



LIMASSOL DISTRICT

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS



Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

**BUILDING BRIDGES,
BREAKING WALLS**



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Published in January 2025

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This analysis is based on information provided by the [Euro-Arab Youth Music Center \(EAYMC\)](#).

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INTRODUCTION

Intercultural Cities is a Council of Europe flagship programme. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view.

In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which was rich in content and detail. However, narrative reports alone were relatively weak as tools to monitor and communicate progress. Thus, an “Intercultural Cities Index” has been designed as a benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the programme as well as for future participants.

While this report is being written (December 2024) 162 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 138 (including Limassol) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found [here](#).

Among these cities, 34 cities (including Limassol District) have between 200 000 – 500 000 inhabitants and 36 (including Limassol District) have more than 20% of foreign-born residents.

This report was prepared in the framework of the European Union and Council of Europe joint project: “Enhancing policies and structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus”.¹ It is based on information gathered by the coordinator of the Limassol District Intercultural Network ([Euro-Arab Youth Music Center \(EAYMC\)](#)), that was established under the project. The report presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Limassol District (Cyprus) 2024, in comparison to the previous analysis prepared in 2022 under the “Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus” joint project and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

INTERCULTURAL CITY DEFINITION

The intercultural city has people with different nationalities, origins, languages or religions/beliefs. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

METHODOLOGY

The Intercultural Cities Index analysis is based on a questionnaire involving 86 questions (73 of which are mandatory) grouped in 12 indicators with three distinct types of data. Indicators have been weighed for relative importance. For each indicator, the participating cities can reach up to 100 points (which are consolidated for the general Intercultural Cities Index).

These indicators comprise the following (including the two new indicators in bold):

1. Commitment	
2. Intercultural lens	Education
3. Mediation and conflict resolution	Neighbourhoods
4. Language	Public services
5. Media and communication	Business and the labour market
6. International outlook	Cultural and social life

¹ The European Union and Council of Europe joint projects: “Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus” and “Enhancing structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus” were co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission.

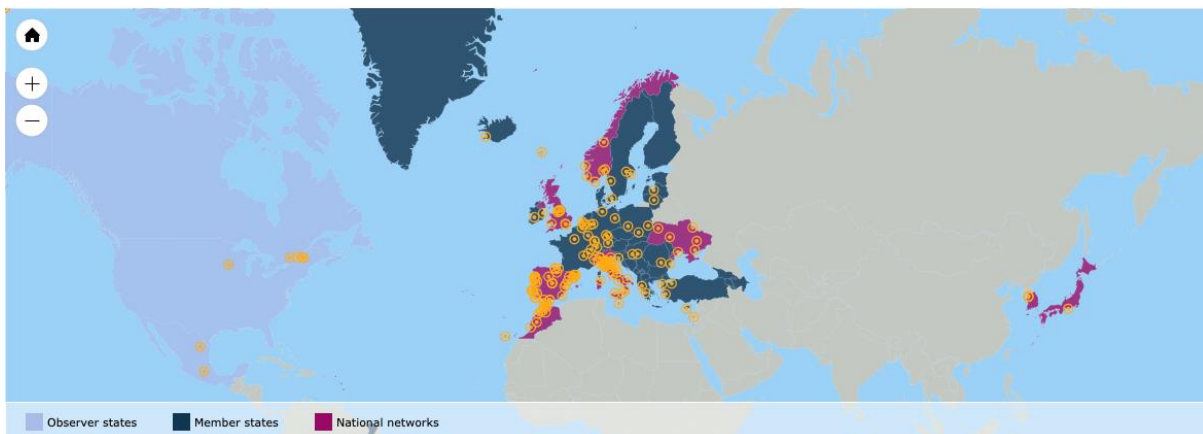
7. Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8. Welcoming newcomers	
9. Leadership and citizenship	
10. Anti-discrimination	
11. Participation	
12. Interaction	

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development, type and scale of diversity, governance models and level of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended **only as a tool for benchmarking/benchlearning**, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.

Considering the above-mentioned differences between the cities and a growing number of new cities willing to join the Intercultural Cities Index, it has been decided to compare the cities not only within the entire sample, but also according to specific criteria. Two of these have been singled out so far: the size (below 100 000 inhabitants; between 100 000 and 200 000; between 200 000 and 500 000; and above 500 000 inhabitants) and the percentage of foreign-born residents (lower than 10 per cent; between 10 and 15 per cent; between 15 and 20 per cent; and higher than 20 per cent). It is believed that this approach would allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

So far, 57 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Limassol District. Thus, the district will be compared to the entire sample for all the indicators, and to the new sample for the new indicators relating to participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, **Limassol District** has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 69 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.²

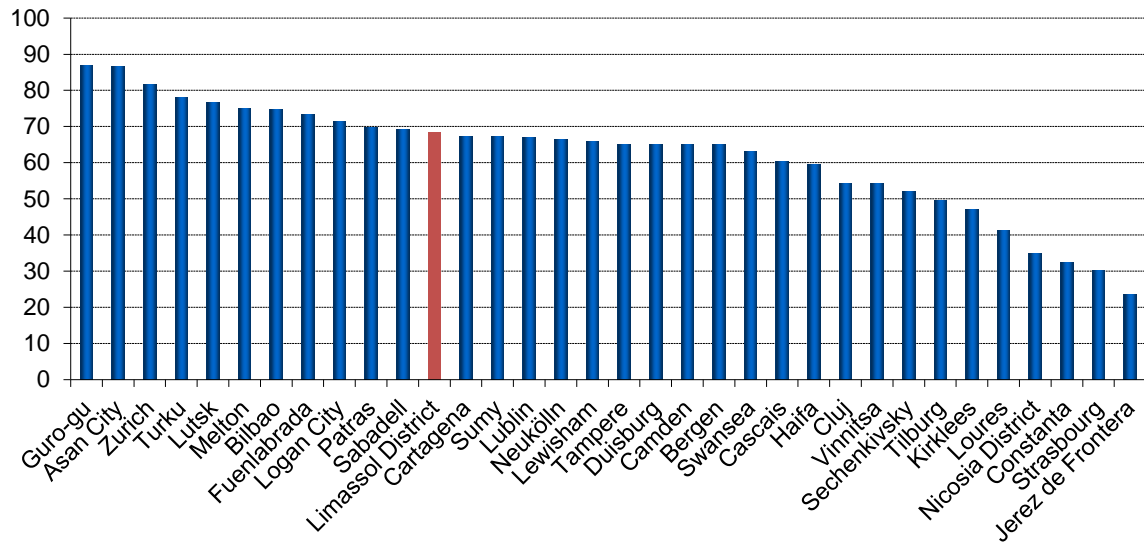


² The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended Intercultural Cities Index with 86 questions. As a main rule, the Intercultural Cities Index report applies the scoring from the original Intercultural Cities Index, to ensure the broadest possible comparison group in the global achievement rate.

In addition, the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index is provided in an explanatory footnote for all indicators where it is relevant. This scoring encompasses the assessment of the questions of the original Intercultural Cities Index as well as the new questions of the extended Intercultural Cities Index for each specific indicator. The scoring of the original Intercultural Cities Index and extended Intercultural Cities Index for the same indicator may hence differ based on the differing number of questions. Finally, the indicators which are completely new to the extended Intercultural Cities Index only include the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index. This scoring for these indicators hence shows directly in the text and not in a footnote.

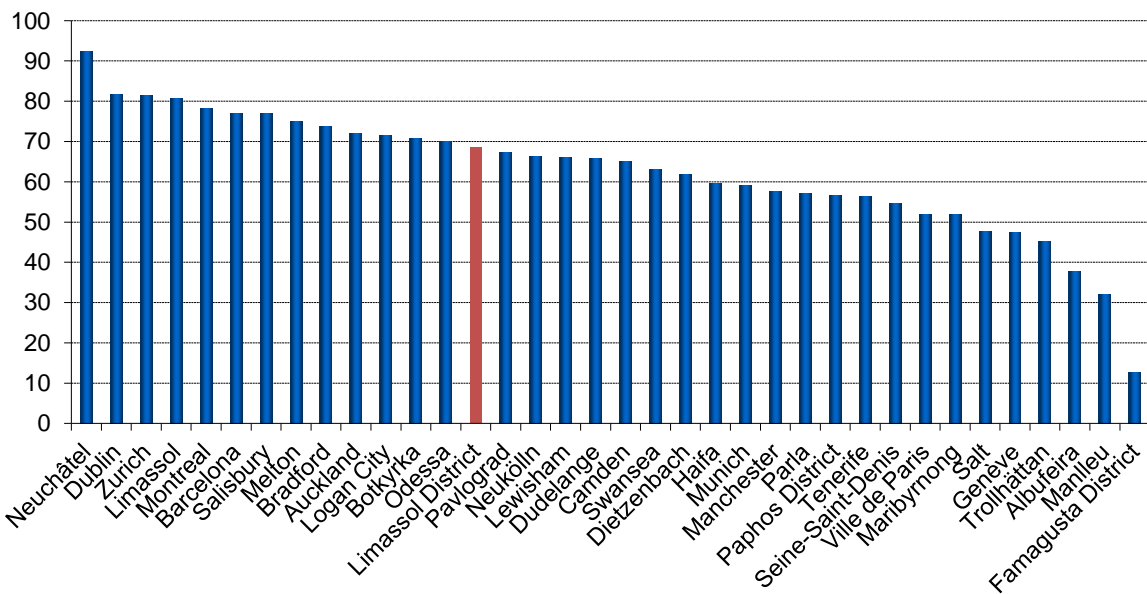
Per inhabitants

Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (inhabitants 200 000 - 500 000)

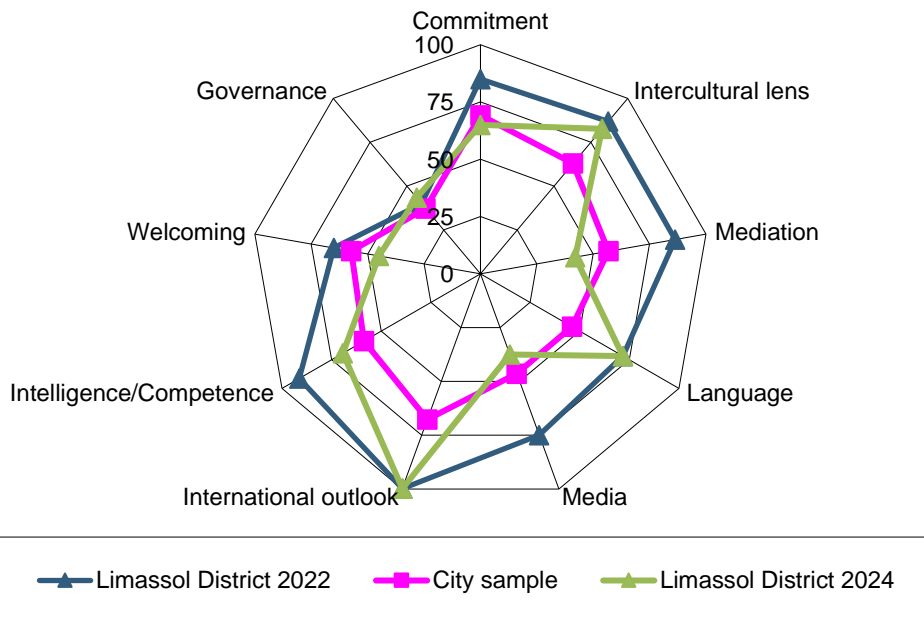


Per diversity

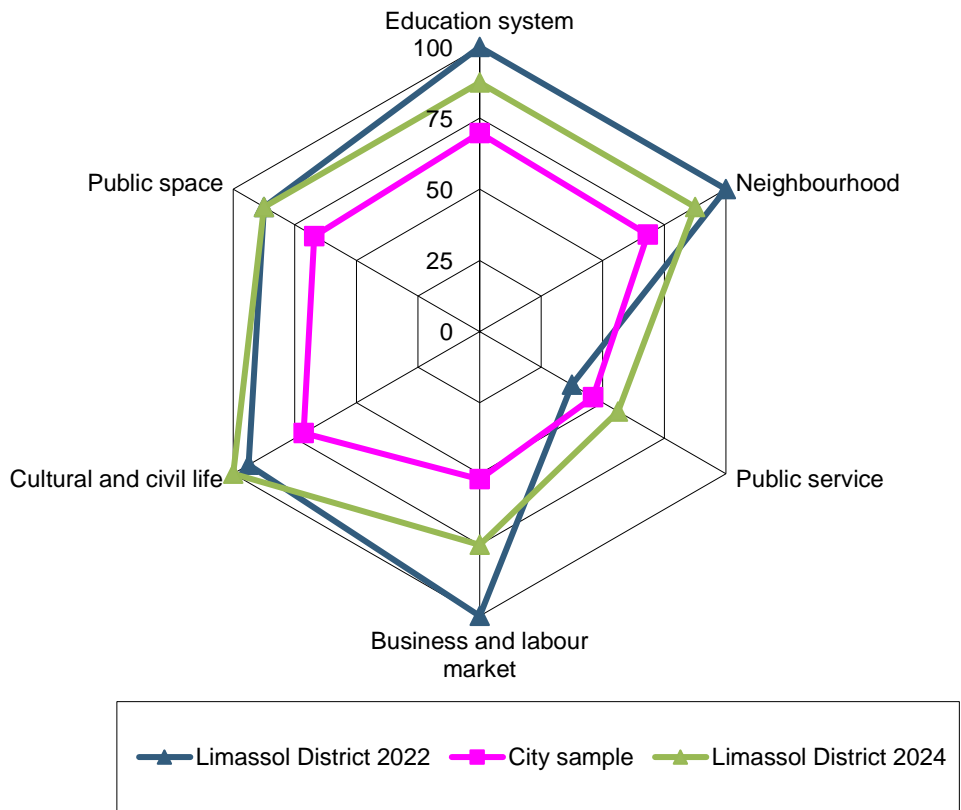
Intercultural City Index (ICC)
City sample (non-nationals/foreign borns > 20%)



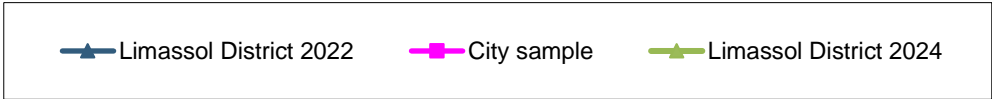
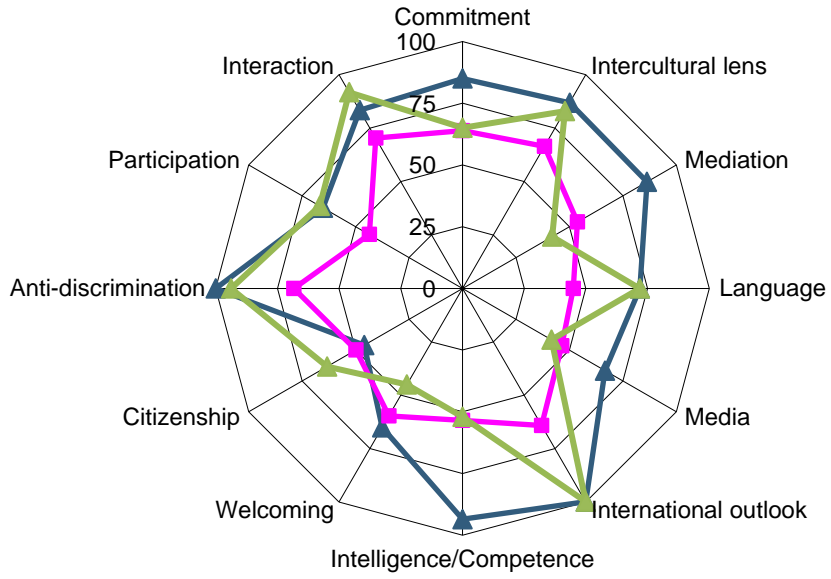
Core Index



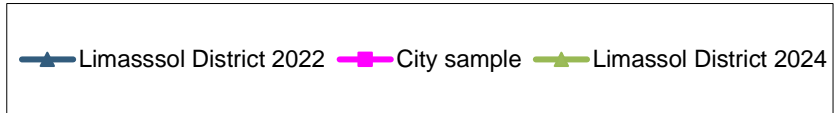
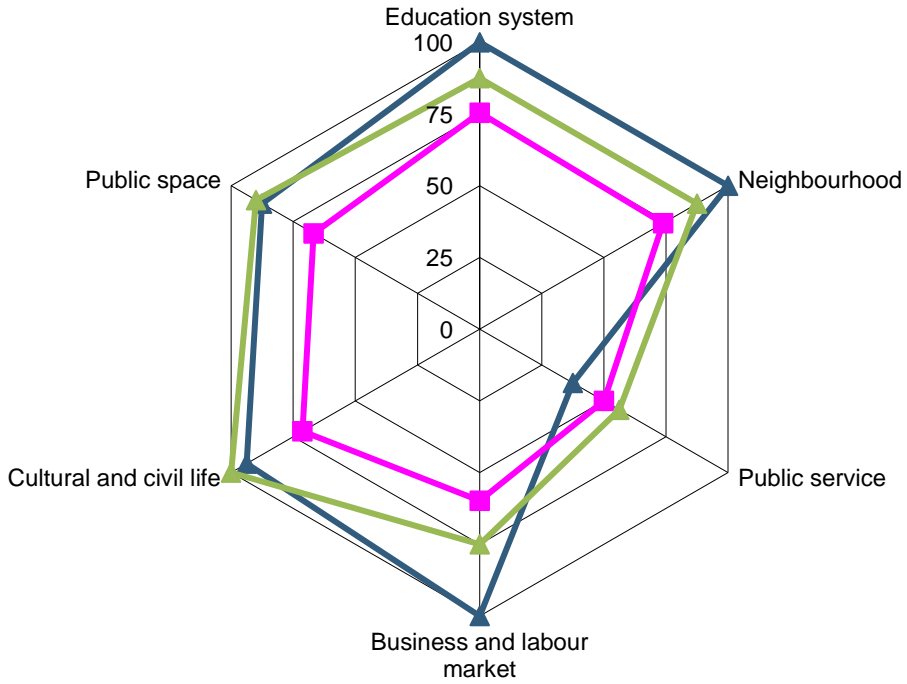
Intercultural Lens with Core Index



Extended Index



Intercultural Lens with Extended Index

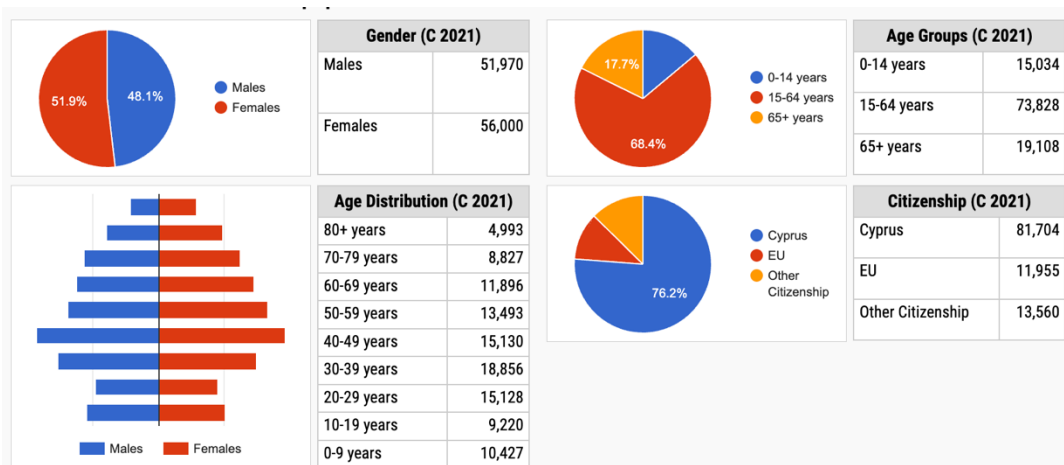


LIMASSOL: AN OVERVIEW

Limassol, located on the southern coast of Cyprus, is a city with a rich and diverse history that dates back to antiquity. It rose to prominence during the Byzantine period and became a key port under Frankish rule after the 12th century. The city was a significant center during the Crusades, notably serving as the site of Richard the Lionheart's marriage to Berengaria of Navarre in 1191. Over centuries, Limassol came under the control of various powers, including the Venetians, Ottomans, and the British, each leaving a distinct mark on its architecture and culture. Following Cyprus's independence in 1960, Limassol continued to develop into one of the island's most vibrant urban centers.

Limassol is a vital economic hub for Cyprus, driven by its strategic location and dynamic port facilities. It is the largest port in Cyprus and serves as a significant shipping, logistics, and maritime center for the region. The city has also emerged as a key player in the finance and services sectors, hosting numerous international companies, including those in forex trading, IT, and fintech. Tourism is another major contributor to Limassol's economy, with its bustling marina, luxury resorts, and vibrant cultural festivals attracting visitors from around the world. The wine industry, linked to the region's long-standing viticulture traditions, remains a notable economic feature, particularly highlighted by the annual Limassol Wine Festival.

As of recent estimates, Limassol has a population of approximately 235 000, making it the second-largest city in Cyprus after Nicosia. Its population is diverse, with a mix of Greek Cypriots forming the majority, along with Turkish Cypriots and other ethnic communities. Limassol has experienced significant urbanization, and its cosmopolitan character reflects the island's historical intersections of cultures and trade routes.

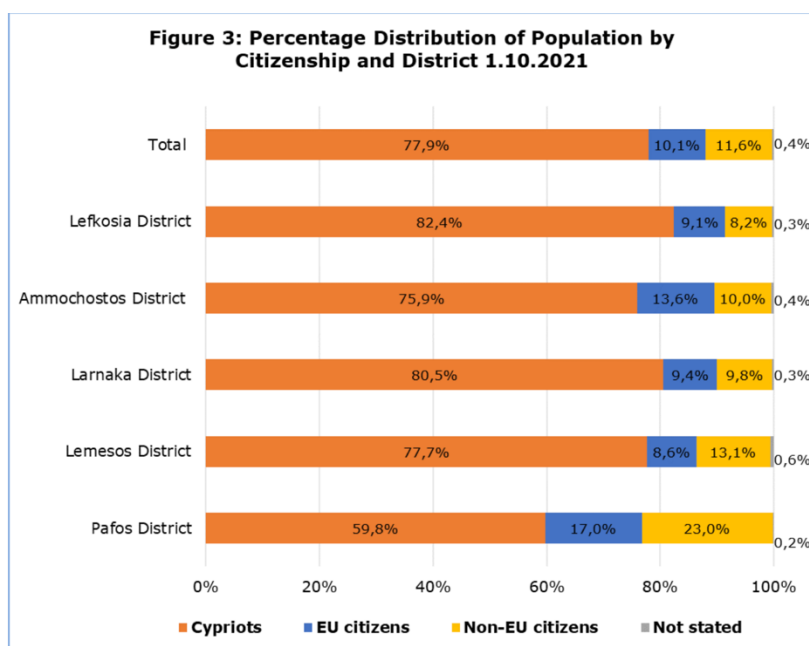


Source: <https://www.citypopulation.de/>

Limassol is home to a substantial foreign population, which has grown significantly in recent decades due to its economic opportunities and attractive lifestyle. Large communities of Russians, British, and other European nationals reside in the city, contributing to its multicultural fabric. The Russian population, in particular, has had a notable influence, evident in the presence of Russian schools, businesses, and cultural centers. In addition to Europeans, there are also smaller communities of South Asians, Middle Easterners, and Africans, many of whom are involved in sectors such as construction, services, and domestic work. Today, the Limassol District is home to a diverse population, with 20.5% of residents identified as non-nationals, based on the 2021 Census. This includes 62% EU and EFTA nationals and a significant proportion of third-country nationals from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa.

The district's population also includes long-term residents who obtained Cypriot citizenship through naturalisation and individuals of Cypriot origin returning from the diaspora. Additionally, refugees and asylum-seekers contribute to the district's growing cultural diversity, reflecting broader regional migration patterns.

According to the 2021 census, the population in the Limassol District (Lemesos) is composed of 77.7% Cypriots, 8.6% EU citizens, 13.1% non-EU citizens, and 0.6% not stated. These figures reflect a notable level of diversity, with non-EU citizens representing a significant portion of the population compared to other districts. While the proportion of EU citizens is lower in Limassol than in districts like Pafos (17.0%), the higher percentage of non-EU citizens highlights the district's role as a key area of settlement for third-country nationals.



Source: <https://www.gov.cy/en/economy-and-finance/census-of-population-and-housing-2021-final-results/>

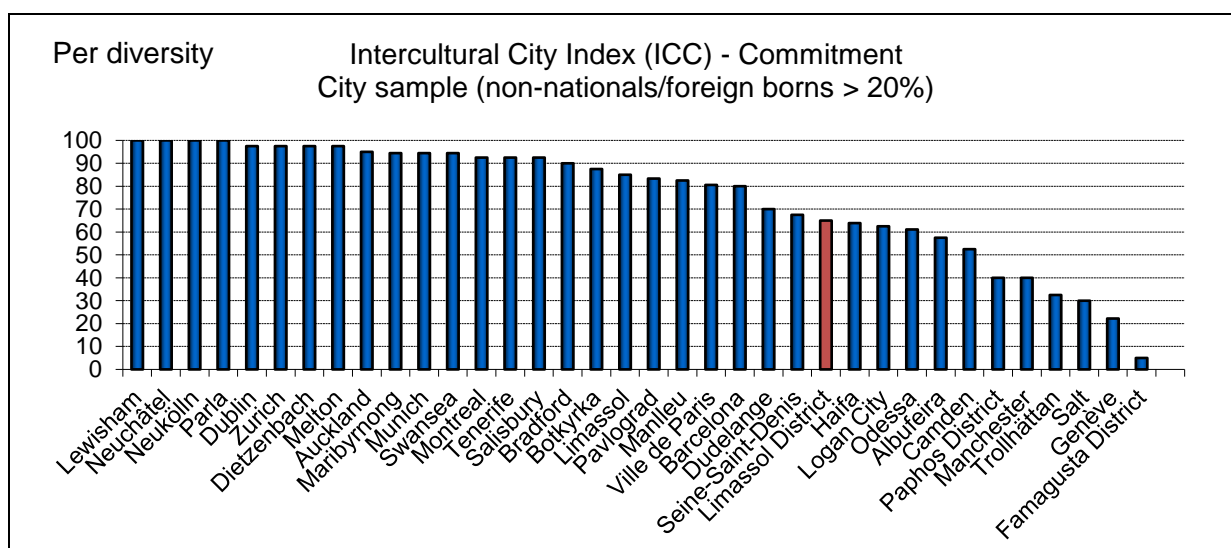
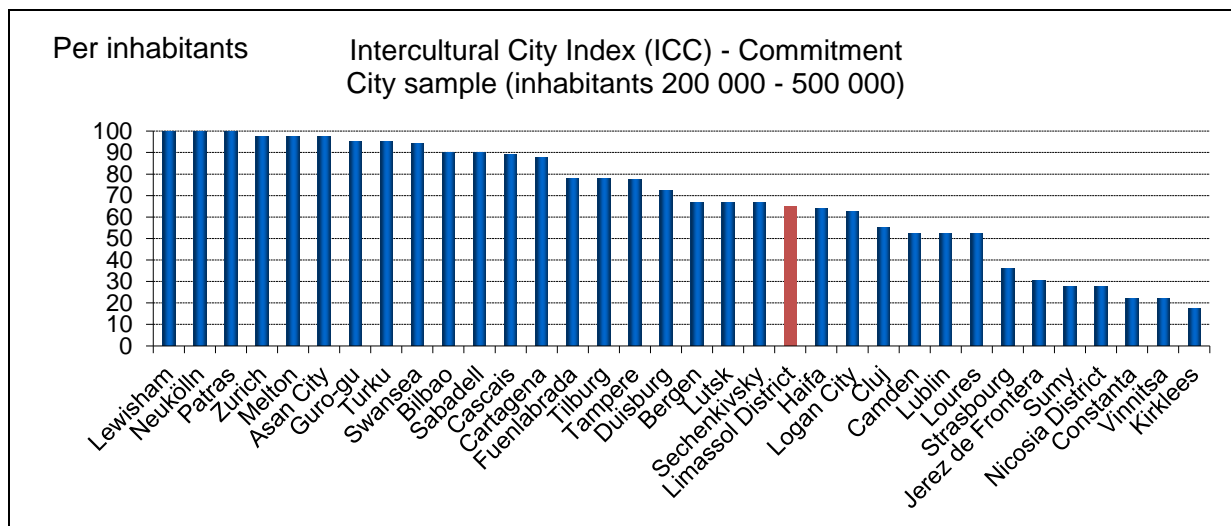
The Republic of Cyprus is a constitutive state of two (constitutive) communities: Greek and Turkish. It also recognizes the following religious groups: 1) Maronite Christians, 2) Armenian-Gregorians, 3) Latin-Catholics, who accordingly to the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus opted to enter into Greek-Cypriot community. (Article 2 (3)). The Roma population is considered to be a part of Turkish-Cypriot community. The Article 2 of the Constitution also defines the religious groups in the following manner: "For the purposes of this paragraph a " religious group " means a group of persons ordinarily resident in Cyprus professing the same religion and either belonging to the same rite or being subject to the same jurisdiction thereof the number of whom, on the date of the coming into operation of this Constitution, exceeds one thousand out of which at least five hundred become on such date citizens of the Republic;" (Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, Article 2). The national educational system (Ministry of Education) recognizes and addresses the Roma group by tailor-made extra-curricular programs for them.

This diverse mix of residents has made Limassol a dynamic and globally connected city, fostering a rich blend of cultural and social exchanges.

COMMITMENT

For intercultural inclusion to occur, city authorities need to send out a clear and well-publicised message emphasising their commitment to intercultural principles, i.e. diversity, equality and interaction. Ideally, a majority of elected officials and senior policy officers will have a clear understanding of these core principles and their implications for policy-making. City authorities also need to initiate an institutional process to translate the principles of interculturality into concrete policies and actions. Most importantly, an intercultural city actively seeks to include residents of all nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups in the policy-making process. The authorities also highlight and nurture any intercultural practices that may already exist in the city.

Limassol achieved a rate of 65%, which is slightly below the city sample's average achievement rate of 69%. It is also lower than the ICC Index results for the district in 2022, which stood at 85%.



Limassol District has formally adopted a public statement declaring its commitment to intercultural integration. In 2018, the Limassol Municipal Council, in collaboration with the Limassol Intercultural Council, endorsed the Lisbon Declaration in a symbolic session. Since then, Limassol's leadership has consistently expressed support for intercultural integration and the "Diversity Advantage". The new local government, elected in June 2024, has placed diversity at the centre of his governance programme under the slogan "[A City for All.](#)"

Limassol District has adopted an intercultural integration strategy. Following the completion of the first strategy (2018–2020), a new strategy for 2023–2025 was discussed and approved by municipal stakeholders. Although the strategy has not been formally adopted due to the electoral cycle, it serves as a guiding framework for Limassol municipalities. Limassol District has adopted an intercultural action plan as part of the 2023–2025 Intercultural. This action plan details short-term measures, operational steps, and allocated resources to achieve the strategy's objectives, ensuring a practical and results-driven approach to intercultural integration.

Limassol has a dedicated coordination structure responsible for implementing the intercultural strategy. This role is fulfilled by the Intercultural Council/Network, which brings together representatives from various departments across the Limassol municipalities to ensure coordinated implementation of the strategy.

Limassol District has allocated a budget to implement its intercultural strategy and action plan. The "intercultural" budget consists of funds allocated to social programmes, education, and cultural activities. Additionally, Limassol

municipalities often partner in EU-funded projects, which provide supplementary resources to support intercultural initiatives.

While Limassol municipalities often engage in public consultations and co-design processes involving diverse groups, there is no specific policy document formalising these practices. For instance, [Lemesos 2030](#) launched a large consultative process to develop cultural policies, encouraging input from stakeholders and community members.

Limassol District has a process for evaluating and updating its intercultural strategy and action plan. The previous strategy (2018–2020) was evaluated by the Intercultural Council and the current strategy for 2023–2025 was drafted following its recommendations.

Limassol's official communications rarely make explicit references to the city's intercultural commitment. While diversity is often acknowledged in public statements and events, there is no systematic use of messaging or branding to emphasise the city's intercultural vision. Similarly, Limassol does not currently have an official webpage that communicates its intercultural statement, strategy, or action plan. The webpages for the Intercultural Council/Network are under construction.

Finally, Limassol District does not currently have a formal system to acknowledge or honour residents and organisations that contribute to interculturalism.

Suggestions

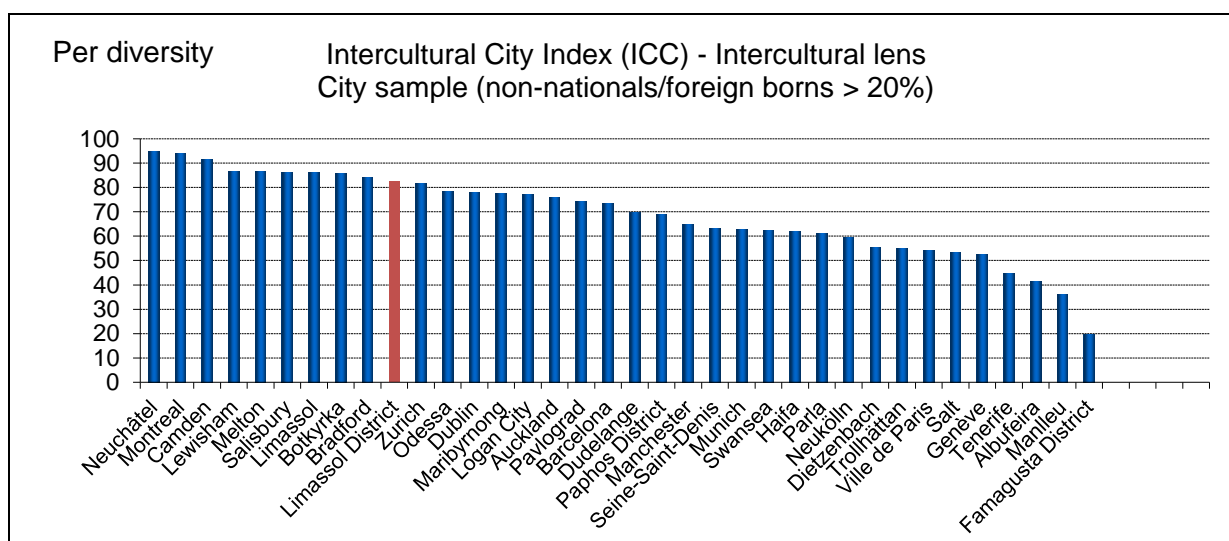
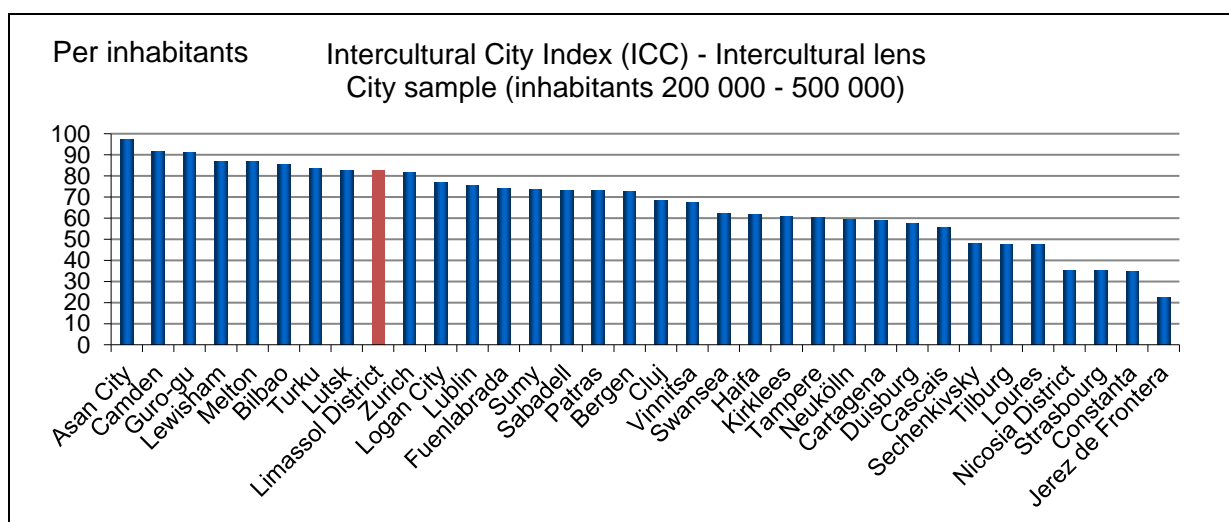
The Limassol District could look to several successful examples from the Intercultural Cities (ICC) network for inspiration. In Turku (Finland) there is a cross-sectional and cross-sectoral effort for reinforcing its intercultural commitment, with the city allocating funds across various services to promote intercultural initiatives. Initiatives like [International House Turku](#) and [spearhead projects](#) are part of Turku's commitment to interculturalism. There is an annual report to the City Council prepared by the Migration Work Steering Group and the Steering Groups of International House Turku, comparing the results of national and regional level questionnaires on the wellbeing of the Turku population and the wellbeing of non-native Finnish/Swedish speaking population. New methods are currently being developed to reach immigrant communities, including utilizing organisations as a means of outreach.

In Dublin (Ireland), the focus is on developing an intercultural and integration strategy for the five-year period 2021-2025. Led by the Dublin City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), this strategy is a key priority supported by former Mayor Hazel Chu. It builds upon previous initiatives and aims to be a dynamic document, incorporating input from various municipal departments and external stakeholders, including migrant and foreign community representatives. The strategy addresses a wide range of issues, with a particular focus on Dublin commuters, nomadic cultures, and the Roma population. Moving forward, the draft strategy will undergo a public consultation process to gather input from the city's residents and stakeholders. The final version, expected in 2022, will outline concrete actions across different municipal departments, demonstrating the city's commitment to anti-discrimination and social inclusion. Additionally, Dublin is establishing two stakeholder networks to support the implementation of the strategy, one internal and one external, comprising organisations and associations collaborating with the municipality.

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore be re-conceived and re-configured in order to assure they provide adequate service to all residents regardless of their nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientation and age group. This is most notably the case for policies concerning education, neighbourhoods, public services, business and the labour market, cultural and social life, and public space.

The overall achievement rate of urban policies in Limassol District, evaluated through an "intercultural lens," stands at 83%, surpassing the model city's achievement rate of 63%.

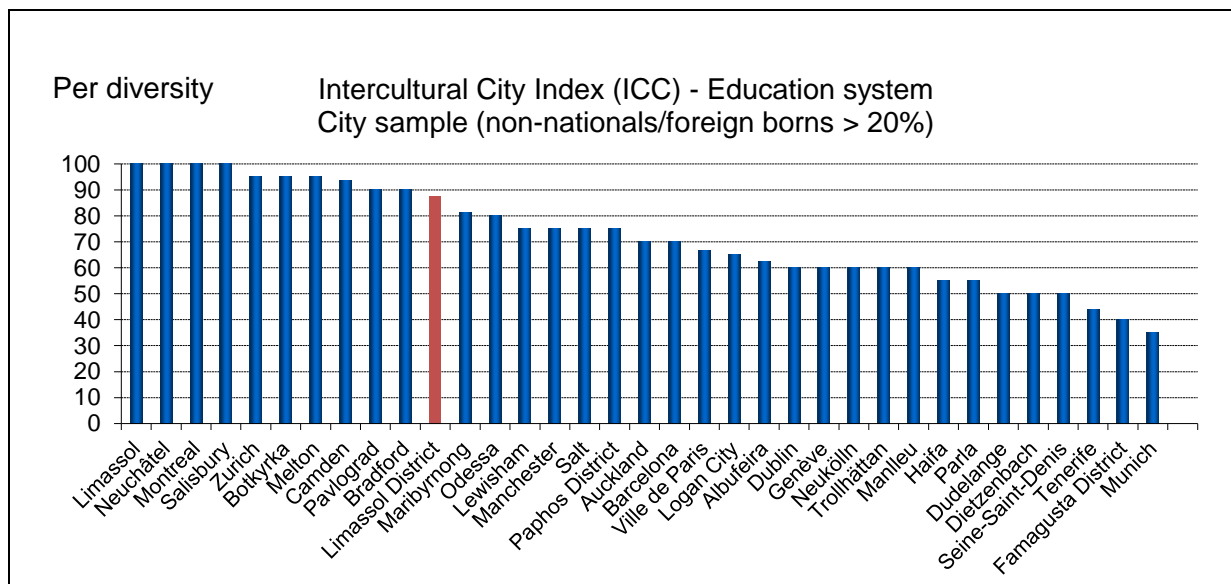
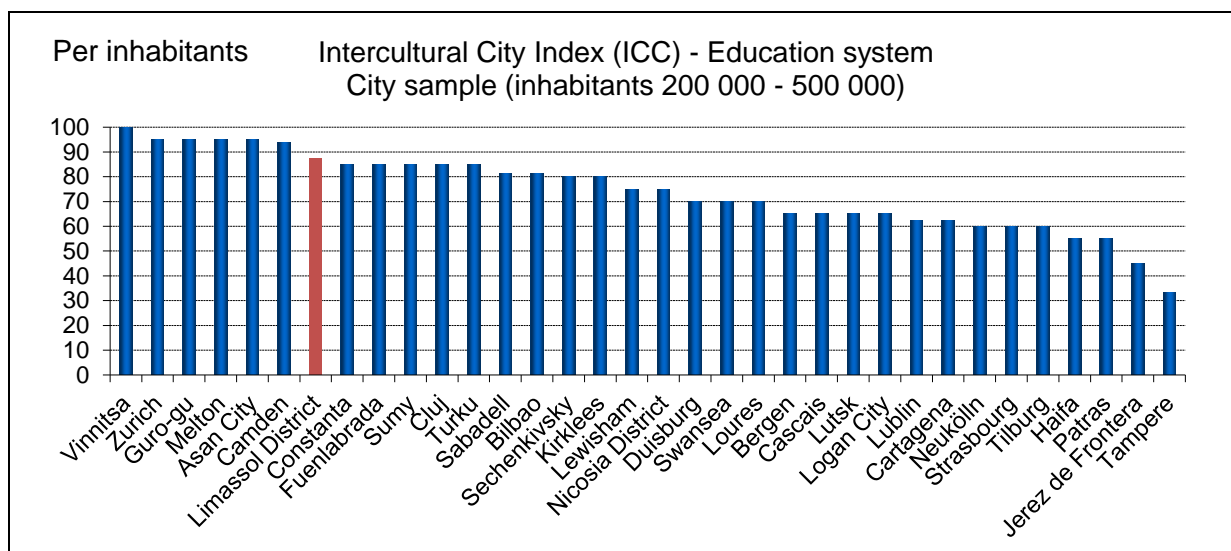


EDUCATION

Formal education and extracurricular activities have a powerful influence on how children will perceive diversity as they grow up. Schools therefore have a strong potential to reinforce or, on the contrary, challenge prejudices and negative stereotyping. Although school programmes are defined primarily at the national or regional level, local schools can look at alternative and innovative ways of providing opportunities for children of different cultures to build trust and mutual respect, and create thereby favourable learning conditions for all pupils, irrespective of their

nationalities, origins, languages, sexual orientation or gender identity, religions/beliefs. From the intercultural perspective, cultural and other diversities, including multilingualism are treated as positive opportunities and are nurtured accordingly. Intercultural schools also consider parents of pupils with migrant/minority backgrounds on an equal basis as other parents. They take steps to ensure that all parents overcome any reluctance they may have in engaging with the school and give them in this way the possibility of playing the educational role usually expected from parents.

Limassol achieved a rate of 88%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 70%, although lower than the 100% scored in the 2022 ICC Index.



In Limassol District, the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of teachers in schools do not yet fully reflect the composition of the city's population, as teacher recruitment remains under the jurisdiction of national authorities. Schools reflect a multicultural and diverse student body, ensuring that children from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds learn together. This diversity is celebrated and supported through targeted initiatives. For example, the "[Free Hands](#)" (*Elefthera Heria*) programme, implemented by the Municipality of Limassol, offers enhanced

afternoon schooling. It specifically addresses the needs of families where parents may not be fluent in Greek, thereby ensuring their children receive the academic and social support necessary to thrive.

Moreover, Limassol's schools are active in promoting intercultural understanding through regular projects and initiatives. Intercultural education is a mandatory component of lifelong learning for teachers, delivered nationally through the Pedagogical Institute. Educators are equipped with [multilingual tools and methods](#) to foster inclusive classroom environments, with resources available in Greek, Georgian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Arabic. This proactive approach ensures teachers are prepared to meet the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of their students.

While no formal local policy currently exists to address ethnic concentration in schools, Limassol has identified the risk of "ghettoisation" in certain neighbourhoods, particularly in areas like Agios Antonios, Neapolis, and Agios Nikolaos. To mitigate this challenge, the city has implemented various activities under its [Social Programmes Framework](#), focusing on non-formal education, youth empowerment, cultural engagement, and sports. These efforts aim to create opportunities for interaction across diverse groups, thereby fostering social cohesion and preventing segregation.

Suggestions

Limassol District has opportunities to combat segregation and foster an intercultural educational environment for students.

In Hamburg (Germany), over 20 teachers from various schools participated in the pilot project "Qualification for intercultural coordinators" to become intercultural change agents within their schools. These teachers actively engage in intercultural school projects. Additionally, around 200 teachers from different schools regularly participate in the "Intercultural Fair" hosted by the department of intercultural education and are involved in the intercultural "exchange forum" at the teacher training institute to gain new ideas for intercultural projects in their schools.

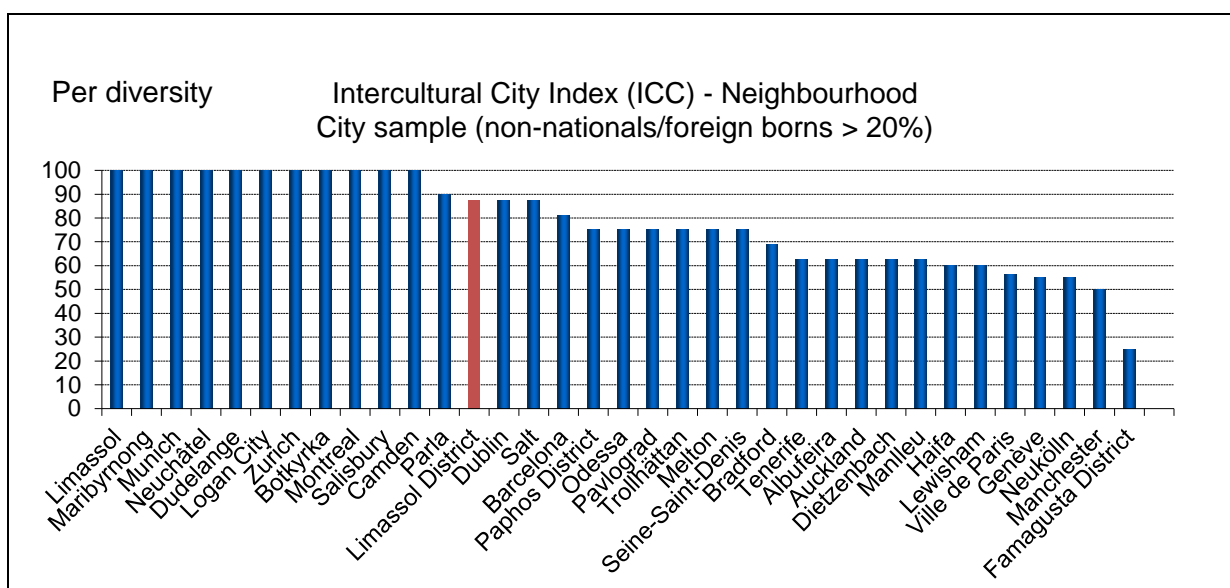
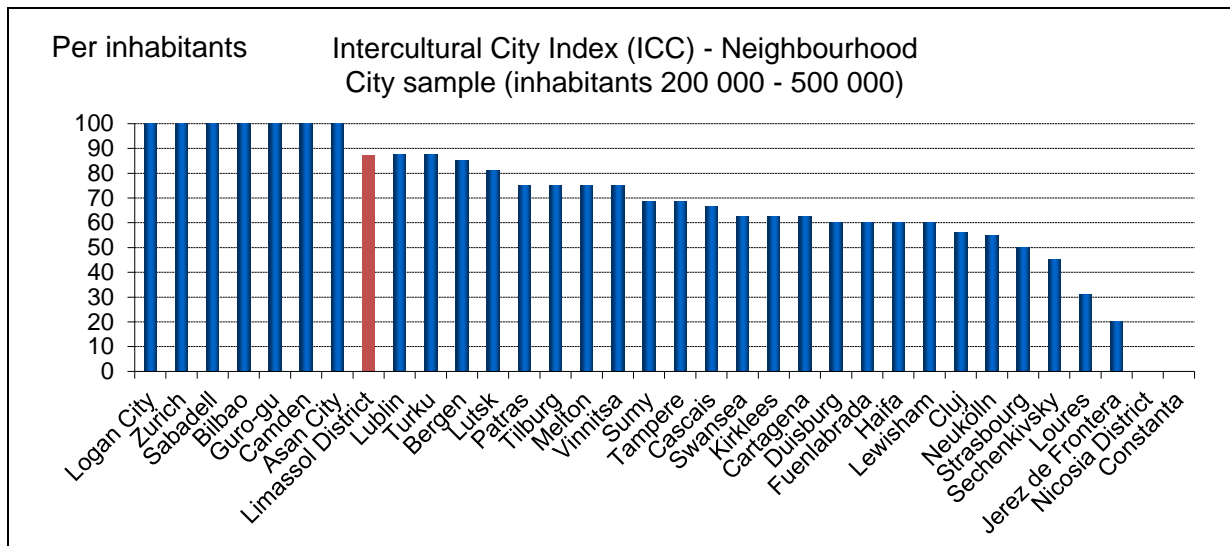
In Camden (United Kingdom), schools make efforts to frequently involve parents, including with migrant/minority backgrounds in school life, both to support parents and to encourage the sharing of culture. In addition, "Camden Learning" and the "Safer Camden Network" have worked with the local community and the Council's communications team to develop a guide to 'Life in Secondary School' that aims to support parents and their children with the move to secondary school. Translated booklets and a range of video resources, tailored for the Camden Somali community, have been produced as part of the work that the Safer Camden Network has undertaken with the local community to support children's transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

Lastly, ICC programme resources on education are also available [here](#).

NEIGHBOURHOODS

Within a city, districts, neighbourhoods, or other territorial sub-units, can be more or less culturally/ethnically diverse. People are indeed free to move and settle in the neighbourhood of their choice. To be intercultural, a city does not require a 'perfect' statistical mix of people in all neighbourhoods. It will however make sure that ethnic concentration in a neighbourhood does not convert into socio-cultural segregation, and does not act as a barrier to the inward and outward flow of people, ideas and opportunities. In particular, the intercultural city ensures the same quality of public service delivery in all the neighbourhoods and plans public space, infrastructures, social, cultural and sport activities to encourage intercultural and socio-economic mixing and interaction.

Limassol achieved a rate of 88%, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 68%.



Most districts and neighbourhoods in Limassol are culturally and ethnically diverse. Although there is currently no formal policy to increase diversity in neighbourhoods and avoid ethnic concentration, the municipality is seriously considering such measures. In collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, Limassol has launched an [Affordable Housing Programme](#) funded by the EU, which will be implemented across various locations. The pilot project will begin in the St. Nicolaos area, aiming to ensure equitable housing distribution and promote integration.

Limassol actively encourages interaction between residents of different neighbourhoods through cultural and community-based events. For instance, the [Limassol Carnival](#) includes a neighbourhood outreach programme, ensuring that various districts are involved in the festivities. Additionally, the *Regional Communication and Development Committee* organises the annual [“Theatre in the Neighbourhood”](#) initiative, with free performances held in multiple districts during July and August.

Furthermore, Limassol has policies in place to encourage interaction within the same neighbourhoods. As part of the city’s bid for [European Capital of Culture Lemesos 2030](#), the municipality has launched initiatives that activate community spaces and promote interaction among residents of diverse backgrounds at a local level.

Suggestions

Although its continuous work in this area, Limassol District could get inspired by other municipalities’ actions. In Reykjavik (Iceland) the city has introduced the “My Neighbourhood” initiative to engage citizens in online

discussions about micro-level budget allocations. This initiative also promotes interaction between neighbourhoods, with the Reykjavik City Library playing a pivotal role in the process. Public libraries, often overlooked as resources, can build meaningful connections both in-person and online. [The Reykjavik City Library](#) exemplifies this by its dedication to interculturalism and its support of arts and creativity. The library frequently hosts events across the city, catering to people from all backgrounds. Additionally, the city's cultural institutions strive to welcome a diverse range of guests, serving as spaces for community, creativity, and interactive cultural dialogue, as outlined in the “Roots and Wings” policy by the Reykjavik Department of Culture and Tourism for 2017–2020.

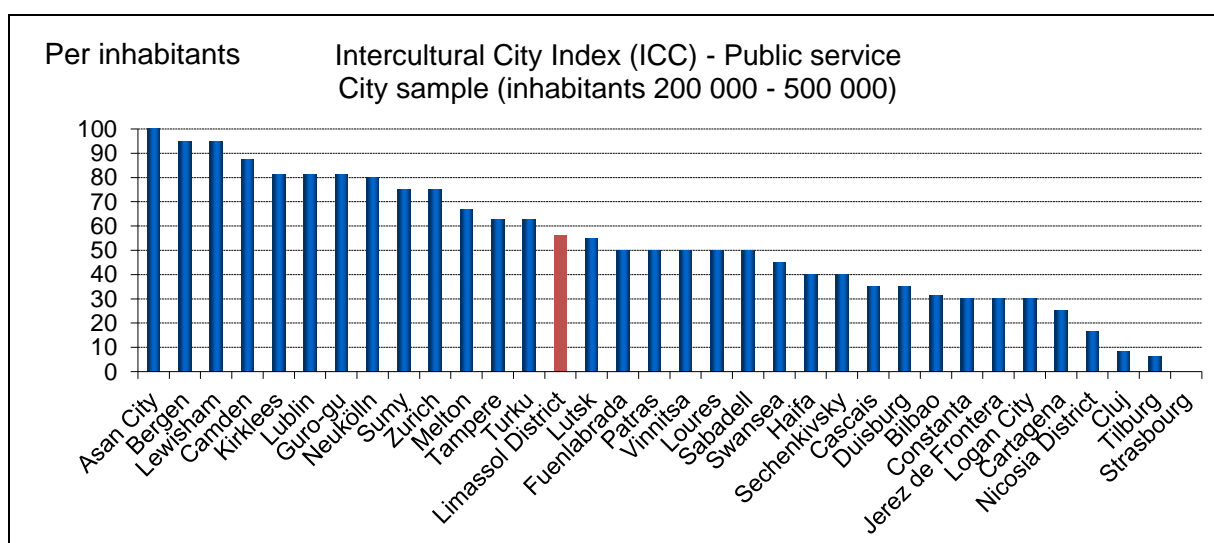
In Braga (Portugal), the city promoted the “(Re)Writing our Neighbourhood”, aimed to enhance three municipal housing neighbourhoods over three years. Through partnerships and funding, it integrated eight measures to promote community engagement and public participation. Initiatives included raising awareness through intercultural interaction, promoting Roma culture in schools, establishing community centres, and creating music programs for social integration. The project also focused on local leadership development, children's literature, employability, and empowering young Roma individuals. By involving residents in shaping their communities' narratives, the project aimed to break down stigma and promote diversity as an asset. Its success led to recognition in the European Network Urban Regeneration Mix in 2020.

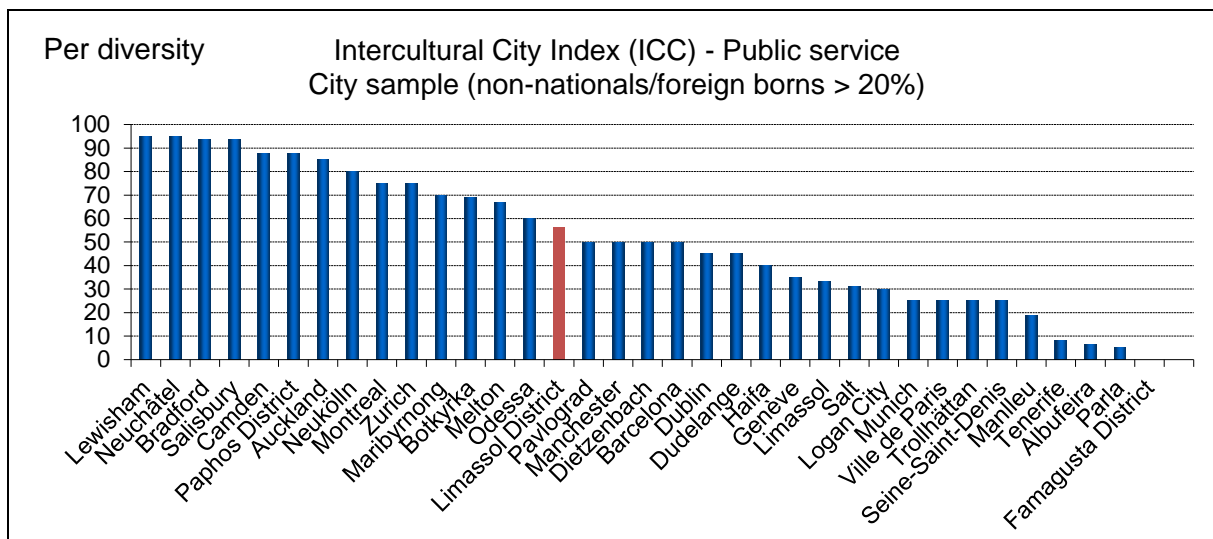
The [ICC study on managing gentrification](#) provides various strategies and examples for creating inclusive public spaces, promoting positive socio-cultural interaction, fostering a sense of belonging, and supporting the growth of diverse businesses.

PUBLIC SERVICES

As their very name implies, public services work for the benefit of the public as a whole. If the population is diverse, public services will be more efficient in delivering adequate benefits and information if city officers, at all levels of seniority, are as diverse as the population in general. This requires much more than simply ensuring equal opportunities to access public service employment. When taking action to encourage a diverse municipal workforce, an intercultural city acknowledges that a ‘one size fits all’ approach to public services and actions does not guarantee equal access to public benefits. The city also recognises that residents with migrant/minority backgrounds should never be treated as passive consumers of public benefits but can contribute actively by suggesting new ideas and innovative solutions to public problems.

Limassol achieved a rate of 56%, which is slightly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 46%.





Although Limassol District has made strides in promoting diversity, its public services still reflect some challenges in representation and inclusivity. While the migrant/minority background of public employees is partially represented, this diversity exists predominantly at the lower hierarchical levels. The city does not currently have a formal recruitment plan to ensure diversity within its workforce, particularly at higher levels of seniority.

In the private sector, Limassol takes notable action to encourage intercultural mixing and competence. Since 2017, the city has worked alongside the Limassol Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders to promote diversity as an economic and social advantage. A joint declaration between the municipalities of Limassol and Ioannina, titled [“Cultural Diversity as an Advantage for Economic Development and Social Cohesion”](#) (2021), highlights the benefits of embracing diversity for fostering economic growth and social unity.

As a key economic hub of Cyprus, Limassol maintains close partnerships with bilateral chambers of commerce (e.g., Cyprus-China, EU, and Middle Eastern countries) and regularly organises business forums to strengthen relationships with diverse business communities. The city also serves as the headquarters for the [Cyprus International Business Association](#) (CIBA), further reinforcing its role in supporting intercultural competence and diversity in the private sector.

When it comes to service provision, Limassol does not provide specific services that consider migrant/minority backgrounds, such as funeral/burial services, school meals, or dedicated women-only sections in sports facilities. While outdoor sports facilities exist, the responsibility for most of these services lies outside the municipality’s direct competence.

Suggestions

Montreal (Canada) offers excellent examples of inclusive public service policies. Its strategic programme, Public Service Policies for an Intercultural Montreal, emphasizes diversifying public sector staffing by recruiting migrants with appropriate skills. For instance, the Human Resources Department runs a work sponsorship programme, enabling candidates who face employment barriers to gain meaningful, paid work experience aligned with their training within the city. To enhance intercultural competencies among public employees, Montreal provides managers with training to promote respect for cultural differences and improve their ability to handle challenging situations. Recruitment staff at the staff assignment centre are also trained to dispel misconceptions about cultural differences, helping to prevent misunderstandings during the hiring process. Additionally, the Montreal Fire Department reviewed its recruitment practices and introduced a preferential appointment system for ethnic and visible minorities. Changes were also made to selection tests to eliminate systemic discrimination and support the integration of these groups into the firefighting workforce.

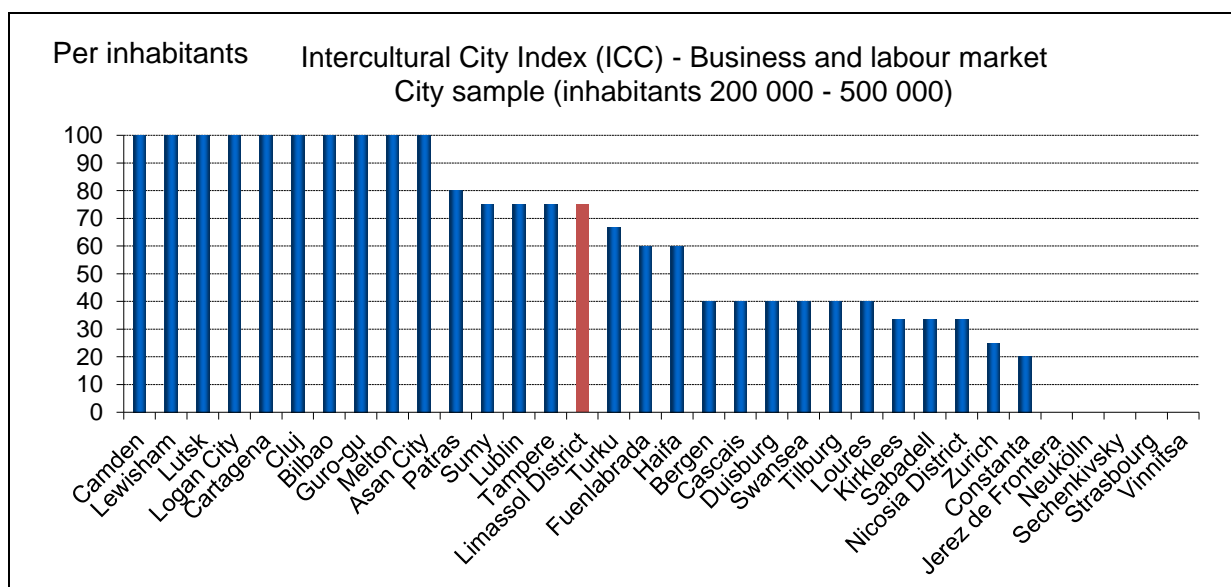
In Bergen (Norway) Inclusive Housing is a municipal initiative aimed at providing residences for migrants and refugees by ensuring access to both social housing and private sector housing. The municipality actively works to prevent urban segregation and ensures that housing for refugees is integrated into the community. According to recent data, 70% of people granted a residence permit find their housing without assistance from the municipality. However, even in these cases, the municipality plays a role in facilitating the process. For migrants and refugees facing difficulties in accessing housing, the municipality assists them in finding suitable accommodation and guides them through the rental agreement process. The municipality also checks the rental agreements in advance to ensure compliance and fairness. In the case of social housing provided by the private market, the municipality covers the guarantee deposit, while the refugee signs an agreement with the community and commits to paying the rent. This approach ensures that migrants and refugees have access to safe and affordable housing while promoting integration and community cohesion.

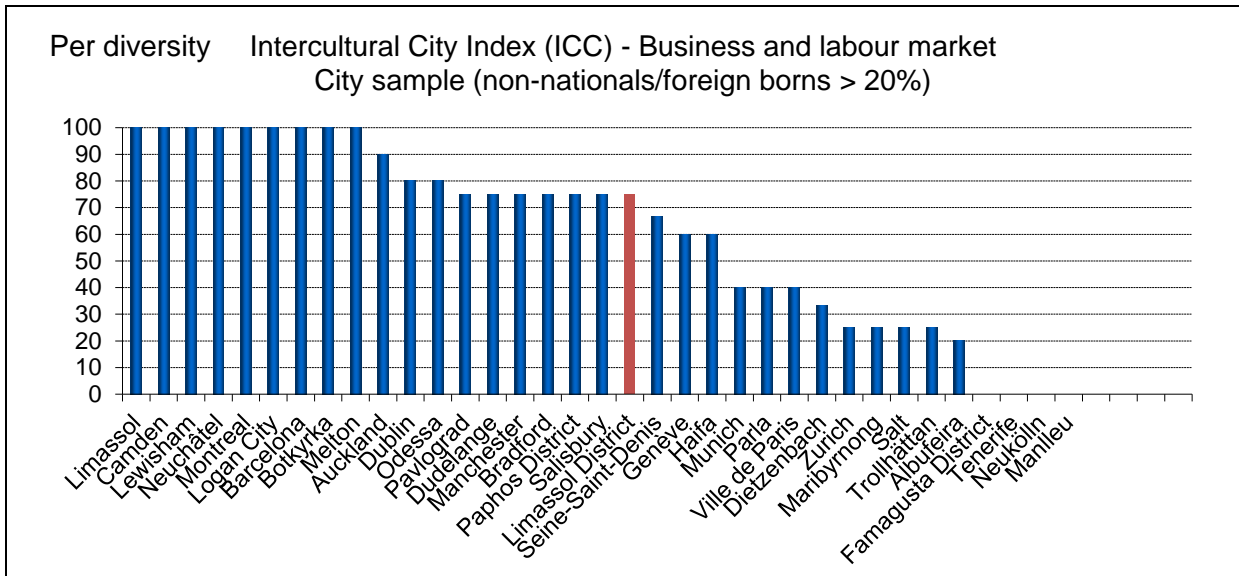
Other ICC programme resources on public and community services are available [here](#).

BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

Access to the public sector labour markets is often restricted by national or regional legislation. When this is the case, the private sector may provide an easier route for people with migrant or diverse backgrounds to engage in economic activity. As a result, private companies and activities tend to offer much more diverse working environments than the public sector. Research has also proved that it is cultural diversity in private companies, and not homogeneity, which fosters creativity and innovation. By constantly highlighting the diversity advantage in business, and partnering with their chambers of commerce and entrepreneurs, cities can influence how diversity is perceived in the private sector in such diverse sectors as shops, clubs, restaurants, industry, technical services and science.

Limassol achieved a rate of 75%, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 52%. It is lower than the ICC Index results for the district in 2022, which stood at 100%.





Limassol District operates within a highly diverse labour market where migrants make up a significant proportion of the workforce. At the regional and national levels, organisations such as the Cyprus Employers' and Industrialists' Federation and the Cyprus Diversity Charter promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace. The Intercultural Network/Council of Limassol plays an essential role in fostering collaboration among employers, chambers of commerce, labour unions, universities, NGOs, and local authorities. Their contributions have been integrated into the city's *Intercultural Draft Strategy 2023-2025*. The national [Cyprus Diversity Charter](#) also supports Limassol members by providing tools, knowledge, and training to foster inclusive practices and ensure equal opportunities in the labour market.

Although business development is not within the direct competence of Limassol's municipalities, the district encourages businesses from ethnic minorities to engage in the mainstream economy and higher value-added sectors (see, for example, the [Limassol Business Hub](#), a private initiative with public support). The city is home to the [Cyprus International Business Association](#) (CIBA) and maintains strong relationships with bilateral chambers of commerce to promote collaboration and economic growth.

To encourage business incubators and joint initiatives, the city is developing a *Comprehensive Limassol Strategy* in consultation with local and international stakeholders, including the Intercultural Council. The strategy aims to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), attract start-ups, and develop innovative solutions by leveraging local universities and scientific expertise.

However, when it comes to municipal procurement, Limassol does not currently favour companies with an intercultural inclusion or diversity strategy, as such measures are not foreseen in national or regional regulations.

Suggestions

Municipalities in Limassol District should explore ways to encourage diversity in municipal procurement processes by learning from other ICC cities, which could also offer inspiration in related areas.

In Reggio Emilia (Italy), the municipality launched the Diversity Lab programme to explore the advantages of cultural diversity, with particular reference to new plural economies and open innovation processes. The programme, implemented by the Foundation Mondinsieme, aims to disseminate a renewed vision on Diversity Management, able to effectively combine inclusion and valorisation efforts (overcoming its simple reparative function). A key strategy to reach this goal consists in integrating Diversity Management and Diversity Marketing strategies. These strategies offer different local actors (businesses and commercial organisations, start-ups, public institutions, collaborative spaces etc.) both customised training opportunities, as well as the possibility of participating in awareness-raising events and collaborative initiatives.

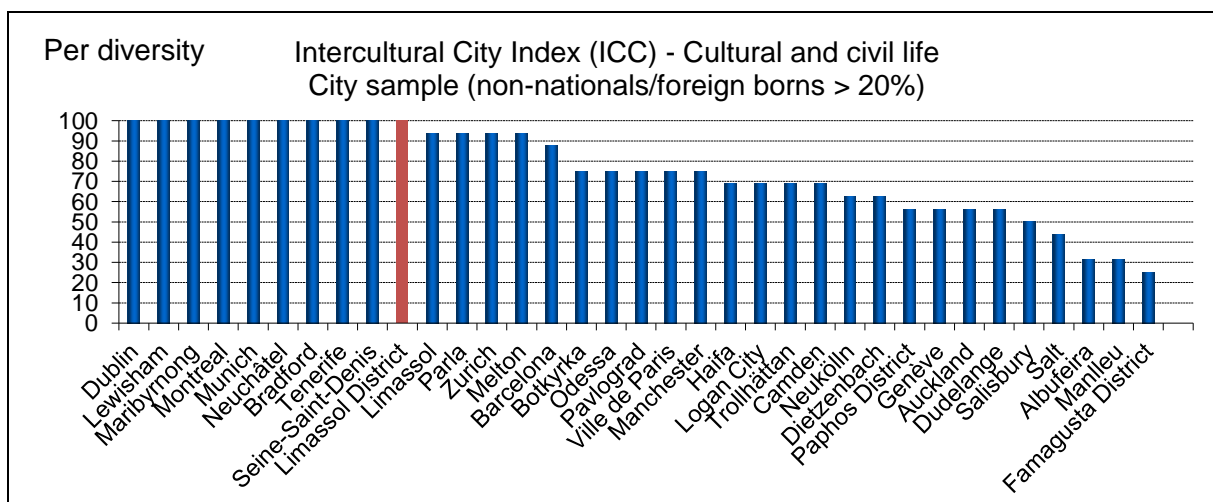
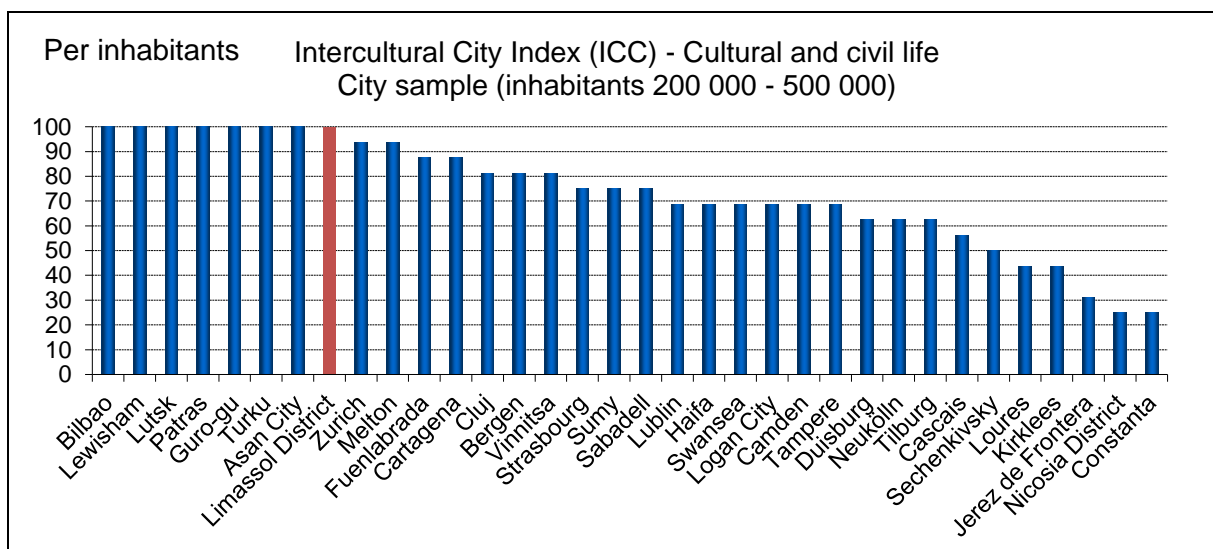
In Tampere (Finland), the city supports entrepreneurship through various initiatives, including providing entrepreneurship training, dedicated advice, and supporting start-up hubs like Platform 6 and [Tribe Tampere](#). These hubs and its collaboration with Ensimetri, serve as platforms for fostering entrepreneurship and innovation in the community. Furthermore, [Platform6](#) serves as the one-stop destination for all start-up-related activities in Tampere. Additionally, it offers advisory services in the field of [International House Tampere](#) (IHT), providing comprehensive support and guidance to start-ups and entrepreneurs in the region.

ICC programme resources on business and employment are available [here](#).

CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE

Whereas people living in a city may have different migrant/minority or other backgrounds, they very often share the same interests and satisfaction when engaging in leisure activities, especially in the fields of arts, culture and sports. Such activities are sometimes structured along ethnic lines. That is quite understandable when they aim to preserve folklore traditions or the language and history of countries of origin. What is problematic is when cross-cultural leisure activities are organised along ethnic lines, for example when a football team only accepts players from one ethnic group. The intercultural city can encourage cultural openness through its own activities and by introducing intercultural criteria when allocating resources to artistic, cultural and sports organisations.

Limassol achieved a rate of 100% in cultural and civil life, which is clearly higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 71%, and also higher than the ICC Index results for the district in 2022, which stood at 94%.



Limassol has taken notable steps to integrate interculturalism into its funding strategies, event planning, and cultural policies. A significant milestone is the joint effort of Limassol's municipalities, including Limassol, Kato Polemidia, Yermasogia and Ypsonas to apply for the [European Capital of Culture 2030](#). These bids have invested substantial financial and human resources, engaging local diverse communities, including migrant groups, through working groups and pilot activities.

In the fields of arts, culture, and sport, Limassol regularly organises events that encourage interaction among people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Activities such as “*Musical Footprints 2024*” and “*Bus 30*” are part of the Limassol's action plan, while Ypsonas organised the *Intercultural Street Festival* in 2023. Under the initiative “*Out There Together*”, the Lemesos 2030 bid team, in collaboration with the Intercultural Council/Network, has mapped and co-organised numerous inclusive cultural events. Programs like [Multicoloured Music](#) focuses on social music inclusion for children from deprived areas, many of whom are of migrant origin.

Cultural organisations in Limassol are encouraged to incorporate diversity and intercultural relations into their work. Institutions like the [Dance House Lemesos](#) and [Rialto Theatre](#), with the support of the municipality, host festivals and artist residencies. Limassol also organises public debates and campaigns promoting cultural diversity and living together through the work of the Intercultural Council/Network. Additionally, initiatives like the Public Discussion and [Femfest](#), organised by the Municipality of Limassol, focus on the role of women, with particular emphasis on migrant, disabled, and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Suggestions

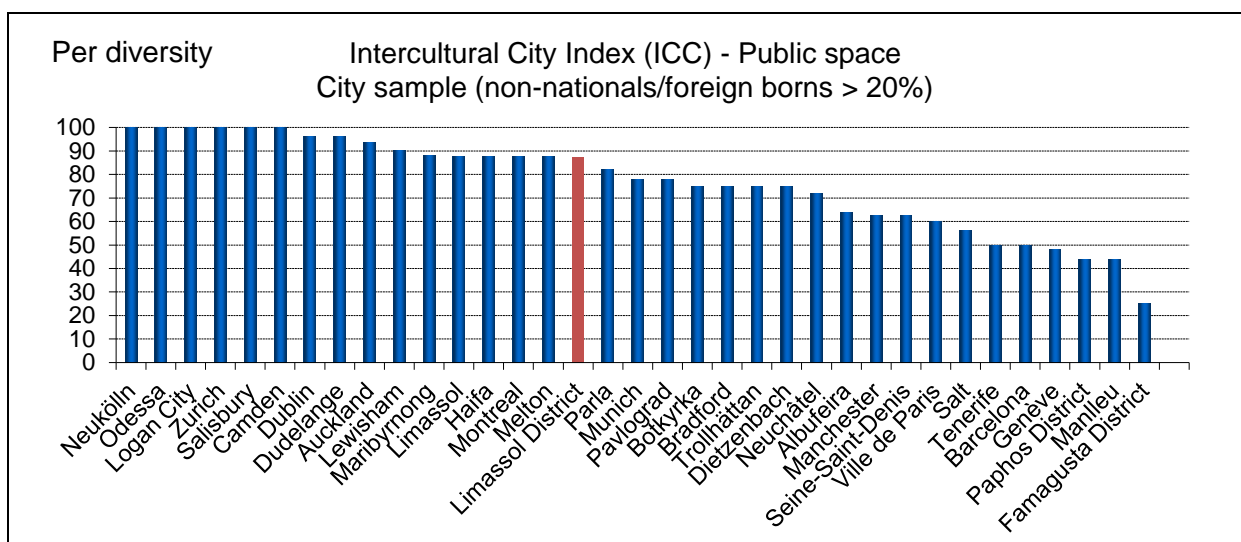
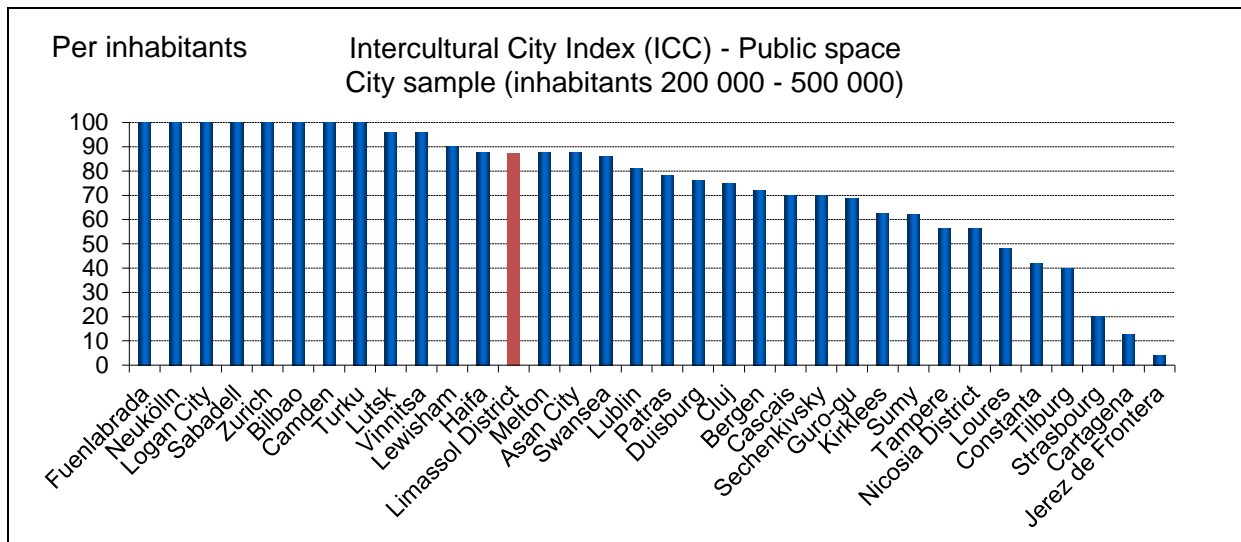
A valuable example to draw inspiration from is the [Festival delle Culture](#) in Ravenna, Italy. This initiative actively engages immigrant associations, volunteers, and local residents in organizing festival activities, guided by facilitators from Ravenna's Municipality. The festival promotes social participation, encourages the involvement of immigrant associations in shaping public narratives, and addresses themes such as global citizenship, combating stereotypes, human rights, and cultural identity through debates, seminars, exhibitions, and cultural performances.

Furthermore, in Sherbrooke (Canada), the municipality aims to make its plural reality visible, valued and recognised by collaborating with the "The thousand faces of Sherbrooke" ([Sherbrooke aux mille visages](#) – French only) with the aim to open up to differences and to get to know each other better as a community, without judgment. The city wishes to offer its residents the possibility of affirming their belonging to a community that shares the same living space: whatever their origins, nationalities, religions, or languages spoken, the city's residents have that in common: they belong to Sherbrooke.

PUBLIC SPACE

Public spaces (streets, squares, parks, etc.) and facilities (public buildings, day centres, schools, health centres, etc.) are places which most citizens are obliged to use. They offer the possibility of meeting people of different nationalities, origins, languages, religions/beliefs, sexual orientations and age groups. For encounters between diverse people to actually occur, such spaces and facilities should be designed and animated in a way that all residents feel comfortable when using them. Conversely badly-managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the “other”. When this is the case, the intercultural city actively engages with all the people concerned, firstly to understand the local context from their perspective, and secondly to identify solutions largely support by them.

Limassol achieved a rate of 88% rate, which is clearly higher than the city sample's achievement of 67%.



Limassol takes significant action to encourage intercultural mixing and interaction in public spaces. The Limassol University Municipal Library, in partnership with the Limassol University of Technology, has expanded its collection of books in multiple languages and covers a broader range of disciplines, fostering an inclusive environment. Playgrounds in the [Limassol Municipal Park](#) have been upgraded with private funding, notably from individuals of migrant origin, incorporating new technologies. The Limassol Promenade remains a key space for the city's diversity, as demonstrated by the photo exhibition "[Diversity – A State of Mind](#)", organised there in May 2023.

Limassol consistently considers the diversity of its population in the design, renovation, and management of new public spaces. The municipalities engage citizens through public discussions, such as those conducted for the [Integrated Limassol Development Plan \(2021-2027\)](#). Similarly, during the development of the *Lemosos 2030* bid, a series of World Café discussions encouraged citizens of diverse backgrounds to co-design plans for new cultural spaces. These inclusive consultations ensure that public spaces reflect the needs of all residents. Limassol municipalities employ diverse consultation methods when reconstructing areas to ensure meaningful involvement of residents, including those with migrant or minority backgrounds. For example, discussions regarding the [renovation of Heroes' Square](#) involved key stakeholders, such as the Intercultural Council, to provide input and feedback on the project.

Although only one or two areas, such as Agios Antonios, show symptoms of ghettoization due to the concentration of marginalized groups, Limassol has implemented a multi-sectoral policy to address these issues. Based on the *Intercultural Policing Training* conducted through the ICC program in 2019, Limassol pioneered the establishment of [Local Crime Prevention Councils](#) in 2023/2024. These councils coordinate with local authorities, the police, and social services to proactively combat youth delinquency and crime, address root causes, and provide early intervention for young offenders.

Suggestions

Cities are encouraged to strengthen policies and actions to support a public space for all. In this context, the municipalities in the Limassol District can implement small steps to start implementing significant measures in this area and encouraging the use of public space.

In Cascais (Portugal), the Council promoted a project to reshape the historic centre of the city while arts brought people together. The 1st edition of Muraliza was held in 2014 as part of the celebrations of the 650 years of the Charter of the Village. The Muraliza festival was produced by Mistaker Maker – Association of Creative Intervention, a non-profit association of an artistic and cultural nature, whose mission and main objectives were: to actively and creatively foster the production and promotion of Contemporary Art exercises, in all its (new) forms of expression; To stimulate informally, through the exploration of new paths in the production of content, the integration of heterogeneous audiences, aiming at the reinforcement of the critical mass and the creation, not only of new artistic products, but also of growing economic, social and cultural value. The event involved all facets of Portuguese culture and witnessed its transformation and evolution: the painting murals of great and medium size, were always inspired by the innumerable and unique characteristics of the region and, concretely, in the peculiarities of this social district built in the 60's.

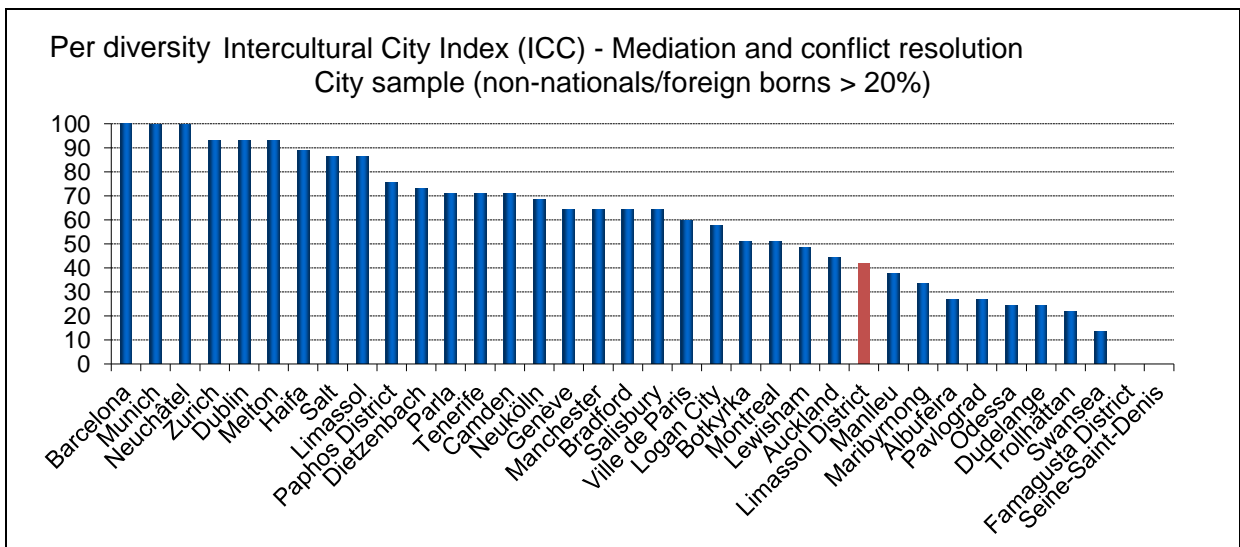
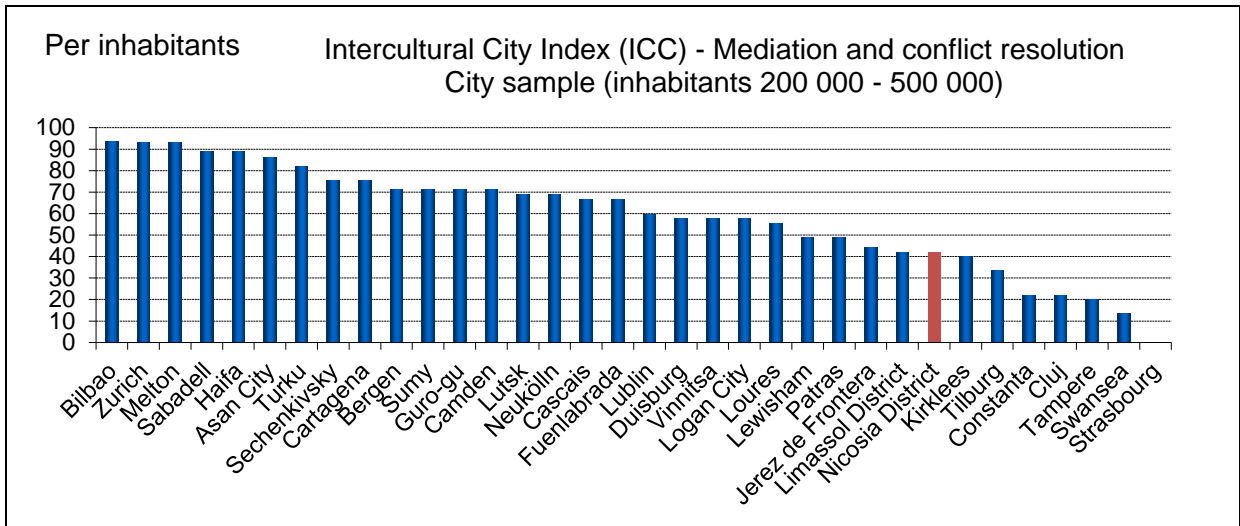
The ICC has launched the [Intercultural Cities in Placemaking](#), a pilot capacity-building project designed by Placemaking Europe. The aim of the pilot project is to build awareness and practical knowledge of placemaking in a way that allows it to foster important long-term change. It is a continuous learning programme designed for municipal public administrations, during which new standards for elevating communities through better public space are set. The final goal is to create a next generation of placemaking experts in governance that can contribute to shaping more human-centered cities for increased well-being and inclusion. Bergen (Norway), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Vila Nova de Famalicão (Portugal), Vinnytsia (Ukraine), and Wroclaw (Poland) are the ICC cities involved in the project.

ICC programme resources on housing, public spaces and urban planning are available [here](#).

MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

In diverse societies there is always the potential for misunderstanding and conflict over values, behaviour or resources. In cities, where people with different cultural backgrounds and socio-economic statuses live together in close proximity, such tensions are natural and indeed part of everyday life. Instead of denying, ignoring, or repressing conflict, the intercultural city seeks to anticipate, identify, address and resolve issues to the satisfaction of all protagonists without compromising the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The intercultural city views conflict as a normal feature of free, dynamic and communicative communities and sees the very process of conflict mediation and resolution as an opportunity for innovation and sustainable social cohesion.

Limassol achieved a rate of 42%, which is lower than the city sample's achievement of 57%. It is also lower than the ICC Index results for the district in 2022, which stood at 86%.



In Limassol, professional intercultural mediation services are primarily provided at the regional/state level. Building on the *Intercultural Policing Training* facilitated by the ICC programme in 2019, Limassol pioneered the establishment of [Local Crime Prevention Councils](#) in 2023/2024. These councils proactively address youth delinquency and crime through community engagement, coordinating efforts between local authorities, the police, and social services. The initiative focuses on early intervention to tackle root causes of criminal behavior and foster safer, more inclusive communities. Due to its success, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cyprus approved the expansion of this programme across the country.

Intercultural mediation in Limassol occurs in specialized institutions, such as police and youth clubs, and in neighbourhoods, where proactive measures engage residents to address conflicts.

In terms of inter-religious relations, Limassol does not have a dedicated municipal or civil society service. However, an important initiative at the national level has been implemented under the auspices of the Swedish Embassy in Cyprus, titled *“Religious Tracks of Cyprus Peace Process”*. This initiative aims to address inter-religious dialogue and promote peacebuilding efforts across the country.

Suggestions

Establishing a specialised body for intercultural mediation and conflict prevention could offer significant benefits to the municipalities within the Limassol District. This body could be developed through collaboration between municipalities or in partnership with other public or political organisations.

For example, in Barcelona (Spain), various [mediation services](#) are designed to support municipal service professionals in enhancing intercultural communication and addressing potential conflicts among individuals and groups from diverse cultural backgrounds. These services aim to act as a bridge between different perspectives and worldviews, fostering dialogue, constructive relationships, and harmonious coexistence among citizens. Additionally, they strive to improve access to municipal services, promoting understanding, acceptance, and the right to information.

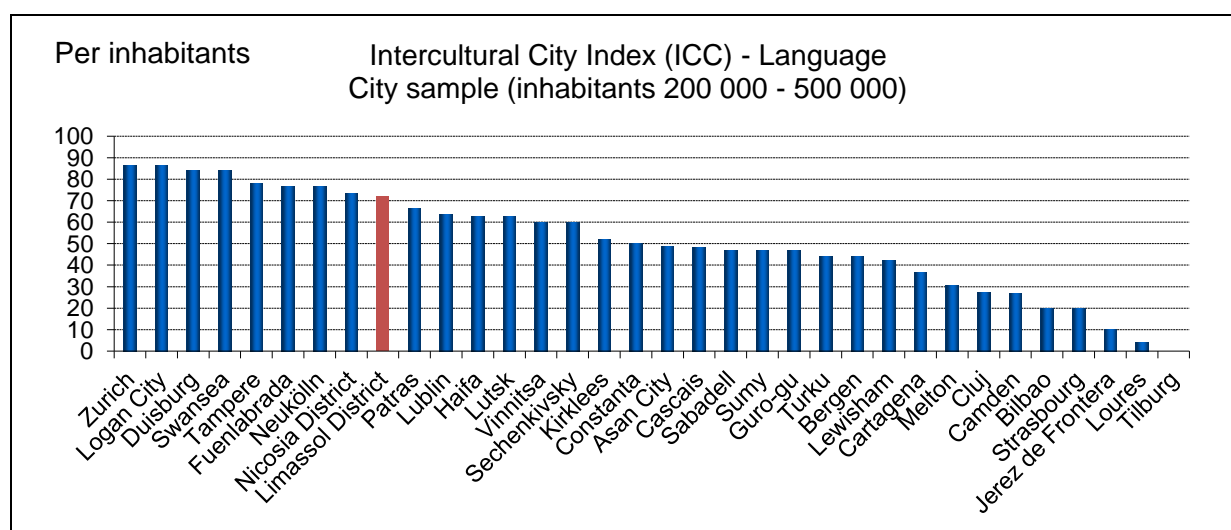
In Cascais (Portugal), it exists the “[Educa](#)” project. The initiative is formed by a group of immigrant or immigrant descendent mediators has been created with training and support, to develop mediation in the educational context. These mediators are interlocutors in the pupil/school/ guardian triangle and a source for signalling specific individualised interventions. Schools feel that they have a quality resource: availability to play with students in the playground, management of emerging conflicts among students, identification and signalling of problem situations. The partners committed to the practice include the creation of a consortium which plays a central role in helping to break down prejudices about some families by trying other ways of approaching problem situations.

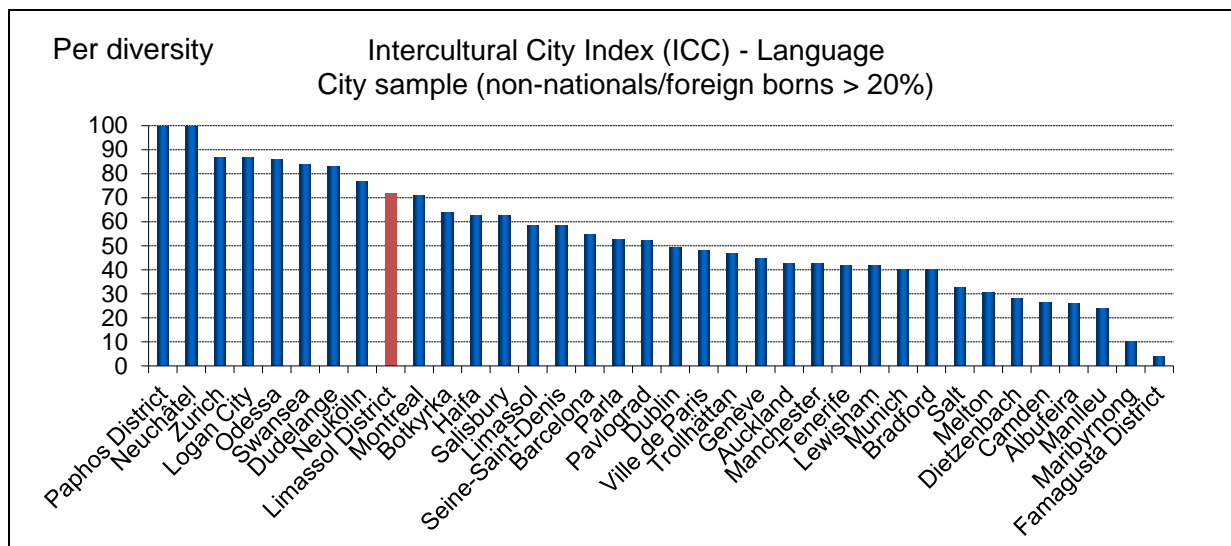
Moreover, ICC programme resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available [here](#).

LANGUAGE

The provision of courses and other facilities for people with migrant backgrounds to learn the receiving country's language(s) is important to ensure social and economic integration. It does however need to be supplemented with activities which highlight the value of other languages, and enable people with migrant origins not only to preserve and transmit their languages to their children and other members of the community, but also to take pride in them as a heritage enriching the local community. An intercultural city promotes multilingualism as a resource for education, business, tourism, cultural life, etc. It underlines the value of all languages present in the city, for instance by giving opportunities to diverse language speakers to express themselves in their mother tongue in public and at cultural events and by promoting all events that offer opportunities for linguistic exchanges and mixing.

Limassol achieved a rate of 72%, significantly higher than the sample's achievement rate of 46%.





Limassol provides a range of services to enhance language competences, catering to both migrants and local residents. The [Adult Education Centre](#) in Limassol, under the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, offers training in various languages, including English, Arabic, Bulgarian, French, German, Greek, Spanish, Italian, Romanian, and Turkish. Additionally, optional languages such as Russian, Arabic, and Turkish are available during formal secondary education.

The city also actively raises awareness of migrant/minority languages through logistical and financial support for media outlets. European and international newspapers in Romanian, Russian, Bulgarian, and English are encouraged and supported in Limassol. Online platforms and radio stations in various languages further serve the diverse population. Examples include [Bulgarian Media](#), Romanian News ([Ziarul Romanesc Cipru](#) and [Jurnal Din Cipru](#)), Russian Radio & TV ([Russian Radio Cyprus](#) and [Kartina TV](#)), and [Cyprus Chinese Radio](#).

Limassol supports projects that promote a positive image of migrant/minority languages. Given its multilingual tradition, amplified by its diverse migrant population and historical use of English, the city regularly celebrates linguistic diversity. The *EUNIC Cluster Cyprus*—comprising cultural institutes such as the British Council, Institut Français, Alliance Française, and Cervantes Institute—organises events like the European Day of Languages. Festivals, such as the Chinese Cultural Festival and Fête de la Musique 2024, further highlight the richness of migrant languages. Additionally, the Limassol mayor actively supports diversity-related initiatives, such as attending school celebrations at the *L.I.T.C. Russian-English School* and lighting the municipal building in the colors of national flags to mark events like Romanian National Day. Programs such as “*World Poetry Day*” (by Cultural Movement Epilogi) and “*Musical Footprints*” emphasize the cultural value of linguistic diversity.

Suggestions

Towns in the Limassol District could explore the possibility of improving language provisions by taking advantage of the diversity present in the area, tourism and travellers and offering and encouraging more languages in the local private and public services and communications.

One inspiring example could be the [Johannes Learning Centre](#) in Stavanger (Norway) which is the primary institution for building language competence, which has evolved from focusing exclusively on teaching Norwegian to promoting bilingualism and multilingualism with a diverse staff. Originally staffed solely by Norwegians, 40% of the current staff now come from minority backgrounds. This transformation was achieved through a policy of hiring former students and individuals with bilingual skills to meet staffing needs. The centre’s main aim is to provide newcomers, both children and adults, with the Norwegian language skills and education needed for equal access to the labour market.

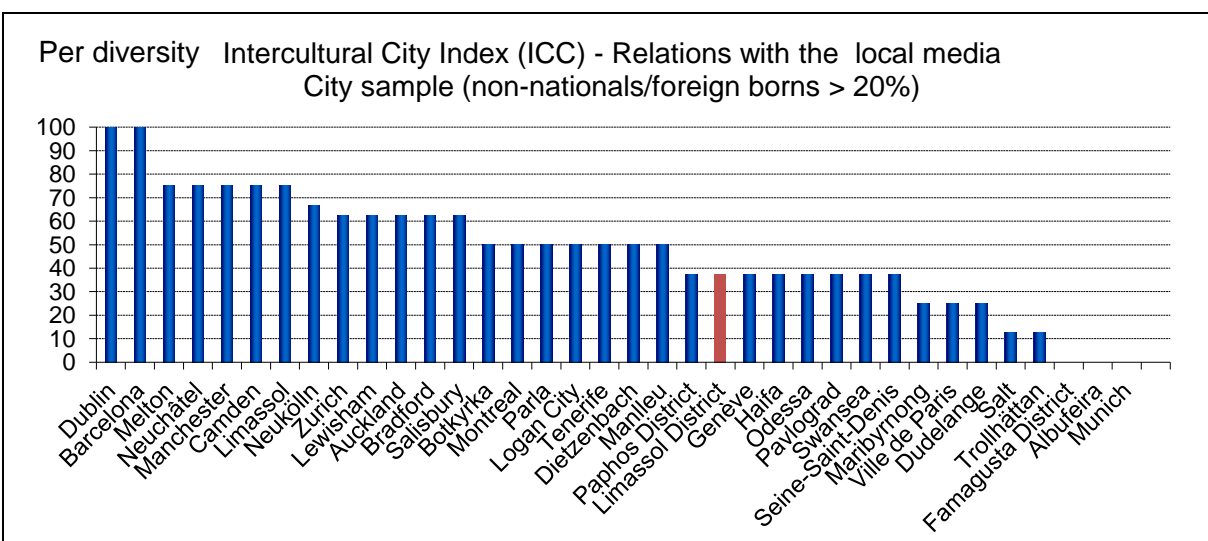
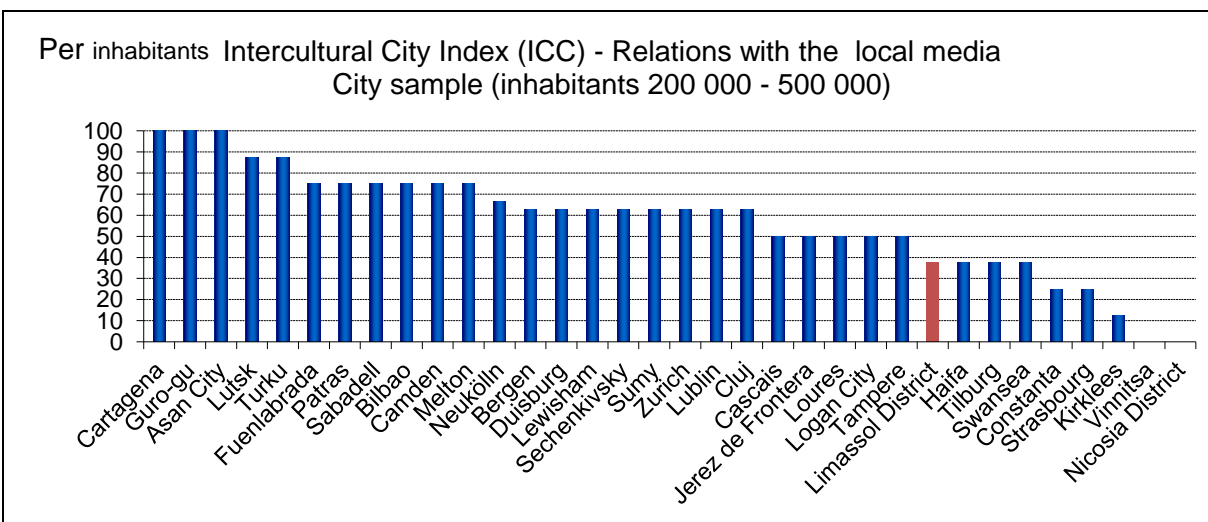
In Lisbon (Portugal), the city, alongside the Portuguese Ministry of Health, has collaborated with local NGOs and hospitals to produce [multilingual health manuals](#). These leaflets were created in partnership with migrant community groups, who identified key topics such as pregnancy, childbirth, STD prevention, and diabetes. The manuals also included illustrations to explain each topic. Community mediators were hired to facilitate discussions with local groups, assist in writing and translating the content, making the development process participatory.

ICC programme resources on multilingualism are available [here](#).

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

Traditional and social media have a very powerful influence on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities. Much of the information people access is generated by international newsgroups, national media, or by private persons in the case of social media. Nevertheless, there is still much the city authorities can do to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an intercultural city constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. More importantly, the city partners with local media agencies so that they purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

Limassol achieved a rate of 38%, clearly lower than the city sample's achievement rate of 46%, and also lower than the 75% reached in the 2022 ICC Index.



Limassol does not have a formal communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant or minority backgrounds; however, there are occasional actions. The Limassol Municipal website offers versions in [English](#) and [Russian](#) to make information more accessible to migrant communities. Additionally, local newspapers, such as [Lemosos](#), publish editions in English and Russian (Novosti), often covering stories relevant to migrants and expat communities.

Although the city's communication (PR) department highlights diversity as an advantage through specific initiatives like the *Lemosos 2030* European Capital of Culture, there is no formal instruction to do so regularly. The [Lemosos 2030](#) team actively promotes the diversity of Limassol through its [social media](#) and website, showcasing members of migrant, LGBTIQ+, and disabled communities, as well as women leaders and individuals of all ages.

Limassol currently does not provide support for advocacy, media training, or mentorship for journalists with migrant or minority backgrounds, nor does it monitor the portrayal of migrants in traditional or social media. While local NGOs and the Intercultural Council may occasionally monitor media portrayals, there is no dedicated body to ensure consistent monitoring, reporting, or engagement with media outlets when negative stereotypes arise.

[Suggestions](#)

Limassol may be interested in developing a more comprehensive media strategy address to raise awareness on interculturalism and diversity, including at monitoring how social and traditional media portray those with a migrant or minority background.

In the Basque city of Bilbao (Spain), the municipal communication office develops the communication strategy of the Municipal Citizenship and Diversity Plan, organising communication of the strategic milestones of Bilbao City Council's intercultural action. Communication is made through press conferences and releases, as well as through social networks with specific intercultural content, where publications related to this content are made. Bilbao City Council provides support to different media projects, promoted by journalists with a migrant background through grants such is the TV channel from the 'Emigrados sin Fronteras' association and Candela Radio. The city also has an [antirumours initiative](#) that has been providing training and developing actions to fight against prejudices and to improve social cohesion for the last 10 years.

Camden Council (United Kingdom) has a communication strategy to improve the visibility and image of people with migrant/minority backgrounds in the local media and the communication department is instructed to highlight diversity as an advantage regularly and in various types of communication. One of Camden's defining features is its diversity and the Council's central mission is to ensure 'no-one gets left behind' and this implies that it focuses on communication projects that give visibility to people of all backgrounds. The Council also actively seeks to promote Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic³ leaders, by supporting its cabinet councillors, Youth members of parliament and community leaders by using them as spokespeople for key issues facing the borough. Regarding media monitoring, the Council itself monitors the way in which traditional local and/or national media, as well as social media, portray people with migrant/minority backgrounds.

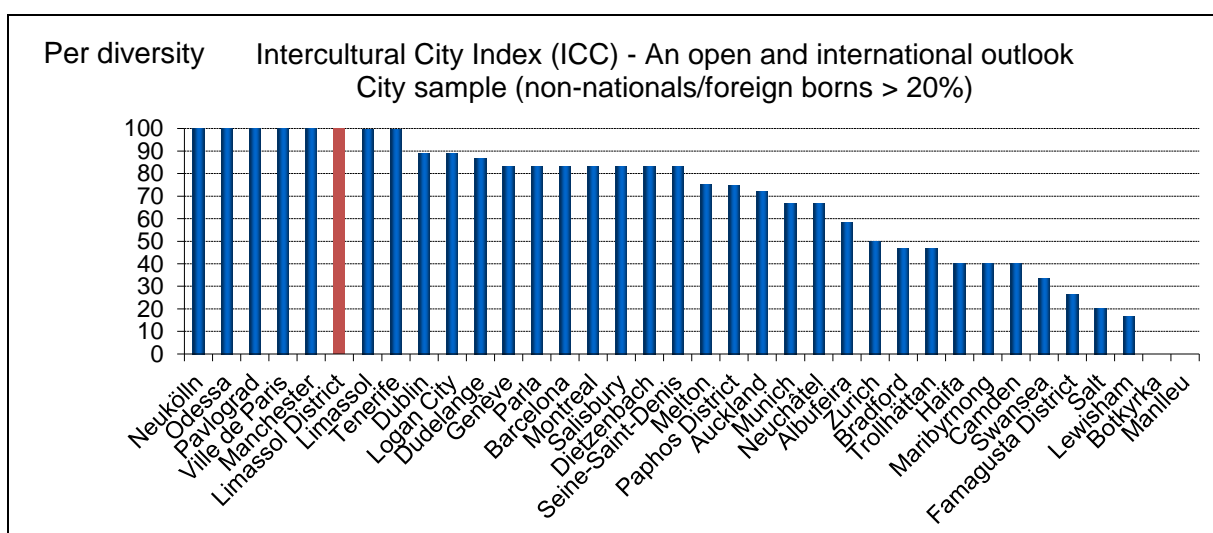
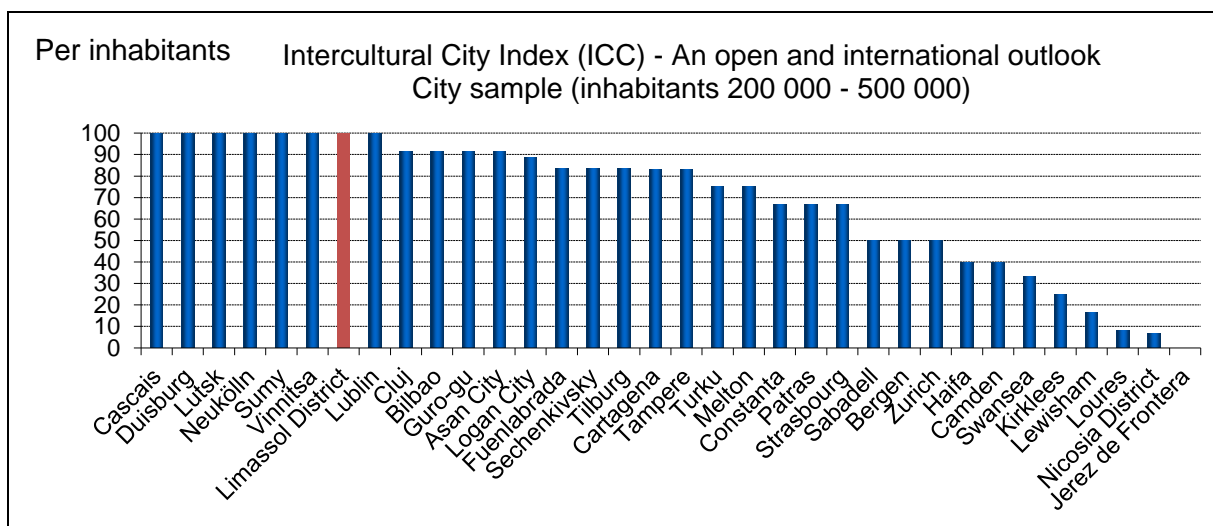
ICC programme resources on communication and public awareness are available [here](#).

INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

Although cities have little or no competence in foreign policy, they can actively seek to make connections in other countries to develop business relations, exchange knowledge and know-how, encourage tourism, or simply acknowledge the ties the city may have elsewhere. An intercultural city actively encourages interactions with the outside world and in particular with the cities, regions or countries of origin of its inhabitants.

³ Reference terms specifically used in the UK context. This footnote is also applicable for the rest of the document, each time these reference terms are used.

Limassol obtained a score of 100%, which is higher than the city sample's average rate of 68% and also the highest possible result.



Limassol has an explicit and sustainable policy to encourage international cooperation across economic, scientific, cultural, and other areas. The [Integrated Limassol Development Plan 2021-2027](#) outlines numerous actions to foster international collaborations, including priority fields such as economic development, cultural exchange, and scientific research. Limassol's institutions, such as the Cyprus University of Technology and the University of Limassol, are strong drivers of international scientific collaboration. A notable example is the [Eratosthenes Centre of Excellence](#), which promotes research and innovation through international partnerships.

A specific financial provision supports Limassol's international cooperation policies. Additionally, Limassol takes active measures to strengthen its global connections. The city maintains a network of twinned cities that enhance economic, social, and cultural cooperation. In 2022, a dedicated staff position for international cooperation was established to develop new collaborations and strengthen ties with existing twinned cities. Limassol is also represented in economic organisations such as the Limassol Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Cyprus International Business Association (CIBA), and the Business and Professional Women (BPW) Cyprus, which drive international economic partnerships.

Limassol actively engages with foreign students and youth arriving through exchange programs. The Intercultural Students Network – [Running Fluent Initiative](#) organises cultural and sports activities in collaboration with the Limassol Intercultural Council and Network to help integrate foreign students into the local community.

The city also develops business relations with countries and cities of origin of its diaspora groups. Through the Cyprus International Business Association and the Limassol Chamber of Commerce, numerous bilateral agreements are maintained.

Suggestions

Although its excellent work in this area, it could be always inspiring to discover what other cities are doing in this area.

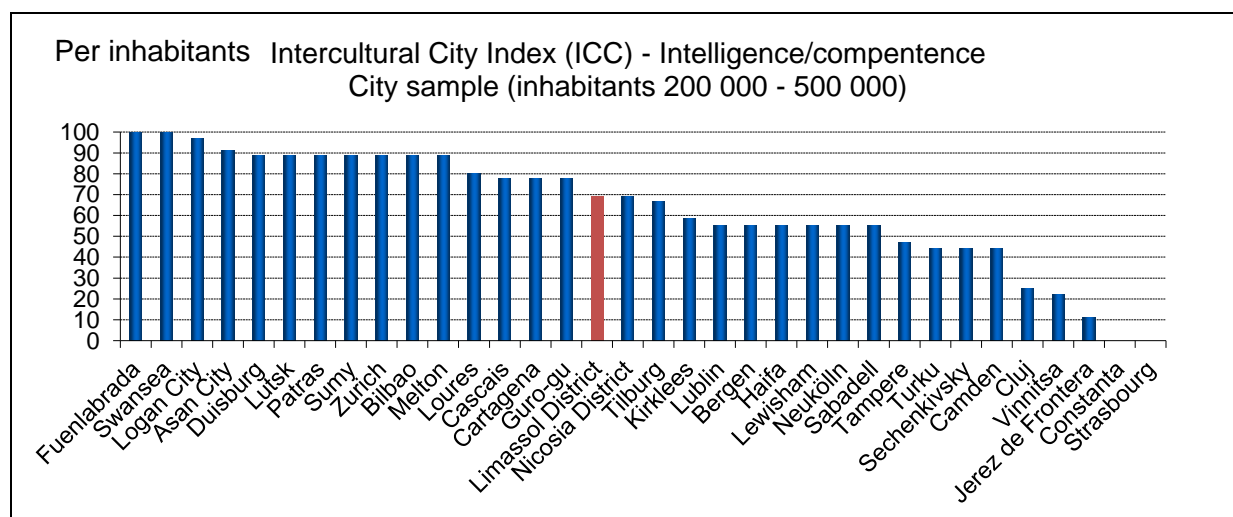
For example, Tampere (Finland) has developed a systematic network of [Tampere Ambassadors](#) comprising internationally renowned researchers, pioneers in business, visible cultural actors, and international experts from various fields. These ambassadors promote Tampere as an ideal location for living, studying, investing, starting businesses, and hosting events and conferences. Their goal is to support Tampere's internationalisation initiatives by utilising their expertise and networks.

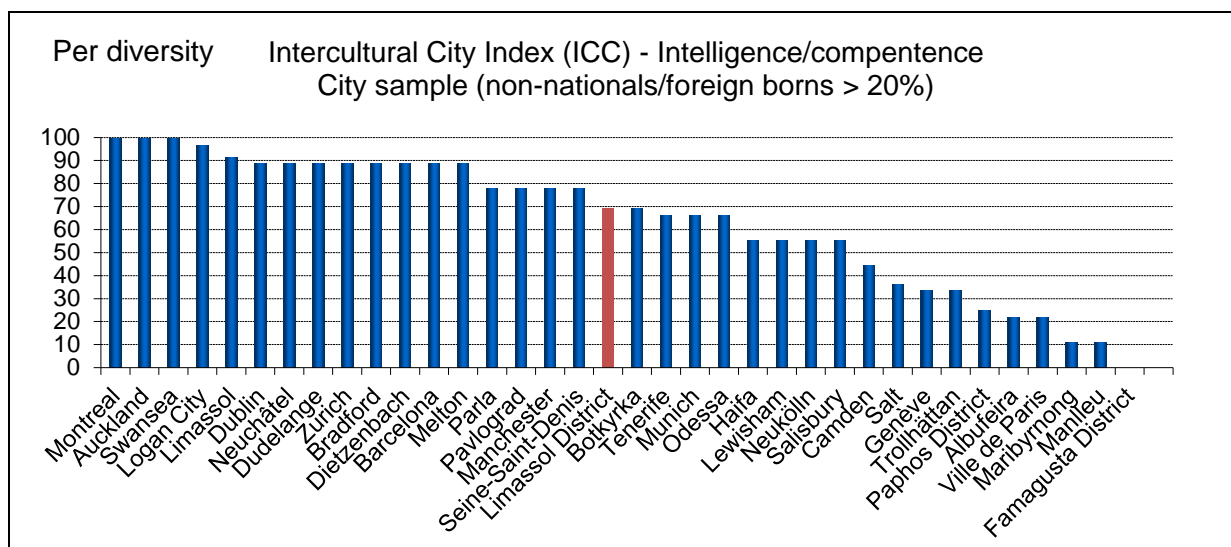
In Cascais (Portugal), the city encourages social and cultural harmonization through twinning, agreements and cooperation protocols which promote local development based on the sharing of knowledge and experiences. The activities carried out teach respect for diversities and stress the importance of unity. The municipality of Cascais created bridges between the various economic, cultural and social realities, with a view to revitalizing a new model of international relations in this century. Moreover, Cascais, through events and programmes, strengthened the connection between Portugal and Morocco, through a cooperation agreement. The purpose of this agreement is to use existing structures in the Cascais Municipal Council to support, whenever possible, the AALM (Associação de Amizade Luso-Marroquina) initiatives organised in the municipality of Cascais. Especially: the promotion of the culture of Morocco; provide Portuguese language and culture lessons; share Moroccan culture through art or photography exhibitions, literary works, etc.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE

Nobody can be an expert in all the languages and cultures that coexist in contemporary cities. Yet, in an intercultural city, officials have an intercultural “mind-set” which enables them to detect cultural differences and modulate their responses accordingly. Intercultural intelligence and competence require a specific know-how when dealing with unfamiliar situations and not an in-depth and often elusive knowledge of all cultures. Such sensitivity and self-confidence are not commonly-seen. It is a technical skill which can be acquired through training and practice. In an intercultural city, the authorities view such skills as equally important and essential to the good functioning of the city as the other professional and technical skills usually expected from public employees.

Limassol achieved a rate of 69%, slightly surpassing the city sample's average score of 59% but falling short of the 91% recorded in the 2022 ICC Index.





Statistical and qualitative information about diversity and intercultural relations is sometimes mainstreamed to inform Limassol’s municipal policy formulation processes. While Limassol municipalities do not have specialised internal instruments to monitor diversity, they are regularly informed by private and civic sector stakeholders. A notable example is the [Social Cohesion Survey](#), conducted in 2024 by the Council of Europe and EU joint project⁴ funded by the EU, which provides valuable insights on diversity and social cohesion issues.

Limassol also participates in surveys addressing public perceptions of migrants and minorities. For instance, the European Social Survey, conducted at the national level by the [University of Cyprus](#), revealed significant trends in public attitudes. However, the city does not carry out surveys on the feeling of security or safety concerning migrants and minority groups. This remains an area for future improvement.

Limassol actively promotes the intercultural competence of its officials and staff through participation in interdisciplinary seminars and networks. As a member of the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC), the European Migration Network, and through its involvement in AMIF and CERV-funded projects, Limassol benefits from training and intercultural capacity-building opportunities. One such initiative includes the [Empower Women Project](#), which focuses on building intercultural skills and inclusive practices.

Suggestions

To develop evidence-based policies, municipalities in the Limassol District could consider collaborating with the private sector, national authorities, and existing local and national civil society organisations, while also tapping into funding opportunities offered by EU programs. Additionally, municipalities might explore joint initiatives to share the costs associated with conducting such research.

In Botkyrka (Sweden), the “Intercultural Dilemma” methodology that was developed in the same city. The methodology is primarily designed to identify individual and structural practices that prevent or, on the contrary, facilitate an intercultural approach on the part of employees. Participants are invited to describe real situations that have posed a challenge from an intercultural point of view. Half of the audience describes a situation that occurred at the individual level, while the other half addresses a situation where the structural conditions for an intercultural approach were lacking. Proposals on how to solve the problems are then presented and analysed by different groups, and a final debate is held to draw conclusions.

Regarding intercultural training, it could be interesting to check different experiences. [Montreal](#) (Canada) has developed and provided an interesting training initiative on intercultural communication in the workplace. This

⁴ “Enhancing structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus” was co-funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument, and co-funded and implemented by the Council of Europe, in cooperation with the European Commission.

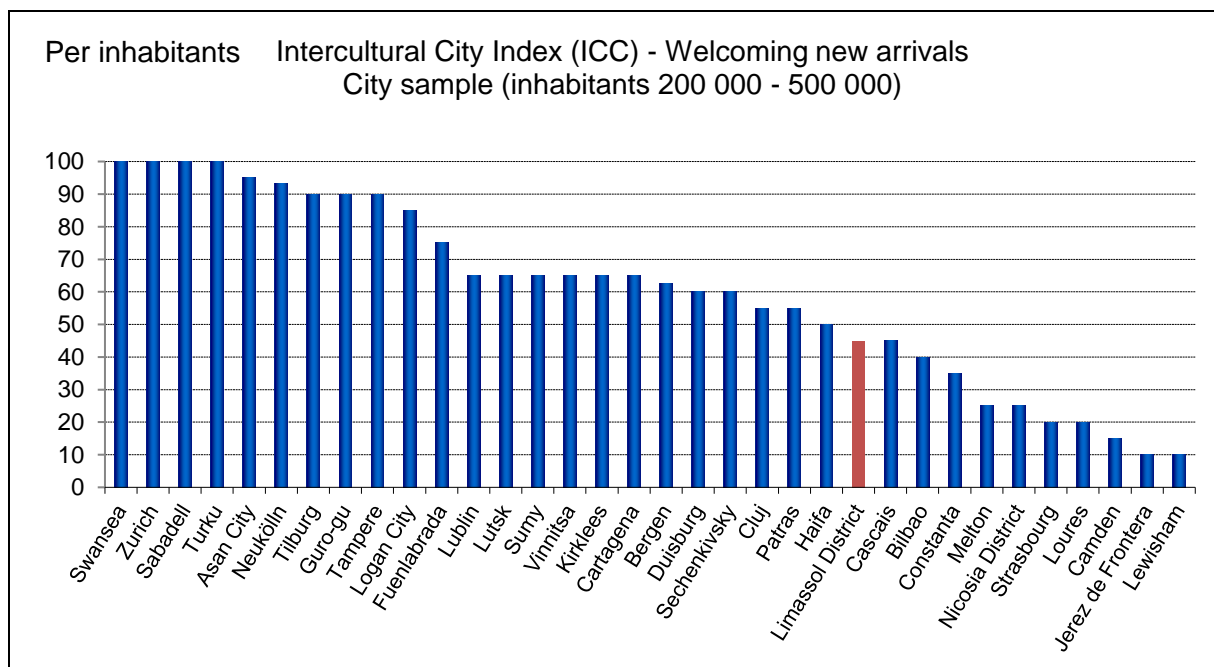
explores obstacles to efficient intercultural communication in the workplace; how people perceive others and themselves in an intercultural setting; cultural diversity in the workplace and the factors behind certain behaviours; and develops skills and attitudes which foster co-operation. A reference document on intercultural skills is also being developed. Likewise, the [Inclusive Auckland Framework](#) developed in the Australian city of Auckland includes a focus on promoting intercultural competence to create inclusive workplaces and to enable leadership for inclusion. This includes anti-racism workshops and eLearning resources on unconscious bias. Finally, [Reykjavik](#) (Iceland) has designed a specific training course for city employees to prevent misunderstandings in a diverse workplace and to open up a dialogue about discrimination, equality, prejudice, and stereotypes. All city departments are targeted. It is specifically workplace oriented in its focus.

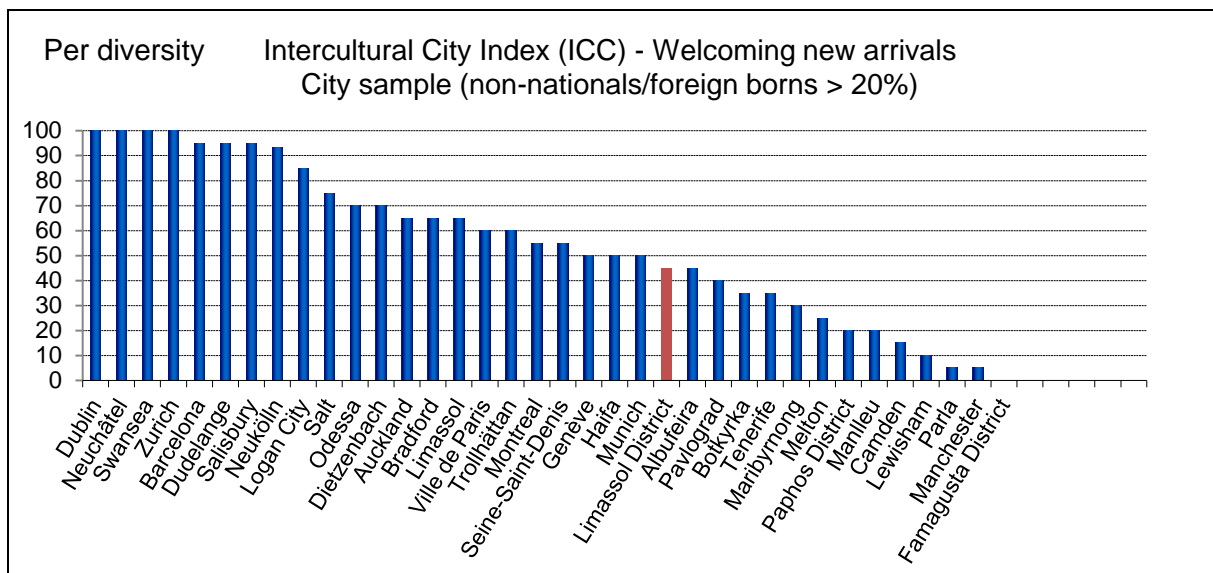
ICC programme resources on intercultural competence are also available [here](#).

WELCOMING NEWCOMERS

People arriving in a city for an extended stay, whatever their circumstances (expats, migrant workers, spouses, refugees, unaccompanied minors, retired persons, etc.), are likely find themselves disorientated. The less familiar they are with the new environment, the more support they will need to feel comfortable and confident enough to start building a new social and professional network. The way in which the city coordinates and effectively delivers various support measures strongly conditions their capacity to integrate or, conversely, their tendency to remain confined to a cultural “ghetto”. This also depends to a great degree on whether the rest of the city’s population is open to the idea of welcoming newcomers in their capacity as residents and citizens or, on the contrary, is accustomed to viewing newcomers as outsiders who pose a potential threat. Again, it is the message the authorities convey on diversity, in communication or through concrete actions, that determines to a certain degree attitudes towards newcomers.

Limassol achieved a rate of 45%, lower than the city sample’s achievement rate of 65%. It is also lower than the ICC Index results for the district in 2022, which stood at 65%.





Limassol does not have a designated agency, unit, person, or procedure specifically tasked with welcoming newcomers. However, the city provides a comprehensive city-specific package of information and support for newcomers, prepared in collaboration with international, national, and civic sector stakeholders. These resources include step-by-step guides, practical information, and support services available in multiple languages through platforms such as the [Navigating the Cyprus Migration Department](#), [UNHCR Cyprus Help Page](#) and [Cyprus Refugee Council Projects](#)

Different city services and agencies provide welcome support tailored for specific groups of newcomers. The [Social Programmes Department](#) of Limassol Municipality offers a wide range of social services for migrant communities, including refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and migrant workers. These programs aim to provide essential support for integration into the local community.

Limassol does not organise a public ceremony to greet newcomers, regardless of their origin or nationality.

Suggestions

There are some actions that the District of Limassol can take to provide town-specific information to newcomers which can boost social cohesion and sense of welcoming for the newly arrived population.

The Portuguese city of Amadora, with the Portuguese Network of Intercultural Cities (RPCI), has developed an app called Portugal Incoming. The app launched in 2019 is a major practical contribution to the integration of migrants in Portugal, bringing all relevant information on how to navigate the Portuguese services and bureaucracy, as well as access to information about cultural and social events into one place. The app is constantly updated and is available in several languages. The information has also been gathered into a guide. In addition, a guide for practitioners on how to conduct welcoming sessions has been developed, together with a matrix for the creation of municipal integration plans and strategies.

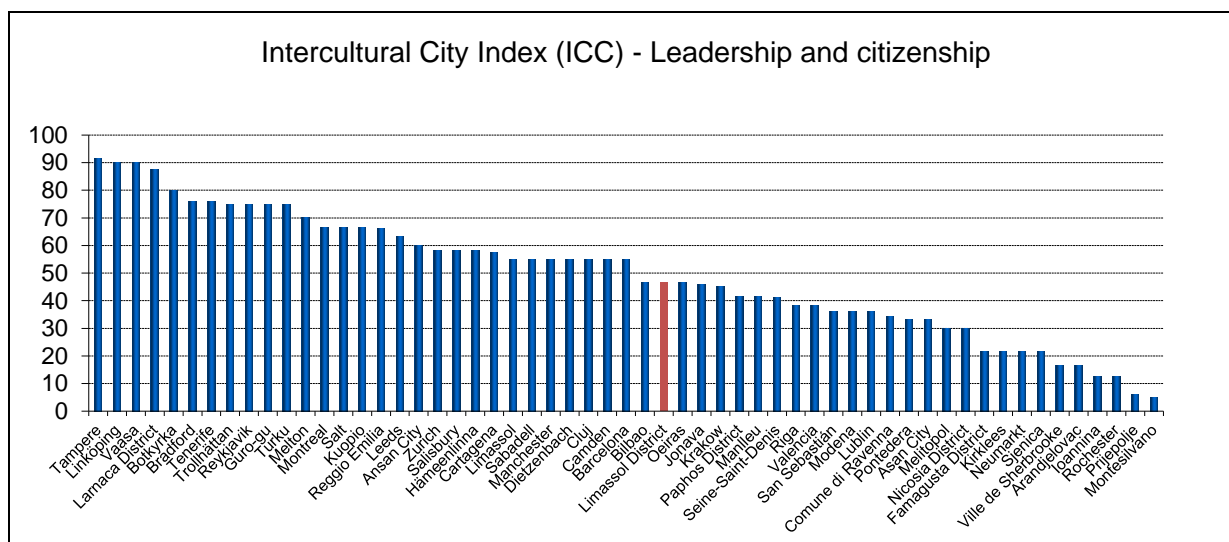
Neumarkt (Germany) offers an annual reception, and all newcomers are invited four times per year. Welcome packs and the reception address all aspects of city life including sustainability, fair trade and integration. Surveys are conducted for feedback as to why people move to Neumarkt and the city enjoys hearing the stories of new arrivals. Information materials are also provided to newcomers including flyers on the community centre; free time offers; the city newsletter with all the programmes at the community centre; school and education information; and the sustainability strategy. There is also information on support for older newcomers from the Genial/genius club who help older people live for longer in their own house. After the reception there is a 1.5-hour tour of the town and a small meeting in the Bürgerhaus with snacks.

ICC programme resources on welcoming policies are also available [here](#).

LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP

The most powerful and far-reaching action a city can take to be more intercultural is to open up democratic representation and decision-making to all residents of the city irrespective of their origin, nationality or residence status. Formal political rights at the local level are determined nationally or at the regional level in some federal states. Nonetheless, there is much that a city council can do to influence the way in which diverse groups interact and co-operate around the allocation of power and resources. An intercultural city strives to include all residents in the policy-making process and ensures thereby that public services are provided according to their diverse needs and not according to their cultural or political proximity to public decision-makers.

Limassol achieved a rate of 63, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 50.



In Limassol, foreign nationals from EU member states can stand as candidates and vote in local elections, provided they have duly registered their residence in Cyprus. However, non-EU nationals are excluded from this right, limiting full political participation to EU citizens only.

While there are elected members in the municipal council who are foreign-born or hold dual nationality, they are primarily of Greek-Cypriot origin who were born in other countries and later returned to Cyprus.

Limassol has an independent consultative body, the [Limassol Intercultural Council/Network](#), established in 2017. It includes representatives from civil society organisations (CSOs), municipal representatives, labour unions, businesses, UNHCR, and academia. Symbolically chaired by the Mayor of Limassol, this council plays a significant role in advising on diversity and integration matters and influencing local policies.

There is currently no standard for the representation of people with migrant or minority backgrounds on mandatory boards supervising schools and/or public services.

The city's efforts to encourage political engagement among people with migrant or minority backgrounds have been inconsistent. Between 2016 and July 2024, an observer for intercultural policies served as the Deputy Mayor. However, due to changes in legislation, this position has not yet been re-established.

Suggestions

In this area, the work of others ICC cities can always provide inspiration to take forward new initiatives.

An example to draw inspiration from is the Multicultural Ambassadors' Program (MAP) developed in Ballarat (Australia). It has established to provide leadership within the migrant community, by encouraging minorities to participate in the political life of the city. The programme aims to enhance community awareness while fostering social cohesion and mutual acceptance.

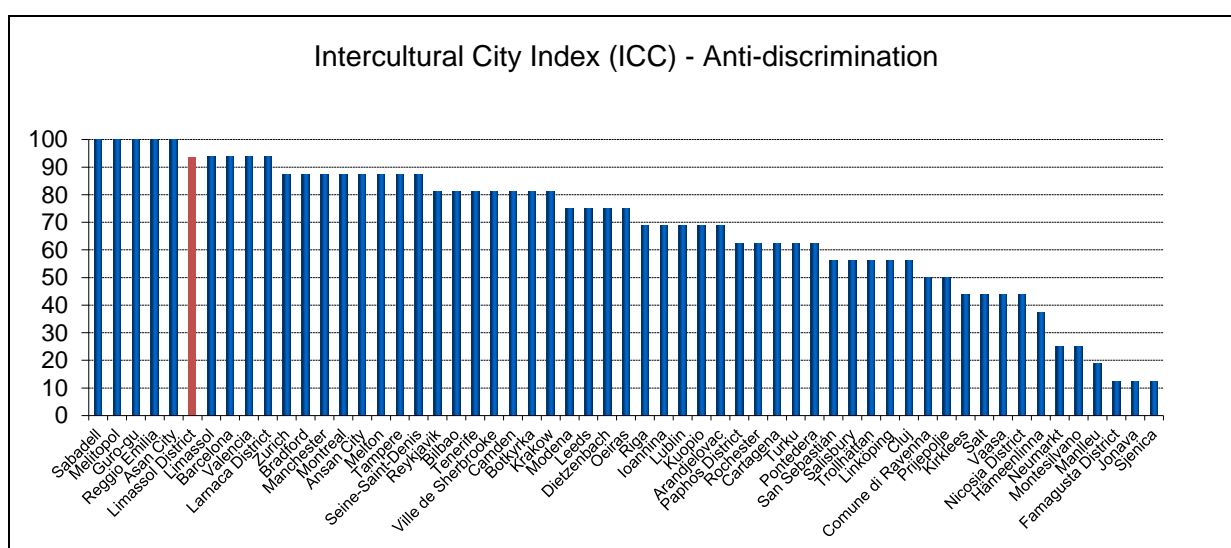
The city of Barcelona’s (Spain) “[Measure to promote the participation of people with diverse cultural and native backgrounds in Barcelona participation areas](#)” can also be of inspiration. The primary goal of this Government Measure in Barcelona is to foster active citizenship by enabling participation for all city inhabitants, with a focus on including individuals from diverse cultural and native backgrounds in various decision-making and participation channels. Developed in response to barriers rooted in cultural power dynamics, the measure addresses the underrepresentation of traditionally excluded populations. It stems from a 2016 working group involving cultural and religious entities, which provided insights and strategies to integrate these groups into the city’s policies and participation mechanisms.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available [here](#).

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

Racism, xenophobia, homophobia, intolerance against certain religious groups, gender discrimination, prejudice and ethnocentrism, are all conducive to discriminatory attitudes and practices. They often subsist in people’s minds despite laws proscribing discrimination against persons or groups of persons on grounds of race, colour, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin or sexual orientation. An intercultural city assures every effort is made to ensure non-discrimination in all of its policies, programmes and activities. The city works in partnership with civil society organisations and other institutions that combat discrimination and offer support and reparation to victims. It also communicates widely on the risks discrimination presents for social cohesion, quality of life and the local economy.

Indicators on anti-discrimination have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 57 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Limassol’s rate of achievement in the field of anti-discrimination is 94%.



Limassol has not yet conducted a systematic review of all municipal rules and regulations to identify mechanisms that may discriminate against residents with migrant or minority backgrounds. However, the city strictly adheres to national and EU regulations on equality issues, ensuring that all policies and services comply with established principles regarding gender equality, LGBTIQ+ rights, migrants, and persons with disabilities.

The city operates under a binding national framework that prohibits discrimination based on race, color, language, religion, nationality, national/ethnic origin, or sexual orientation. These provisions are embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, and all entities operating in Cyprus must comply. Public institutions such as the

[Ombudsman Office](#), the [Gender Equality Commissioner](#), and the [Commissioner for the Rights of Children](#) address discrimination-related concerns and actively intervene in public discussions when needed.

Limassol has a dedicated service to advise and support victims of discrimination, although it operates within the framework of national bodies such as the Ombudsman Office and other state services mentioned above. While the city does not provide direct financial support to civil society organisations, it often participates in joint [EU-funded projects](#) to indirectly support initiatives targeting victims of discrimination.

Limassol does not conduct regular monitoring or research on discrimination itself but relies on public organisations and private entities that conduct such studies, often as part of EU-funded projects.

The city actively runs anti-discrimination campaigns, such as anti-rumour activities embedded into cultural events. One example is the [Musical Footprints Festival](#), an intercultural event running since 2008, including its 2024 edition, which raises awareness about diversity and combats stereotypes. Limassol participates in regional and national organisations addressing discrimination, including the Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC) and the European Migration Network Cyprus. Furthermore, the city implements anti-rumour activities following the Council of Europe's official methodology.

Suggestions

In order to fight discrimination, the city of Modena (Italy) has set up the "Anti-Discrimination Listening Point", which is part of the municipality. This service is open for everyone who is experiencing discriminatory acts based on language, ethnic or social origin, geographical origin, sexual orientation, skin colour, age, political orientation, beliefs, religious practices, or handicaps. Operators listen to complaints, help to activate relevant resources, offer guidance, and accompanies them on the most effective path to protect their rights. The service offers consultancy interviews, guidance, and accompaniment to other services, including prevention activities through pathways in schools. The city also has several centres and associations which deal with the issue of discrimination and gender-based violence. The city provides financial and/or logistical support to civil society organisations that advise and support victims of discrimination. However, it does not regularly monitor or research the extent and character of discrimination in the city, leaving this work to be done by a private organisation supported by the city.

In Swansea (United Kingdom), the city run the Think Project. This is an educational programme aimed at individuals with a higher risk of far-right extremism, implemented in the framework of three-day courses, participants were encouraged to discuss and reflect on diversity issues and their own attitudes and views, engaging in open dialogue as well as experiential learning. The Think Project employed a non-criminalising approach, listening to their concerns and exploring the experience and information underlying their negative attitudes. After the course, participants were encouraged to engage in intercultural interaction. The project has proven to be able to transform young peoples' worldviews and thinking about diversity and societal change.

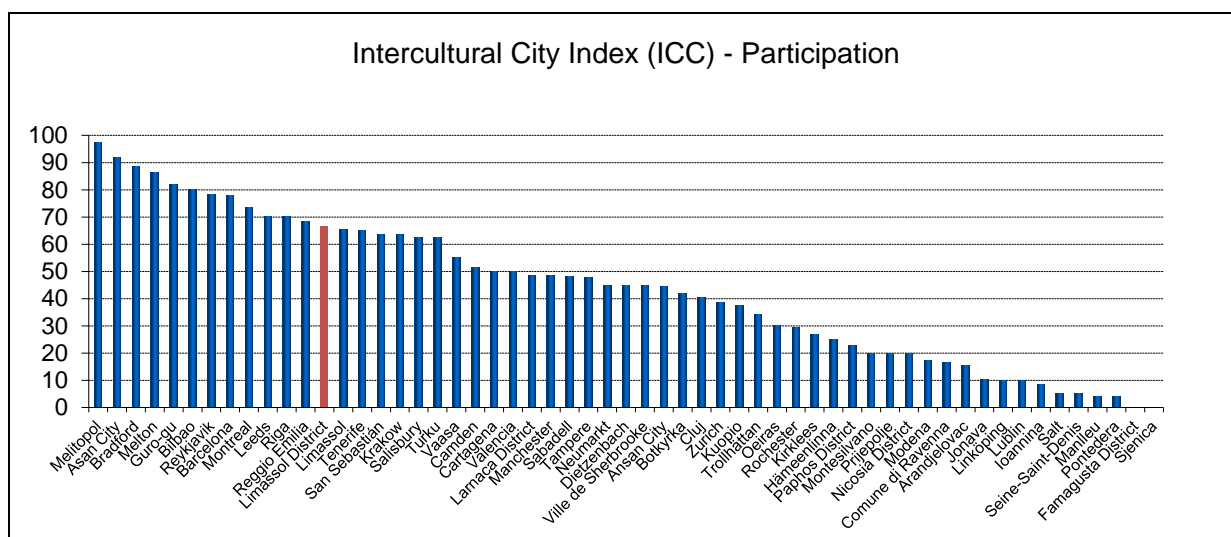
ICC programme resources on systemic discrimination are also available [here](#) and resources on anti-rumours are available [here](#).

PARTICIPATION

Inclusion, power-sharing and participation are the golden keys of intercultural policy-making. A range of studies have demonstrated that inclusive integration policies produce better outcomes in terms of social cohesion, trust in the administration, safety, quality of services, welfare, good governance and economic growth. People with different backgrounds and experiences can bring innovative solutions to common challenges, as well as anticipate problems that might arise. Conversely, when people encounter barriers to participation, or otherwise choose intentionally not to participate, they may, passively, withdraw from social and public life or choose, actively, to live outside prevailing social customs and law. An intercultural city actively seeks the participation of all residents in the various decision-making processes that affect life in the city. By doing so, it increases support, and thereby the sustainability of local policies, while at the same significantly reducing the economic costs of social exclusion and

instability.

Indicators on participation have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 55 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Limassol's rate of achievement in the field of participation is 67%



Limassol's [intercultural integration strategy](#) and action plan were developed through a consultation process that included people with migrant and minority backgrounds. Following the implementation of its Intercultural Strategy 2018-2020, Limassol has moved forward with a second intercultural strategy, which covers the district and includes a comprehensive action plan. The preparation of a district strategy and many activities have been implemented under the "Enhancing structures and policies for intercultural integration in Cyprus" project, which is co-funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe. This process ensured active engagement with migrant organisations and community leaders, with their views and contributions taken into account throughout the development phases.

Limassol has introduced participatory mechanisms beyond voting rights or consultative bodies to allow all residents, including those with migrant or minority backgrounds, to participate equally in decision-making processes. Mechanisms include public participation networks such as the [Intercultural Network](#) and platforms for intercultural dialogue like those fostered through the [Lemesos 2030](#) initiative.

While Limassol does not yet have a formal tool to monitor participation of residents with migrant or minority backgrounds in decision-making processes, the city is actively working on developing such a monitoring mechanism.

The city takes action to ensure that residents with migrant or minority backgrounds are represented in key institutions and organisations, particularly in public service organisations and trade union boards. However, efforts are still underway to improve representation on school boards, work councils, and other institutions.

Limassol has not yet introduced mechanisms to ensure gender equality in organisations that participate in decision-making on matters related to migrant or minority inclusion. However, the city is seriously considering actions to address this, including measures to promote gender-balanced representation.

Suggestions

Some inspiring examples to kickstart actions in the field of participation could be the city of Vienna (Austria). The Vienna Diversity Monitor is a comprehensive report issued tri-annually to assess the city's integration processes and diversity policies. It encompasses eight areas, sixty indicators, and eleven benchmarks aimed at identifying

structural and systemic factors contributing to inequality related to migration status and/or ethnic origin. Drawing from existing statistical sources, the monitor includes all residents registered in Vienna for over three months in its statistics. The findings from the monitor inform policy decisions, particularly in addressing obstacles to integration highlighted in the report, such as restricted work permits, access to public housing, and voting rights. Notably, the monitor revealed that 27% of eligible Viennese residents above 16 are excluded from voting due to legal restrictions on third-country nationals' voting rights and a restrictive naturalization regime. To promote political participation among non-citizens, Vienna introduced petition rights independent of nationality in 2013.

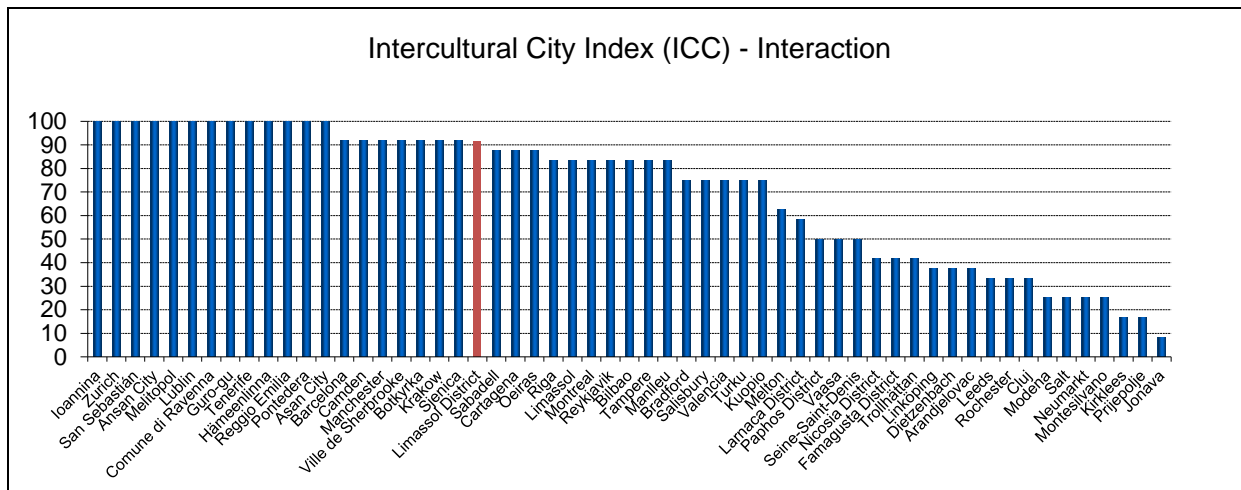
The city of Sabadell (Spain) has taken several measures to guarantee that gender equality is well represented in organisations that work with the municipality and participate in the decision-making on issues related to the reception and inclusion of migrants and ethnic minorities. The Gender Plan 2018-2022 addresses these issues in axes 3 and 4 on 'Diversity and Intersectionality' and 'Visibility and Social and Political Participation'. These axes contemplate different lines of action that include the empowerment of migrated and Roma women and the promotion of their associative activity; as well as the diversification of the participants in the different spaces of participation and decision making incorporating the intersectional perspective. The "Espai Dones" (Women's Space) programme has been launched in different neighbourhoods of the city, to provide personal tools to women and to create links within the community. The program offers relational learning spaces located in different parts of the city and activities focused on topics related to the physical and mental health of the participants (knowledge of the environment, female health, personal growth, women's rights, sexist violence, etc.). The Espai Dones also offers to foreign women with little command of the language, the opportunity to participate in activities in the neighbourhood and the city.

ICC programme resources on political and public participation are also available [here](#).

INTERACTION

Interaction between people of all kinds is what gives the intercultural city its distinctive value. Identity is not 'given' in a passive sense, but something which is 'enacted' and defined through interaction. In spite of protective laws, prejudice and discrimination can thrive where there is segregation or a lack of contact and dialogue between people. There is ample evidence to prove that, under certain conditions, the more contact people with different backgrounds and lifestyles have with each other, the less likely they are to think and behave in prejudicial ways. Therefore, an intercultural city develops, in partnership with other organisations, a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups.

Indicators on interaction have been included in the Intercultural Cities Index in 2019. The data collected so far is not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 55 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Limassol's rate of achievement in the field of interaction is 92%.



Limassol maintains a list/database of civil society and grassroots organisations active in intercultural inclusion through platforms such as Lemesos 2030 and the Intercultural Network/Council. This database is continuously updated to include stakeholders irrespective of their formal status; however, it is not available to the public and can only be accessed upon request.

The city actively collaborates with civil society and grassroots organisations by holding regular meetings with the Intercultural Network/Council. These meetings take place twice a year to discuss intercultural inclusion policies, share updates, and coordinate initiatives. The last meeting was held on 26 March 2024, with the next one planned for the end of November 2024.

Teachers in elementary and primary schools receive training in intercultural communication and pedagogy as part of a mandatory national lifelong learning process. The training is facilitated through the [Pedagogical Institute](#), which provides tools, resources, and multilingual teaching materials in Greek, Georgian, Turkish, Ukrainian, Russian, and Arabic. These resources equip teachers to address the diverse needs of students and foster inclusive learning environments.

Suggestions

Examples from other cities can still serve as inspiration and help strengthen the positive efforts that are already underway.

In Hämeenlinna (Finland) the database of civil society and grassroots organisations that work in intercultural inclusion topics is permanently updated and public. The list is an appendix of the [integration programme](#) of the city.

In Botkyrka (Sweden), anti-rumour cafés have been established in libraries as a public platform to address and challenge rumours and prejudices. Libraries were selected due to their popularity among young people aged 18-25 years old. Four anti-rumour cafés were set up, each focusing on a specific rumour theme. The initial theme centered around "Criminality," which was the most prevalent rumour theme in Botkyrka. This was followed by cafés focusing on themes such as the "Incompatibility of Swedish and immigrant cultures," "Unequal distribution of public resources," and "Swedish culture is under threat." The café addressing the rumour that "Swedish culture is under threat" garnered significant attention, particularly in light of the political situation in Sweden in 2014, when the populist party, Swedish Democrats, experienced a surge in popularity. The primary goal of each café was to encourage discussions about rumours that people often feel uncomfortable addressing.

ICC programme resources on anti-rumours are also available [here](#) and resources on intercultural competence and mediation are available [here](#).

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Limassol District has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 69 (out of 100 possible points). This is a good step of Limassol on its intercultural journey. The district achieved particularly good scores in several areas, but there is room for improvement from the intercultural perspective in others. The following table gives more information on what Limassol District does well and areas it could learn more from the experience of other cities.

COMMITMENT	✓	Limassol District has formally adopted a public statement, an intercultural integration strategy, and an action plan. It has allocated a budget, established a dedicated coordination structure, and implemented an evaluation and updating process for the strategy
	✗	The district does not have a formal policy for consultation and co-design, lacks systematic references to intercultural commitment in official communications, has no official webpage for its strategy, and does not have a system to acknowledge contributions to interculturalism.
EDUCATION	✓	In Limassol District, schools reflect a diverse student body, where children of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds learn together. Schools actively involve parents with migrant and minority backgrounds through different, and intercultural projects are regularly carried out.
	✗	The ethnic and cultural background of teachers does not reflect the city's diversity, and there is no formal local policy to address ethnic concentration in schools, though social programmes aim to mitigate this challenge.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✓	Most neighbourhoods in Limassol are culturally and ethnically diverse. Limassol actively promotes interaction between residents of different neighbourhoods.
	✗	There is no formal policy to address ethnic concentration.
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓	Limassol encourages diversity and intercultural competence in the private sector, collaborating with different stakeholders to promote cultural diversity as an economic advantage.
	✗	In the district, public employees with migrant/minority backgrounds are represented only at lower levels of the administration, and there is no formal recruitment plan to address this gap. The city does not provide services like funeral/burial arrangements, school meals, etc.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✓	Limassol District benefits from regional and national initiatives to promote diversity and inclusion in the labour market. The city's <i>Comprehensive Strategy</i> aims to support SMEs and attract start-ups, integrating an intercultural approach to entrepreneurship.
	✗	Limassol does not favour companies with an intercultural inclusion strategy in municipal procurement decision.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	Limassol integrates interculturalism when allocating funds. The city regularly organises events in arts, culture, and sports. Public debates and campaigns on cultural diversity are organised.
	✗	Interculturalism is used as a criterion for funding cultural activities mainly related to the European Capital of Culture of 2030: interculturalism should become a standard criterion in all grant allocations.

PUBLIC SPACE	✓	Limassol encourages intercultural interaction in public spaces. The city considers diversity in the design and management of public spaces by involving citizens.
	✗	There is no systematic policy to address all spaces dominated by single ethnic groups, and issues like ghettoization remain limited
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓	No intercultural mediation or conflict resolution mechanisms are currently implemented. Intercultural mediation in Limassol is provided through a regional/state-run service. Mediation occurs in specialized institutions such as youth clubs and police services, and in neighbourhoods.
	✗	For inter-religious relations, Limassol does not have a dedicated municipal service.
LANGUAGE	✓	Limassol offers specific language training in different languages. The district raises awareness of migrant/minority languages by supporting media and promotes a positive image of migrant languages in different events.
	✗	There is a lack of TV programming in migrant/minority languages.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✓	Limassol takes occasional actions to improve the improve the visibility of migrants in the district. The municipal website has English and Russian versions.
	✗	The city's PR department does not consistently highlight diversity as an advantage, nor does it provide support for advocacy, media training, or mentorship for journalists from migrant backgrounds. Limassol does not monitor traditional or social media for the portrayal of migrants and minority groups and does not engage with media when negative stereotypes arise.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓	Limassol has an explicit policy for international cooperation, supported by the Integrated Limassol Development Plan 2021-2027. The city has a financial provision for this policy and actively builds international connections through twinning agreements and economic organisations. Limassol engages with foreign students through different initiatives and develops business relations with diaspora-origin countries.
	✗	Limassol District achieved a 100% score in this area.
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	✓	Statistical and qualitative information about diversity in Limassol is sometimes used to inform policy formulation. The city conducts surveys on public perceptions of migrants. Limassol promotes intercultural competence among officials through interdisciplinary seminars and networks.
	✗	Limassol does not have specialized internal instruments to systematically monitor diversity and intercultural relations, does not conduct surveys on the feeling of safety or security related to migrants and minority groups, and does not provide structured intercultural training courses for its officials and staff.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	Limassol provides a comprehensive information package prepared by international and civic stakeholders. The district services offer welcome support for specific groups, such as refugees, asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors, and migrant workers
	✗	Limassol does not have a designated agency or procedure to welcome newcomers. The district does not organise a public ceremony to greet newcomers to the city.

LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓	Limassol has an Intercultural Council/Network which advises on diversity and integration policies. Elected members in the municipal council include foreign-born individuals, though they are primarily of Greek-Cypriot origin.
	✗	Limassol encouraged political engagement in the past. There is no standard for the representation of migrants/minorities on supervisory boards of schools or public services
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	✓	The city has a dedicated service to advise victims of discrimination but does not provide direct financial support to civil society organisations. The city regularly runs anti-rumour campaigns.
	✗	Limassol has not yet conducted a systematic review of municipal rules to identify discriminatory mechanisms, does not directly finance civil society organisations supporting victims of discrimination, and does not monitor discrimination independently.
PARTICIPATION	✓	Limassol's intercultural integration strategy and action plan were developed through a consultation process that included migrant and minority community inputs. The city has introduced public participation networks and intercultural dialogue platforms.
	✗	Limassol does not yet monitor migrant participation in decision-making processes, lacks mechanisms to ensure gender equality in inclusion-related bodies, and has limited representation of migrants on school boards and work councils.
INTERACTION	✓	Limassol has a list/database of civil society and grassroots organisations, which is regularly updated but not publicly accessible. The city collaborates regularly with organisations. Teachers in public elementary schools receive mandatory intercultural communication training at the national level.
	✗	Limassol does not make its list of civil society and grassroots organisations publicly accessible.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate Limassol District for the efforts taken and we are confident that if the city reflects more on its different areas of work and what it is already doing, as well as follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices, the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

When it comes to intercultural efforts, with reference to the survey, Limassol District could enhance the sectors below by introducing different initiatives:

Commitment: While Limassol District has adopted key measures, including a strategy, action plan, and coordination structure, it should establish a formal policy for consultation and co-design with diverse groups. Developing an official webpage, enhancing intercultural messaging in communications, and creating a system to acknowledge contributions to interculturalism would improve visibility, inclusivity, and community engagement.

Education: Limassol could address the lack of teacher diversity and the absence of a formal policy to encourage ethnic mixing in schools by introducing targeted initiatives. Additionally, Limassol could consider introducing policies to encourage greater ethnic and cultural mixing in schools.

Neighbourhoods: Limassol could develop a formal policy to address ethnic concentration.

Public Services: The district may wish to adopt a recruitment plan that reflects the diverse population in public administration. Initiatives to integrate intercultural competence training into public services and design inclusive facilities catering to all communities could also be beneficial.

Business and the Labour Market: Limassol should explore ways to encourage diversity in municipal procurement processes by learning from other ICC cities.

Cultural and Social Life: Limassol district should formalise its intercultural funding strategies into long-term policies, ensuring that interculturalism becomes a standard criterion in all grant allocations. Additionally, expanding campaigns and debates on diversity and inclusion to cover a wider range of themes would further enhance public engagement and foster social cohesion.

Public Space: The district should expand its efforts by ensuring intercultural design principles are systematically integrated into all public spaces and new projects. Additionally, the city could adopt participatory tools to engage marginalized groups more proactively in consultations, strengthening their involvement in urban planning processes.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution: Limassol could establish a dedicated intercultural mediation service at the municipal level. Additionally, the district could support local inter-religious initiatives.

Language: Limassol could expand its efforts by integrating migrant/minority languages into the regular school curriculum. Additionally, providing municipal-level support for TV and other media platforms in minority languages would ensure broader awareness and representation of the district's linguistic diversity.

Media and Communication: Limassol could establish a formal communication strategy to regularly highlight diversity as an asset and counter negative stereotypes. The district could provide media training for migrant-background journalists, setting up monitoring mechanisms for traditional and social media, and actively engaging with media outlets to challenge misrepresentations.

International Outlook: The district could provide further logistical support for initiatives connecting diaspora groups, students, and entrepreneurs to maximize their economic and cultural impact. The district could consider sharing some of its experiences in interaction with other ICC cities through the database.

Intercultural Intelligence and Competence: Limassol could introduce regular surveys to assess residents' perceptions of safety and security regarding migrants and minority groups. Additionally, the district could offer structured intercultural training courses for all municipal staff, including high-level personnel.

Welcoming Newcomers: Limassol could develop a comprehensive integration program to streamline welcoming services to include tailored programs for families, students, and workers. The municipalities in the district could establish a dedicated welcome unit and organise public ceremonies to greet newcomers.

Leadership and Citizenship: Limassol could establish representation standards for migrant/minority groups on supervisory boards, and reintroduce formal mechanisms, such as observer roles, to encourage their active political engagement.

Anti-Discrimination: Limassol could carry out a systematic review of municipal rules to identify discriminatory practices, establish its own monitoring system for discrimination, and provide direct financial support to civil society organisations that advise and assist victims.

Participation: The district could introduce formal monitoring tools to track migrant participation, establish gender equality mechanisms in decision-making processes, and expand representation of migrants and minorities in schools, work councils, and other key institutions.

Interaction: Limassol could consider making its list of civil society and grassroots organisations publicly accessible to improve transparency, enhance collaboration, and facilitate the engagement of new stakeholders in intercultural initiatives.

Limassol District may wish to consider further examples implemented by other Intercultural Cities as a source of learning and inspiration to guide future initiatives. Such examples are provided above for each sector as well as in the [Intercultural cities database](#).

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. A decade after the start of this work, there is growing evidence that diversity, when recognised and managed as a resource, produces 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.

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