



Draft Limassol District Intercultural Strategy

2023-2025

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I. Introduction

The development of this document was influenced by several key factors. These include the post-COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on social interaction, liberties, and human rights, and powers of municipalities, while the increase in the number of migrants and refugees due to political unrest in the region is also a factor.

The "[Building structures for inclusive integration in Cyprus](#)"¹ project implemented by the Intercultural Cities Programme and the European Commission’s Directorate General for Structural Reform Support, in partnership with the Civil Registry and Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior, is another key factor that influenced the development of this document. This project aims to promote inclusive and intercultural integration, and it provided a basis for national and local instances on intercultural integration.

The previous Intercultural Strategy of Limassol ended in 2020, and the current strategy document is intended to be a starting point for discussion and joint activities between the Intercultural Council of Limassol and the Regional Intercultural Network which includes the municipalities of Limassol District, and national authorities. This strategy builds upon the previous one and extends the actions to include the whole District of Limassol using the [Results of the Limassol District Intercultural Cities Index Analysis](#) as a guide.

II. General objectives

The general objective of the strategy is to promote diversity and harness the richness of different cultures and backgrounds in Limassol to create a prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive society. To achieve this objective, the strategy outlines a set of actions that include effective and sustainable management of diversity, creating opportunities for deep interaction and co-creation, empowering all members of the community to develop their potential, power-sharing in decision-making, fostering intercultural competence, embracing cultural pluralism and complexity of identities, developing inclusive narratives, and managing conflict positively.

Through these actions, the strategy aims to create an environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated, and people of different cultural origins and backgrounds can come together to build trust and realise their creative potential. The governance model is designed to empower all members of

¹ The “Building structures for intercultural integration in Cyprus” project is carried out with funding by the European Union via the Structural Reform Support Programme and in cooperation with the European Commission’s DG Structural Reform Support. The views expressed herein can in no way be taken to reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the Council of Europe.



the community, regardless of their origin or status, to contribute to local prosperity and participate in decision-making in urban institutions.

Fostering intercultural competence in public, private, and civil-society organisations is seen as critical to creating an inclusive society. This means that people from diverse backgrounds should be involved in leadership positions and decision-making processes. The strategy also recognises the need to embrace cultural pluralism and the complexity of identities through leadership discourse and symbolic actions. This involves developing inclusive narratives that celebrate diversity and fight stereotypes, while also managing conflict positively and engaging in a debate about the impact and potential of diversity for local development.

In summary, the strategy seeks to promote diversity as a source of strength and prosperity by empowering all members of the community, fostering intercultural competence, embracing cultural pluralism, developing inclusive narratives, and managing conflict positively.

III. Interaction

Objective:

- **In partnership with numerous local, national and international stakeholders, continue developing a range of policies and actions to encourage more mixing and interaction between diverse groups by: (i) actively seeking and maximizing the opportunities for diverse groups of citizens to come together, mix and interact in the public space, and (ii) Defining and involving stakeholders, places and issues that bring together residents over and above cultural differences (i.e. opening up the public spaces and cultural centres for celebrating all kinds of diverse holidays and events).**

Actions:

- 1. A public declaration from the municipalities that they support the strategy and look forward to implementing it together:**

The municipalities have to commit to working together to implement this strategy in a collaborative and effective manner. Achieving shared goals will require cooperation, coordination, and active engagement from all stakeholders.

- 2. Creation of a first contact centre for residents with the contribution of all the municipalities of Greater Limassol:**

The aim of the centre is to provide a comprehensive information and connections for people living in Limassol District, on issues related to the main areas of integration: social benefits, housing, health care, employment, education, socialisation and connections with services and institutions. The centre should enable the migrants to find work and provide mentoring services to facilitate their integration into the community. The creation of a central point in the city should also enable the creation of service branches in other small points in all municipalities, maintaining the same expertise and database. The services of the centre will enable the translation of basic information and, in addition



to providing information and mentoring support, practices that enhance the sociability and active involvement of migrants and refugees in the life of the city will be organised.

3. Create a mobile app:

With the philosophy of aggregating information and mapping on issues concerning the city, the creation of an application that can gather information concerning the District of Limassol with the main purpose to provide accurate and updated information. It could include information regarding public services, the rights and obligations of residents, means of transport, support phone lines, interface with online requests, schools, events, social services, employment issues and the possibility to interact with other people who are also looking for information about the city. The application should enable all residents to use it with the additional possibility of translating basic information and additional information for migrants and refugees arriving in the city for the first time.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

IV. Participation:

Objective:

- **Ensure the active participation of all residents in the Limassol District, by developing participative democracy actions and consultation mechanisms for a wide range of municipal policies.**

Actions:

4. Inform and encourage the participation of people of migrant backgrounds and consult them on municipal policies:

The municipalities are realising the importance of providing information to migrants and refugees about the decision-making process at the local level and to encourage their participation in consultation mechanisms for municipal policies. This can be done through targeted outreach efforts and by providing information in languages that are accessible to migrants and refugees.

5. Implement awareness campaigns and thematic events:

Raising awareness about the importance of participation in democratic life is essential. This can be achieved through targeted awareness campaigns and thematic events that provide information about effective participation in democratic life, including public consultations, elections and main strategic documents on local level connected to the life of migrants.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District



V. Anti-discrimination

Objective:

- **Ensure that all residents of Limassol District are treated equally in all dimensions of personal and social life, especially in Municipal policies, programmes and activities.**

Actions:

6. Developing and approving a Charter document on non-discrimination:

This is a good step to establish the principles and values that guide the municipalities' actions towards equality. The municipalities will be encouraged to reconsider their policies in order to detect possible obstacles for equal opportunities and treatment. They will be also encouraged to identify potential areas of improvement and exchange the information on good practices.

7. Develop an anti-discrimination campaign and continue the implementation of the Anti-rumours Strategy:

Developing an anti-discrimination campaign and continuing the implementation of the Limassol Anti-rumours Strategy, which was developed with the assistance of the Council of Europe's Intercultural Cities Programme, would raise awareness and change attitudes towards discrimination, which can lead to a more inclusive and welcoming community.

Lead municipality: Limassol Municipality

VI. Welcoming newcomers

Objective:

- **Support for newly arrived migrants and refugees to make them feel comfortable and confident enough to start building new social and professional networks, while boosting the awareness of locals on the benefits of diversity and therefore increasing a more positive attitude towards migrants and refugees.**

Actions:

8. Create a mentorship programme and connect newcomers with local organisations:

Pair up newcomers with local volunteers who can assist them in navigating the community, finding job opportunities, and building social connections. Identify local organisations that share similar interests or cultural backgrounds with newcomers and provide them with information about how to get involved. This will help newcomers build networks and become more involved in the community and can also help locals learn about different cultures and traditions.

9. Bus and walking tours and multilingual signage:

The creation of walking and bus tours will give the opportunity to newcomers to familiarise themselves and to get to know Limassol District, identify the bus lines and the civic/governmental spaces they can refer to. Promote the use of multilingual signage in public spaces such as parks, museums, and



transportation hubs to create a welcoming environment for newcomers from different language backgrounds.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

VII. Education

Objectives:

- **Bring together educational stakeholders in order to ensure effective intercultural education for every child in the Limassol District.**

Actions:

10. Spread intercultural activities such as the “Multicoloured Music” and the project “Care for children with migrant biography” all over Limassol District:

By spreading intercultural activities throughout Limassol District, the Intercultural network will help engage the community and promote intercultural understanding. These activities will help break down barriers and foster empathy and respect for diverse cultures.

11. Develop language classes through municipalities open schools and adult education centres:

Offer language classes to help migrants and refugees learn the local language, which can help them feel more confident and connected to the community. This can also help local volunteers learn about different languages and cultures. This will be done through the collaboration with national educational instances and infrastructures, like the lifelong learning programs of the Ministry of Education.

12. Coding Academy:

Creation of an Academy for learning coding languages specially designed for people from vulnerable groups such as migrants. The aim of this project is to increase their chances of finding a job.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Open Schools

VIII. Neighbourhood

Objectives:

- **Develop further a decentralised concept of neighbourhood development, through the reform of Neighbourhood Councils, through increasing diversity, participation, and interaction.**



Actions:

13. Neighbourhood Councils:

Conduct outreach and awareness-raising campaigns to inform residents about the purpose and functions of Neighbourhood Councils, as well as the benefits of getting involved in their work. This could be done through door-to-door visits, community events, social media, and other channels.

14. Provide incentives for the regeneration of local green areas (public parks) and make them a basis for local community action:

Green spaces (public parks) can provide an opportunity for residents to come together and engage in community action. The municipalities and intercultural network will provide incentives for the regeneration of local green areas, such as parks and community gardens, and encourage residents to use these spaces for intercultural community events and activities.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Neighbourhood Councils

IX. Public services

Objective:

- **Make Public services more accessible to the diverse categories of residents.**

Actions:

15. Organise trainings on diversity issues for public service officers:

Organise training sessions for public service officers to improve their understanding of diversity issues and to enable them to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate services to all residents.

16. Develop information materials and a mobile unit:

Develop user-friendly and culturally appropriate information materials, such as brochures, flyers, and videos that explain public services and procedures in an easy-to-understand manner. Operate a mobile unit in the community, which will be staffed by competent personnel, to support migrants and refugees who are unable to go to different social services (to complete applications, psychosocial support, etc.) to access them.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

X. Business and labour

Objective:

- **Promote diversity in businesses and the participation of migrants and refugees in the mainstream labour market**



Actions:

17. Access for migrants and refugees to information regarding their employment and anything related to social welfare in Cyprus:

Through information leaflets in various languages, migrants should be informed about their employment rights. In addition, migrants need guidance on access to various benefits (www.gov.cy). The role of the trade unions in this issue is crucial and therefore their support towards achieving the above objective will help to avoid any possible exploitation of migrant workers.

18. Businesses to have access to a skilled workforce and offer training and education to emerging young migrant and refugee entrepreneurs

In some employment sectors the needs are very specific. With properly targeted training programmes (apprenticeship schemes) and the linking of the New Strategy for the Employment of Third-Country Nationals with the migration issue, we could resolve any issue concerning migrants' access to full employment.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Trade unions

XI. Cultural and social life

Objective:

- **Promote diversity and equal participation of people from different backgrounds in cultural and social activities. The goal is to support artists, cultural and sport workers in their careers while fostering dialogue and exchange among local stakeholders through cultural and sport activities. The aim is to leverage Limassol's rich cultural, historical, architectural, industrial and other types of heritage to promote diversity and build an inclusive identity for all its people.**

Actions:

19. Develop and continue to support tailor made cultural and sports programmes targeting migrants and refugees (especially families, children, and youth) involving ethnically diverse groups for a positive interaction:

Establish a Cultural Diversity Task Force comprising of representatives from various cultural and ethnic communities, artists, sports personalities, NGOs, and relevant stakeholders to advise on the development and implementation of cultural and sports programmes that promote social cohesion and diversity. Offer training and workshops to cultural and sport workers to enhance their intercultural communication and understanding of diverse communities.

20. Organise intercultural festivals, sports events, cultural and heritage tours:

Organise intercultural festivals and events that showcase the diversity of Limassol's culture and heritage and involve the participation of diverse communities. Collaborate with local schools to organise intercultural and sports events involving students from diverse backgrounds. Organise



cultural and heritage tours that showcase the rich cultural, historical, architectural, industrial and other types of heritage of Limassol, especially those that promote diversity and inclusiveness.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

XII. Public space

Objectives:

- **Further develop the public spaces infrastructure encouraging intercultural mixing and interaction**

Actions:

21. In collaboration with all municipal departments create an awareness raising campaign on the possibilities of the use of public spaces throughout the city:

Increase awareness and understanding of the importance of public spaces for intercultural mixing and interaction. This could include creating flyers, social media posts, and other promotional materials that highlight the benefits of using public spaces and encourage people to explore them.

22. Develop cultural content in public spaces in various languages throughout the city including libraries, museums, playgrounds and squares and held them regularly. Install seating and other amenities in public spaces to encourage people to spend time there and to engage with one another:

Work with local artists and cultural groups to create public art installations and performances that reflect the diverse cultural heritage of the community. This could include cultural events, such as music festivals or art exhibitions that showcase the diversity of the community and bring people together.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

XIII. Mediation and conflict resolution

Objective:

- **Ensure effective communication between various communities and religious groups of the district in order to anticipate, identify, address and resolve efficiently any possible conflict or misunderstanding.**

Actions:

23. Hosting events that celebrate the diversity of the community and promote understanding and mutual respect:

This could include cultural festivals, interfaith gatherings, and other events that showcase the unique traditions and perspectives of different groups within the community.



24. Providing educational resources and training for individuals and organisations to better understand and navigate cultural and religious differences:

This could include workshops on cultural competency, diversity and inclusion training, and resources for learning about different religious, traditions and practices.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

XIV. Multilingualism

Objectives:

- **Ensure the visibility and presence of various languages spoken by Limassol inhabitants and honour them as a part of the city's every day's life, as resource for education, business, tourism, and cultural life, while encouraging Limassol residents to learn the languages of others.**

Actions:

25. Organise awareness building actions on the issues of multilingualism and utilise current infrastructure towards it (Municipal Library, newspapers, magazines, online media):

By promoting the importance of language diversity, we can help build more inclusive communities where people of different backgrounds can come together and communicate more effectively. Organise events that celebrate the diversity of languages and cultures in Limassol, such as language festivals.

26. Create language learning resources:

In collaboration with Academia, CSOs and national authorities, the Intercultural Network will develop and distribute language learning materials such as audio and video lessons, podcasts, and mobile apps that are tailored to the specific needs of Limassol's diverse language communities.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

XV. Media and communication

Objective:

- **Utilise the power of media to develop the positive attitude towards cultural diversity of Limassol District.**

Actions:

27. Support writers and journalists of migrant origin and collaborate with the Journalism Ethics Council:

Encourage the creation of a mentorship program for aspiring journalists from diverse backgrounds. This programme could pair them with experienced journalists or editors who could provide guidance and feedback on their work. They will also offer internships or freelance opportunities in municipal



media channels, such as the city's website or social media accounts. This would provide valuable exposure to their work and help them build their portfolio. You could reach out to the Journalism Ethics Council and offer to partner with them on their initiatives related to migration. You could also propose to develop regular reports on the public image of immigration in Limassol District, using data from social media analytics or surveys. These reports could be published on the municipal websites or shared with local media outlets.

28. Support the operation and circulation of news media in other languages spoken in Limassol:

By supporting news media in languages other than the dominant language(s), Limassol Intercultural Network will promote linguistic and cultural diversity and help preserve the cultural heritage of different communities and we can ensure that all members of the community have access to news and information that is relevant and important to them.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Local Media, Journalism Ethics Council

XVI. International outlook

Objective:

- **Utilize and develop the international image of Limassol as the centre of Intercultural dialogue and inclusive integration.**

Actions:

29. Continue working on the Mediterranean Network of Intercultural Cities by using local, national, and European funds and programmes:

The Mediterranean Network of Intercultural Cities is an excellent platform for sharing best practices and ideas for promoting intercultural dialogue and inclusive integration. You can take advantage of this network by actively participating in its activities, including conferences, workshops, and study visits. You can also seek funding from local, national, and European sources to support your participation and to implement joint projects with other member cities with whom Limassol had previously collaborated (Ioannina, Patras, Haifa etc).

30. Develop the action plan on the collaborative actions with twinned cities:

Limassol Municipalities will be further utilising the existing Twinning with other cities, as it is an excellent way to promote intercultural dialogue and inclusive integration. They will aim to develop an action plan that outlines specific collaborative actions that you can undertake with your twinned cities. These actions will include cultural exchanges, joint events, and collaborative projects that focus on topics such as language learning, community building, and civic engagement. They will also seek funding from local, national, and European sources to support these collaborative actions.



31. Involve communities of migrants and refugees from Limassol to develop relations with the cities of their origin:

Communities of migrants and refugees in Limassol District can be powerful advocates for promoting intercultural dialogue and inclusive integration. You can involve these communities by establishing a regular dialogue with them and requesting them to develop relations with the cities of their origin. This can include organising exchange visits, cultural events, and joint projects that focus on the common interests and values of these communities.

32. Develop synergies with business and tourism stakeholders in presenting Limassol as an Intercultural City:

Business and tourism stakeholders (i.e. Limassol Chamber of Commerce – EVEL) can be powerful allies in promoting Limassol as an Intercultural City. The Intercultural Network will develop synergies with these stakeholders by promoting Limassol's cultural diversity, heritage, and cultural events through their channels. This can include partnering with local businesses and tour operators to develop intercultural tourism packages, promoting Limassol's cultural events and festivals through their marketing channels, and providing training and support to local businesses and tour operators to help them better serve culturally diverse communities.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Tourism Stakeholders

XVII. Intercultural intelligence and competence

Objectives:

- **Develop intercultural evidence-based policies, skills, understanding and intelligence through continuous mutual learning process, research and cooperation.**

Actions:

33. Collaboration with local public and private colleges and universities:

Establish partnerships with local public and private colleges and universities to develop research activities in the field of interculturalism and inclusive integration. The research activities can focus on identifying best practices in interculturalism, assessing the impact of intercultural policies, and analysing the intercultural dynamics of the municipalities. The research should be evidence-based and should inform the development of intercultural policies and strategies.

34. Development of a database:

Municipalities should develop a database of all intercultural stakeholders, including NGOs, individuals, activists, activities, and programmes. The database should be regularly updated and should be accessible to all stakeholders. The database can be used to identify gaps in intercultural policies and to facilitate collaboration between stakeholders.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District, Colleges, Universities



XVIII. Leadership and citizenship

Objectives:

- **Engage in the democratic process and improve the diversity of the participation in the social and political life of the city, as well as the representativeness of persons of migrant and refugee origins.**

Actions:

35. Make visible organisations and build awareness:

The Intercultural Network will be supportive to the development of a communication strategy that promotes the visibility of migrant organisations and highlights their contributions to the community. Furthermore, it will identify opportunities for migrant organisations to participate in public consultations and discussions, such as town hall meetings, community events, and roundtables. It will encourage local media outlets to feature stories that highlight the work of migrant organisations and their impact on the community and develop promotional materials that showcase the work of migrant organisations and distribute them in public spaces and online.

36. Inform migrants about election processes and their rights:

The Municipalities and Intercultural Network will be working on developing voter education campaigns that target migrant populations and provide information about election processes, voter registration, and voting rights. Provide translated election materials and ballots in languages commonly spoken by migrant populations. Establish outreach programmes that promote voter registration and participation in local elections. Collaborate with community leaders and organisations to disseminate information about election processes and voter rights.

Implementing Body: Municipalities of Limassol District

XIX. Evaluation and renewal

The current Action Plan will be monitored by the Intercultural Network Co-ordinator through periodic reports and registration of best practices, which will become a food for thought for the renewal of the strategy by the end of 2025.