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“Building Inclusive Societies”
- Implementing the Action Plan (2016-2019)

¹ This document has been classified ‘restricted’ at the date of issue; it will be declassified in accordance with Resolution Res(2001)6 on access to Council of Europe documents.

This document provides an overview of the state of implementation of the main actions of the “Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019)”, of which the Ministers’ Deputies took note at their 1251st meeting (15-16 March 2016). The Ministers’ Deputies took note of the previous report on the implementation of the Action Plan (document SG/Inf(2017)7rev) at their 1285th meeting (3 May 2017).

During these first two years of implementation, the Action Plan has fully responded to the expectations on which it had been established, confirming the capacity of the Organisation to rapidly mobilise and develop a variety of tools (whose combined impact will fully emerge in the medium and long terms) and the commitment of member states to its objectives. This includes new standards (such as ECRI General Policy Recommendations and Committee of Ministers recommendations), important policy tools notably in the Education field, such as the Framework of Competences for Democratic Dialogue and European Qualifications Passport for Refugees, as well as the innovative actions and the dissemination of promising practices undertaken through for instance the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign and the Intercultural Cities Network. The political dimension, notably at Parliamentary level, has also gained relevance.

The Action Plan initiatives also contributed to the implementation of the Thematic Action Plans on “the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism”, “on protecting refugee and migrant children”, and on “the inclusion of Roma and Travellers”². The logic of the Action Plan has inspired other sectors of the Organisation, who are now engaging in activities fully consistent with its aims, although not originally foreseen, thus enriching the picture with new initiatives. The EU and member states - through voluntary contributions - also supported the implementation of the Action Plan through extra-budgetary resources, staff secondments etc. International partners like the UNHCR also actively contributed to the elaboration and implementation of different activities.

1. Education

a) Competences for democratic culture

The process leading to the implementation of the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (CDC) was launched at the 25th session of the Council of Europe Standing Conference of Ministers of Education hosted by the Belgian authorities in Brussels on 11-12 April 2016. The Framework is a conceptual model of the key competences for democratic culture for use in school curricula, describing the values, attitude, skills, knowledge and critical understanding which students at different levels of formal education should have in order to promote democratic, active and responsible citizenship.

Following the validation of descriptors through practical piloting in 16 countries, the complete Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (Model of competences, Descriptors and Guidance for implementation) was presented at the Prague Forum (October 2017) and is currently being prepared for publication in spring 2018. A first set of support documents on key issues – curriculum development, assessment, teacher education,

² The terms “Roma and Travellers” are being used at the Council of Europe to encompass the wide diversity of the groups covered by the work of the Council of Europe in this field: on the one hand a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali); c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

pedagogy, implications related to fight against radicalisation as well as to counteract hate speech, and multiple forms of discrimination is available. Additional support documentation and guidance – for instance for the youngest learners, or on higher education and vocational training – is in preparation.

The Model of Competences has already been used in curriculum reform, school projects and teacher education. It is being considered as a direct reference in education reform bills in at least 2 member states and work on its implementation is in progress in at least 4 others. The model has also been translated into 15 languages and has been the basis for activities in co-operation with the European Union, while *ad hoc* seminars and other co-operation activities have been undertaken to support implementation in member states. A new network of contact points will be established to follow-up the implementation of the Framework in the member states. The OECD refers to the CDC model substantially in its recently published OECD PISA global competence framework. The CDC model constitutes a key contribution from the Council of Europe in a variety of education policy contexts, including fostering integration, fighting radicalisation and promoting Global Citizenship Education (in the context of the CoE/EU iLEGEND programme implemented by the North-South Centre).

b) “Junior Edition” of Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

This project will be implemented should extra-budgetary funding for it be made available.

c) Language skills as a vehicle for integration

Recognising the importance and value of learning the language of the host society as an engine for integration, the activities of the programme on “Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants” have included:

- a new Council of Europe web page – LIAM (“Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants”)³, constantly updated, offering comprehensive policy guidelines and tools, as well as targeted resources for policy makers, practitioners and other actors involved in facilitating linguistic integration.
- a new online toolkit in 7 languages, containing 57 tools and other resources, to support volunteers, NGOs, associations or governmental bodies offering language support to refugees. Available free of charge and not subject to any conditions, flexible and adaptable, the Council of Europe toolkit so far has no equivalent. The “toolkit” was rapidly and widely acknowledged for its uniqueness, as also underlined by other international organisations (EU, IOM, OECD and UNHCR).
- Following the 2016 symposium on “The linguistic integration of adult migrants: lessons from research”, a publication with articles based on the presentations made at the symposium was produced in 2017 (and already reprinted only 3 months after its publication). The purpose was to offer research-based results considering whether and how scientific evidence can inform the development of policy and practices supporting the linguistic integration of adult migrants, thereby responding to the need of policy makers to draw on good practice and research-based evidence to make decisions.

³ <http://www.coe.int/en/web/lang-migrants/home>

Further tools and guidelines were developed to foster language policy schemes for migrants learning the language of the host country.

d) Recognising qualifications of refugees and migrants

Enabling refugees to make use of the qualifications they already have, whether for work or for further study, is important in reducing the pain of the refugee experience. Refugees are given the opportunity to use and develop their competences, which is of advantage to their host countries and will be of great importance to rebuilding their home countries if and when they are able to return home.

On the basis of Article VII of the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (Lisbon Recognition Convention, ETS 165), which provides for the recognition of qualifications of refugees, internally displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation, the Lisbon Convention Committee adopted in November 2017 a recommendation on the recognition of refugees' qualifications under the Lisbon Recognition Convention, as a subsidiary text aiming at facilitating the implementation of article VII of the Convention. The aim of the Recommendation is in particular to facilitate the recognition of the refugees' qualifications in cases where the qualifications cannot be adequately documented. The Bureau of the Lisbon Convention will monitor the implementation of the new recommendation in 2018-2019. While the Recommendation is adopted within the framework of the Lisbon Recognition Convention and applies to the Parties to this Convention, the principles and practices described can also be applied to the recognition of qualifications in countries other than the Parties to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

In parallel, the pilot project on "the European Qualifications Passport for Refugees" continues – thanks notably to support from voluntary contributions - and will be extended in 2018. Partners include the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and qualification recognition centres in Greece, Italy, Norway and the UK. The UNHCR Office in Greece also supports the project. The European Qualifications Passport for Refugees is a specially developed assessment scheme for refugees, even for those who cannot fully document their qualifications. The document provides an assessment of the higher education qualifications, based on available documentation and a structured interview. It also presents information on the applicant's work experience and language proficiency. The document provides reliable information for integration and progression towards employment and admission to further studies. It therefore facilitates the recognition of qualifications, including in cases where these cannot be adequately documented, and may remove the need for subsequent host countries to carry out a new assessment. In 2017, 92 refugees were interviewed and 73 qualifications passports were issued for refugees.

e) Access to education for migrant and refugee children and young people

The issue remains on the agenda of the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE), which has amongst its objectives for the biennium 2018-2019 to ensure provision of education to migrant/refugee children and children of other vulnerable and marginalised groups through the implementation of strategies related to access to language(s) for all.

2. Combating intolerance and discrimination

a) ECRI initiatives against hate speech, racism and intolerance

- General Policy Recommendations

Launch events continued during the reporting period to encourage member states and other stakeholders to make full use of the latest ECRI General Policy Recommendations (GPRs) on Combating Hate Speech and on Irregularly Present Migrants, including events with the No-Hate Parliamentary Alliance of the Parliamentary Assembly, International Organisations such as OSCE field missions and the EU, National Authorities and Parliaments, as well as NGOs.

The revised ECRI GPR No. 2 on specialised bodies to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance at national level was adopted in December 2017. The GPR will be launched during a seminar to be organised in Strasbourg on 24 May 2018 for member states' authorities and Equality Bodies.

- Identification and dissemination of good practices

Ten abridged versions of ECRI GPRs for use by the general public have been prepared on topics such as Anti-Gypsyism, discrimination in employment and promotion of equality. Such material is now also available in a number of non-official languages of the Council of Europe and was distributed to national authorities for use in their countries. A special section of the ECRI web site has been created, dedicated to increasing the visibility of ECRI material. Similarly, its distribution and use will be ensured in the context of future co-operation programmes in the field of Anti-Discrimination. A study was published by ECRI on good practices by Equality Bodies in advising authorities on the anti-discrimination legislation and implementation of related policies.

All 40 of ECRI's 5th cycle monitoring reports published so far contain a chapter on integration with a comprehensive analysis of policies and specific recommendations identifying a number of good practices. In the preparation of its 6th monitoring cycle (2019-2023) ECRI envisages the possibility of continuing its current scrutiny of the adequacy of integration policies that are or could be relevant for its vulnerable groups, in particular migrants (including, where relevant, immigrants and persons of immigrant origin, asylum seekers, beneficiaries of international protection and stateless persons) and Roma. Key areas of this specific monitoring are being considered, such as integration/inclusion policies or strategies, language and integration courses, education, employment, housing, acquisition of legal status, participation in public life, and family reunification.

- Training of police

The ECRI brochure with key recommendations on building good relations between the police and minority groups was translated into several languages. This brochure and ECRI GPR on Combating Racism and Discrimination in Policing can be used in police training activities in the context of the CoE co-operation programmes. Other activities can be envisaged should extra-budgetary resources become available.

b) The “No Hate Speech Movement” Campaign

At the end of 2017, which marks the conclusion of the Council of Europe co-ordination of the No Hate Speech Movement Campaign, the campaign was active in 44 countries/territories.

The manual “Bookmarks - combating hate speech online through human rights education” has been published in 17 languages (4 more languages added in 2017) and three more are being prepared. Six courses using Bookmarks have been organised in co-operation with youth ministries, 11 with other institutional and civil society partners.

The Handbook “We CAN!: Taking Action Against Hate Speech through Counter- and Alternative Narratives”, launched in March 2017, is now available in English and French and four translations are being prepared. European courses for trainers were held at its launch in Strasbourg, and in Utoya Island, Norway, at the new education centre built on the site of the terror attack in 2012, in co-operation with the European Wergeland Centre and the EEA Norway Grants. A course for trainers based on WE CAN! was co-organised with the Commonwealth Secretariat in December 2017. Two national courses were held in Belgium and in Norway and a wide range of workshops have been organised by national campaigns.

The Hate Speech Watch website has integrated new features, including the possibility to insert counter narratives to accompany a report. Detailed information on how to report hate speech, crime and cyber bullying to national authorities or civil society organisations in 19 countries and on five social media platforms has also been added.

In 2017 Campaign Action Days were held on 7 February on Internet Safety; 8 March on Sexist Hate Speech; 22 July on Remembrance and Solidarity with Victims of Hate Crime; 21 September on countering hate speech against Muslims; 9 November on anti-Semitic hate speech and a final action day took place on 10 December on the theme “Love Human Rights: Every day, Everyone, Everywhere”.

Other relevant activities include: the 6th Euro-Arab Youth Forum (Fez, Morocco, 24-29 April 2017), focusing on “Combating hate speech and extremism”, which facilitated connections between activists from European and Arab states; a seminar on anti-Semitic hate speech held in May 2017; a summer school on young refugees as actors for social inclusion and intercultural dialogue held in Portugal in August 2017.

The evaluation of the Campaign, including the identification of possible follow-up proposals, is ongoing, and a closing conference focusing on its results and legacy is scheduled for April 2018. Figures on the dissemination of the Campaign output are, however, very telling: “Bookmarks” courses co-organised by the Council of Europe have reached approximately 425 multipliers and activists from the national campaigns and youth organisation partners, and workshops or courses based on “Bookmarks” were organised in 40 national campaigns. The “We CAN!” courses trained 110 multipliers, leading five national campaigns to hold workshops or training courses supporting youth to develop an effective response to hate speech targeting refugees and migrants, minority groups and LGBT, amongst others. Over 1000 reports were submitted to the “Hate Speech Watch”. Many of these reports have been used in educational settings to discuss and analyse hate speech. The campaign Action Days reached on average 30 000 people through online platforms and mobilised 20 to 35 national campaigns.

The legacy of the Campaign goes beyond the youth sector: it stimulated for instance the work of the Gender Equality Commission (GEC) on the preparation of a draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers, to prevent and combat sexism, which would include a section on sexist hate speech, and the work to be carried out in the area of anti-discrimination with ECRI's active involvement. The campaign activities have certainly resulted in greater awareness of the risks and consequences of hate speech, especially on inclusion and cohesion matters in multicultural societies, showing that the issue should be understood and dealt with as a phenomenon affecting the fragile democratic fabric of European societies and not just as an epiphenomenon of social media or online behaviour.

c) The “No Hate Parliamentary Alliance”

The activities and working methods of the No Hate Parliamentary Alliance are based on a Road Map indicating the priority thematic areas (namely hate speech, antisemitism, islamophobia, anti-gypsyism, homo- and transphobia), adopted for 2015-2017 and confirmed for 2018-2019. By the end of 2017, the Alliance counted on 47 members, parliamentarians committed to taking an open, firm and pro-active stance against racism, hatred and intolerance. Through their participation in various national and thematic seminars, members of the Alliance were informed of existing standards, Council of Europe tools and best practices in the fight against racism, hatred and intolerance. These events also inspired parliamentarians to launch concrete national initiatives. Engaging in dialogue and creating synergies with other stakeholders working on the same priorities was essential to the Alliance. In 2017, these included key international partners including the European Parliament, civil society, media, national human rights institutions, authorities and parliaments. The Alliance raised awareness through social media, publications and a webpage. The Alliance pursued its activities also thanks to voluntary contributions.

Planned activities for 2018-2019 include 2 meetings per year to be held in Strasbourg and 2 thematic conferences/seminars per year, coordinated by Alliance members, in national parliaments. These would be focused on improving public policies with regard to the fight against racism, hatred and intolerance. Other planned activities include: participating in activities organised by national committees of the No Hate Movement campaign at national level and inviting national coordinators to take part in parliamentary activities; translating and disseminating Council of Europe publications on combating racism, intolerance and hate speech (e.g. “Bookmarks” and “We Can!”); disseminating of a purpose-made video to raise awareness on racism and intolerance in Europe through personal testimonies; and the participation of the General Rapporteur and other members of the Alliance in relevant Council of Europe events, including the closing conference of the No Hate Speech Movement campaign.

d) Congress’ Toolkit for locally-elected representatives

As a follow-up to its Resolution 397(2016) on “Organising intercultural and interreligious activities: a toolkit for local authorities”, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has prepared a toolkit to give local and regional authorities direct access to the available information and knowledge on the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, the fight against radicalisation, democratic citizenship and the building of inclusive societies at local level.

The toolkit includes: the Guidelines for local and regional authorities on preventing radicalisation and manifestations of hate at the grassroots level, adopted by the Congress in October 2015; the twelve principles for interfaith dialogue at local level, and four resource cards giving access to an online database (www.coe.int/congress-intercultural) of good practices, education and training programmes, literature resources and legal resources.

The toolkit exists in 36 languages, covering all Council of Europe countries. A 5-minute video clip to raise awareness on the toolkit, available on the Congress and Council of Europe YouTube accounts, has also been produced.

A project to promote the Toolkit to local councils by the Youth Delegates of the Congress is ongoing. The Youth Delegates selected every year from among hundreds of candidates to participate in the sessions of the Congress are invited to participate in the Toolkit's visibility campaign. In 2017, they presented the Toolkit to their local councils in six countries. The Youth Delegates selected for 2018 and 2019 will be invited to engage in a similar exercise.

In addition, the Congress adopted a number of relevant resolutions and recommendations, including notably a Recommendation "From reception to integration: the role of local and regional authorities facing migration", and a Resolution on endorsing and disseminating the revised Charter of European Political Parties for a Non-Racist Society at the local and regional level.

3. Support for effective integration policies

a) Guidelines on the protection and promotion of human rights in culturally diverse societies

Dissemination of the Guidelines (adopted in March 2016) continued in 2017. The Council of Europe book "Human Rights in culturally diverse societies" contains the text of the Guidelines as well as a compilation of Council of Europe standards relating to the principles of freedom of thought, conscience and religion as well as links to other human rights. Work conducted in 2016-2017 in this area is a direct source of inspiration for the intergovernmental work entrusted by the Committee of Ministers to the Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) for the biennium 2018-2019 on "the way of reconciling freedom of expression and other rights and freedoms in particular in culturally diverse societies", with the aim of drafting a non-binding legal instrument.

b) Parliamentary platform on diaspora-related issues

The Parliamentary Network on Diaspora Policies was launched in Lisbon on 7 and 8 September 2017, with the objective of promoting political and legislative reforms regarding the role of diasporas in countries of origin and host societies.

This new network will operate as a platform bringing together parliamentarians from countries of origin, host countries and diaspora associations, fostering information exchanges on good practices, promoting the role of these associations in the integration of migrants in host societies and, finally, developing political co-operation between countries of origin and host countries. The first regional seminar of the Network took place in Rabat on 8 February 2018. Its main goal was to broaden the discussion on diaspora policies to include parliamentarians of the PACE partner countries of the region, focusing in particular on integration policies of host countries and on the prevention of radicalisation of migrants through integration, and on the role of national parliaments and diaspora associations in the prevention of extremism and radicalisation through social and economic inclusion, despite cultural and religious differences. The first annual Forum of the Network will take place on 7 May in Geneva.

c) Youth and Children

- Implementation of CM recommendation on Access to social rights for youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods (the “Enter! Recommendation”)

The Joint Council on Youth adopted a strategy for the implementation of recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights (“the Enter! Recommendation”) including a process for reviewing and sharing results (in 2019).

A publication “Taking it Seriously” provides guidelines and examples for member states, local authorities and youth workers on how to use the recommendation and, especially, to pay specific attention to situations of discrimination facing young people in the exercise of, or when accessing, their social rights. The “Youth Works” online platform gives visibility to examples of youth work practices for social inclusion, access to rights and autonomy of young people.

The Enter! long-term training course for youth workers, which began in May 2017, is an exemplary support activity on implementing a Committee of Ministers recommendation for practitioners and public authorities across the member states. The training gathers 30 youth workers from 25 member states. The training initially provided an overview of relevant standards and of the Enter! Recommendation and supported participants in building their local youth work projects. Two project support workshops were then implemented in December 2017, involving over 20 local authorities. A second seminar planned for June 2018 will look into examples of implemented projects with local authorities and showcase good practices. The website of the Enter! project presents some of the success cases and serves as a source of ideas for other youth and social workers, as well as local authorities. The training course is supported by an e-learning programme, and by mentoring and networking opportunities.

A long-term course on access to social rights for young people in the Russian Federation launched in 2016 was successfully finalised in November 2017. The course, held in Russian, gathered participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.

In addition to the 5 languages in which the Enter! Recommendation was already available (German, Italian, Russian, Spanish and Turkish), an unofficial translation of the Recommendation in Ukrainian and a draft translation in Romanian have been produced for training purposes.

- European Youth Foundation support to projects aiming at building inclusive societies

More than half of the projects supported by the European Youth Foundation in 2017 dealt with topics related to building inclusive societies. Over 1.2 million euros in grants were awarded to 50 local, national or international youth NGOs mobilising young people throughout the member states. 31 pilot activities were supported in 18 member states with a strong local impact. Topics included the No Hate Speech Movement and countering violent extremism; supporting social inclusion strategies for young migrants and refugees; strengthening social cohesion in multicultural settings and addressing all forms of discrimination. The contribution to the Action Plan will remain one of the focus themes for pilot activities in 2018.

- New Strategy for the Rights of the Child (2016-2021)

The Council of Europe Strategy for the Rights of the Child refers to “Racism, hate speech and radicalisation” as one of the key challenges identified. The Ad Hoc Committee for the Rights of the Child (CAHENF) approved draft guidelines to protect, promote and fulfil children’s rights in the digital environment, which *inter alia* address the right of children to be protected from violence and harm arising in the digital environment from online recruitment of children for participation in political or religious extremist movements.

In addition, the CAHENF Drafting group of Experts on Children’s Rights and Safeguards progressed with the elaboration of standards on legal guardianship and on age assessment, which – together with the review of the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors (CM/Rec(2007)9), to be undertaken in 2018 – constitute an integral part of the thematic Action Plan on protecting refugee and migrant children (2017-2019).

d) Intercultural Cities

The Intercultural cities (ICC) network has been significantly enhanced and it now involves 121 cities from 32 countries (105 from 29 countries in the previous report), in the 5 continents. ICC also counts 6 national networks (in Italy, Morocco, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Ukraine), and new national or regional networks are under construction in Canada (Quebec) and Australia. The extension of the network to 121 cities has increased the take up of the intercultural integration approach, offering a richer knowledge, good practice and policy advice in the field of inclusive integration. National networks make an important methodological and substantive contribution to the programme, without any cost for the Council of Europe.

The "Inclusive Integration Policy Lab" launched in 2017 is a platform for constructive and continuous dialogue between national and local authorities to ensure policy consistency and coherent long-term planning in areas of competence shared by the different governance levels in relation to migrant integration. A side event during the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) spring session also introduced the Policy Lab concept to PACE members.

In order to effectively address stereotypes, build capacity for critical thinking in relation to migration and diversity, and combat the worst expression of negative perceptions of migrants such as racism and hate speech, an "Anti-rumours Handbook" has been published for cities wishing to implement anti-rumours strategies. In the light of the growing demand of cities for Anti-rumours training, work will continue in this field with training of certified trainers, notably on the basis of the Handbook.

In the field of economic development and employment, a pilot project has explored the potential of joint initiatives by business incubators, cities, corporate and philanthropic funders to build a new type of incubators connecting migrant/refugee and mainstream entrepreneurs to stimulate innovation and new enterprise creation. The concept and operational mode of this new type of business incubators, called Diversity connectors, have been outlined in a set of Guidelines. A pilot project has offered mentoring to aspiring media start-ups focusing on diversity, to develop business plans and digital outreach tools.

A pioneering methodology for increasing migrant employment in large enterprises has been developed and will be tested in several cities. An online database has been developed to facilitate the dissemination of good practice in the field of local migrant integration, and thematic events have been organised to identify effective local policies and actions in the field of protecting human rights at local level, preventing radicalisation and violent extremism, anti-discrimination, and multilingualism.

At the ICC Milestone event organised in Lisbon in November 2017, the ICC integration model has been reviewed to demonstrate its contribution to human rights, equality, including in relation to gender issues, inter-convictional/faith relations, and refugee reception. The links between integration and other key areas of work of the Council of Europe, based on its legal standards and monitoring mechanisms, will now be further reinforced.

In addition, the ICC model has been the object of a research study that revealed a strong statistical link between local intercultural policies and cities' social and economic performance. According to the results of this study, countries where integration policies are co-ordinated between the national and local levels have better overall integration results, higher community cohesion, stronger trust in democratic institutions, better socio-economic development, and less political and religious radicalism.

e) Civil Society

- Integration via sport for migrants

The integration via sport for migrants is a thematic priority of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS) for 2016 and 2017. On the basis of the conclusions of the 2016 Vienna Conference on Newly-arrived migrants and their integration through sport, an on-line platform for migrant integration through sport (<https://www.coe.int/sport-migrant-integration>) has been operational since summer 2017, with a view to creating a network of structures and volunteer experts in sport and migration issues through exchanges of information and good practices. Currently, 42 projects from 20 countries are presented and this number is regularly growing. A second step of the project would consist in a desk research on measurement of the impacts of sport in the integration process of migrants, designing a methodology and identifying appropriate relevant indicators.

- SG reference document for better understanding of religious and convictional issues and Annual Exchanges on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue

The initiative, launched following the 2015 Sarajevo Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue, to set up a reference document on “shared stories” has evolved into a project on “safe spaces” and freedom of expression in schools.

This responded to emerging evidence that education professionals in a number of member states consider themselves ill-equipped to navigate difficult discussions among young people relating to issues such as terrorist attacks, conflict in the Middle East, the refugee crisis and, as a consequence, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and other forms of racism and discrimination. These issues had been explored in July 2016 at a round-table with experts and practitioners in Strasbourg, and further developed in the report presented by Mr Francesco Ragazzi at the Council of Europe Conference of the Cyprus Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers “Securing Democracy through Education” (Nicosia, 22 – 23 March 2017).

In response, and in line with the priorities of the Secretary General, a campaign on “Democratic Schools: Safe Spaces for All” will be launched in autumn 2018, to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the European Wergeland Centre, who will be implementing it. The campaign will look at the impact of counter-terrorism legislation/policies on teaching practice and the wider classroom environment as a place to foster debate and freedom of expression. Specific attention will be given to the implementation of the new Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture and of the EDC/HRE Charter at school level and to promoting open debate and dialogue in safe learning environments. In the longer term, the aim of the campaign is to foster democratic functioning of education institutions and the practice of democracy.

The 2016 Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue was held in Strasbourg on 9-10 November. The global theme proposed was "The role of education in the prevention of radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism". The 2017 Exchange was held in Strasbourg on 6 and 7 November 2017. The main theme was “Migrants and refugees: challenges and opportunities – What role for religious and non-religious groups?” with two sub-themes: “From reception to integration: the role of religious and non-religious groups” and “The role of religious and non-religious groups in the development of migration policy”. The debates highlighted the important role religious and non-religious groups play in contributing to the reception and integration processes and in defending the dignity of all persons, regardless of their ethnic or religious affiliation.

Other relevant actions not included in the Action Plan

- The Council of Europe Development Bank

The Bank contributes to building inclusive societies by financing social development projects in its member countries. The Development Plan 2017-2019 further enhanced the social content of CEB actions and the CEB’s comparative advantage as “the social development bank” in Europe. Among the Bank’s main lines of action, “Sustainable and inclusive growth” places particular emphasis on vulnerable groups and the importance of reducing inequality and poverty, together with activities related to access to the labour market, social and solidarity economy services, housing and local infrastructure.

“Integration of refugees, displaced persons and migrants” is another main line of action which addresses the migrant and refugee situation in Europe. The CEB’s Migrant and Refugee Fund (MRF) helps the Bank’s member states to deal with migrants and refugees on their territory and to ensure that these persons enjoy basic human rights, such as shelter, food and medical aid. By the end of 2017, funds raised under the MRF exceeded €25 million. In the longer-term perspective, the CEB provides financing for local infrastructure, decent and affordable housing, language acquisition, skills development and job creation to help those entitled to stay in the country to integrate as effectively and quickly as possible.

Recent examples of approved projects include a €100 million loan to Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB) in Germany to part-finance the construction of shelters and housing for refugees and migrants, and a €100 million loan approved in favour of Hémisphère SCI in France to support the acquisition of obsolete hotels and residences to accommodate vulnerable people and asylum seekers. Another loan, approved in favour of Nuevo MicroBank S.A.U. in Spain for €20 million, will support a microloan scheme for low-income people facing unforeseen difficulties. More recently, a €300 million loan to Bank Nederlandse Gemeenten N.V. and a €16.6 million loan to Qredits Microfinanciering Nederland were approved for the benefit of various population groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, refugees, migrants and

homeless persons, entrepreneurs or job seekers. The two projects aim at addressing challenges related to changing demographics and population increases in the Netherlands through the provision of better public infrastructure and facilities as well as support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises⁴.

The CEB continues to manage the Regional Housing Programme (RHP), which aims to provide durable housing solutions to refugees and internally displaced persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia. By the end of 2017, some 3,000 housing units had been delivered to RHP beneficiary families.

- Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy

The new Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2023 addresses the need to protect the rights of migrant, refugee and asylum-seeker women and girls, including through support of the systematic integration of a gender equality dimension in policies and measures regarding migration, asylum and integration. One of the specific actions foreseen is to review and update Recommendation No. R (79) 10 of the Committee of Ministers concerning women migrants, and regularly review its implementation.

- North-South Centre's initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue and inclusive societies

The North-South Centre took a number of initiatives, mostly through extra-budgetary support, particularly pertinent for the Action Plan, bringing together representatives from governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil society. This includes, in particular the North-South Process for the Empowerment of Women and the Euro-Mediterranean Youth Cooperation, as well as the Lisbon fora. The 2016 edition of the Forum focused on "Migration and human rights: how to structure effective collective action?", with at least 30 good practices and initiatives presented (two of them were refugee-led initiatives) and a specific side event roundtable on the situation of women refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean. The topic of the 2017 edition was "Interconnecting People: managing migration, avoiding populism, building inclusive societies and reinforcing North-South dialogue".

⁴ Previous projects have been presented in document SG/inf(2017)7rev

Appendix

TABLE SUMMARISING ACTIVITIES IMPLEMENTED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ACTION PLAN ON BUILDING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES		
	Relevant references in P&B 2016-2017	Status of the activity
1. Education		
<i>Competences for Democratic Culture</i>	Education for Democratic Citizenship, Ordinary budget, expected result 1 (page 110)	The core Framework of competences and supporting documents was presented. Implementation in MS started. Additional support documentation in preparation.
<i>“Junior Edition” of the White Paper</i>	Building Inclusive Societies, Extra budgetary project 3541 (page 106)	Not started. To be financed with extra budgetary resources.
<i>Language skills for integration</i>	Building Inclusive Societies, Ordinary budget, expected result 3 f (page 106)	Completed (New webpage, Toolbox in 7 languages; Publication on research-based evidence supporting policy makers).
<i>Recognising qualifications of refugees and migrants</i>	Education for Democratic Citizenship, Ordinary budget, expected result 2 (page 117), Extra budgetary project 3541 (page 112)	New subsidiary text to the Lisbon Recognition Convention parties adopted. The “European Qualification Passport for refugees” pilot project continues (through EB support).
<i>Access to education for migrant and refugee children and young people</i>	Education for Democratic Citizenship, Ordinary budget, expected result 2 (page 111), Extra budgetary project 3541 (page 106)	Ongoing. Extra budgetary resources allowed organising a summer school for refugee students and a seminar on their social inclusion.
2. Combating intolerance and anti-discrimination		
<i>ECRI initiatives (good practices, training, launch of GPRs)</i>	Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), Extra budgetary project 3540 (page 37)	Ongoing. 2 General Policy Recommendations (GPR) adopted, a third revised. GPRs dissemination activities and development of good practices in response to racial profiling are ongoing. Co-operation activities under development

<i>No Hate Speech Campaign</i>	Youth for Democracy, Ordinary budget, expected result 3 (page 124), Extra budgetary projects 3529 and 3542 (Page 119)	CoE coordination of the Campaign terminated. Evaluation and follow-up activities in preparation.
<i>No Hate Parliamentary Alliance</i>	Extra budgetary project 3670 (Page 119)	Ongoing. National seminars and hearings held, new roadmap adopted for 2018-2019.
<i>Congress initiatives</i>	Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Ordinary budget (page 96)	Ongoing. Toolkit adopted and operational. Awareness-raising initiatives under way. Several declarations, resolutions and recommendations adopted.
3. Support for effective integration policies		
<i>CM Guidelines on HR in culturally diverse societies</i>	Enhancing the effectiveness of the ECHR system at National and European Level, Ordinary budget, Expected Result 2 (page 29) and Committee of Ministers, Ordinary budget (page 138)	Ongoing. CM Guidelines adopted. Translation, dissemination and awareness-raising initiatives ongoing. New non-binding instrument in preparation on the way of reconciling freedom of expression and other rights and freedoms in particular in culturally diverse societies.
<i>PACE Platform on diaspora-related issues</i>	Extra budgetary project 3523 (page 95)	Ongoing. Platform set. First regional seminar held.
<i>Access to rights for youth in disadvantaged neighbourhoods</i>	Youth for Democracy, OB, expected result 3 (page 118), Extra budgetary project 3528 (page 119)	Ongoing. Training seminars and symposiums organised. Translation, dissemination and awareness-raising initiatives ongoing.
<i>European Youth Foundation (EYF)</i>	European Youth Foundation, expected result 1 (page 120)	Ongoing. In 2017, EYF has so far granted more than 2M€ to national or international initiatives.
<i>Children's rights</i>	Children's rights, Ordinary budget, expected result 1 (page 42)	Ongoing. Strategy adopted, new standards in preparation.
<i>Intercultural cities</i>	Building Inclusive Societies, Ordinary budget, expected results 1 (page 105) and 4 (page 106), Extra budgetary project 3184 (page 106)	Ongoing. Network expanding, various projects already launched, some already completed.

<i>Civil Society - NGOs</i>	Building Inclusive Societies, Extra budgetary project 3541 (page 106)	Not yet started. To be financed with extra budgetary resources.
<i>Integration through sport</i>	Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sports (EPAS), expected result 2 (page 87)	Main activities completed.
<i>Religious and convictional issues, including the inter-religious dimension of intercultural dialogue</i>	Building Inclusive Societies, Ordinary budget, expected result 2 (page 105)	Ongoing. "Safe Spaces" project advancing. 2016 and 2017 Exchanges successfully held.