



OEIRAS

INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

2025



Diversity, Equality, Interaction, Participation

**BUILDING BRIDGES,
BREAKING WALLS**



www.coe.int/interculturalcities



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

OEIRAS
INTERCULTURAL CITIES INDEX ANALYSIS

Published in December 2025

Intercultural Cities Secretariat
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

www.coe.int/interculturalcities

INTRODUCTION.....	3
Intercultural city definition	3
Methodology	3
OEIRAS: AN OVERVIEW	7
COMMITMENT	9
THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS.....	11
Education	11
Neighbourhoods	13
Public Services	14
Business and the labour market	15
Cultural and social life	17
Public Space	18
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	20
LANGUAGE	21
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	23
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK.....	24
INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE.....	25
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS.....	27
GOVERNANCE.....	28
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	29
PARTICIPATION.....	30
INTERACTION.....	32
OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	34
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	35

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.

At the time of writing (June 2025) 164 cities embraced the ICC programme and approach, and 139 (including Oeiras) have analysed their intercultural policies using the Intercultural Cities Index. The respective reports can be found [here](#).

Among these cities, 36 cities (including Oeiras) have between 100,000 and 200,000 inhabitants. In 41 cases (including Oeiras), 10-15% of residents are non-nationals / foreign-born.¹

This document presents the results of the Intercultural Cities Index analysis for Oeiras, Portugal, in 2025, 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 three 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
7. Intercultural intelligence and competence	Public space
8. Welcoming newcomers	
9. Leadership and citizenship	

¹ This location is somewhat problematic for Oeiras because these two categories are not synonymous: the majority of migrants to the municipality come from the former Portuguese colonies of Brazil and Cape Verde, naturalisation is available in Portugal after five years of residence and those who acquire Portuguese citizenship are no longer officially counted as migrants. So the proportion of foreign-born residents of Oeiras is higher than 15%, even if the proportion of non-nationals is below that threshold.

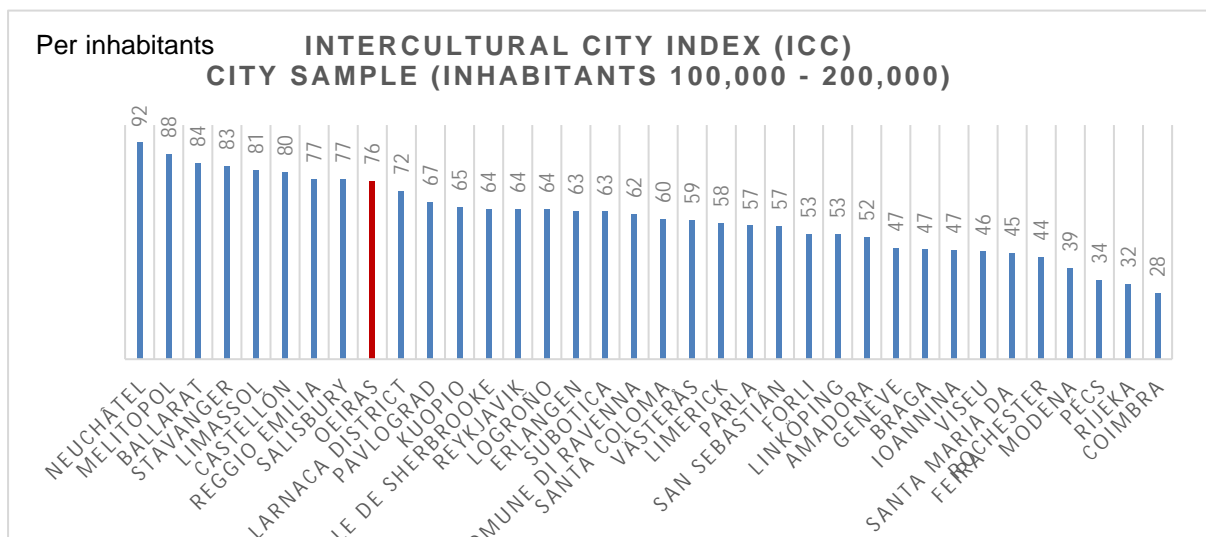
10. Anti-discrimination
11. Participation
12. Interaction

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.

Taking into account 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 will allow for more valid and useful comparison, visual presentation and filtering of the results.

So far, 58 cities have used the Intercultural Cities Index containing the new indicators in their evaluations, including Oeiras. Thus, the city will be compared with the entire sample for all the indicators, and with the new sample for the new indicators relating to anti-discrimination, participation and interaction.

According to the overall Intercultural Cities Index results, Oeiras has an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index result of 76 (out of 100 possible points). The details of this result will be explained below.²

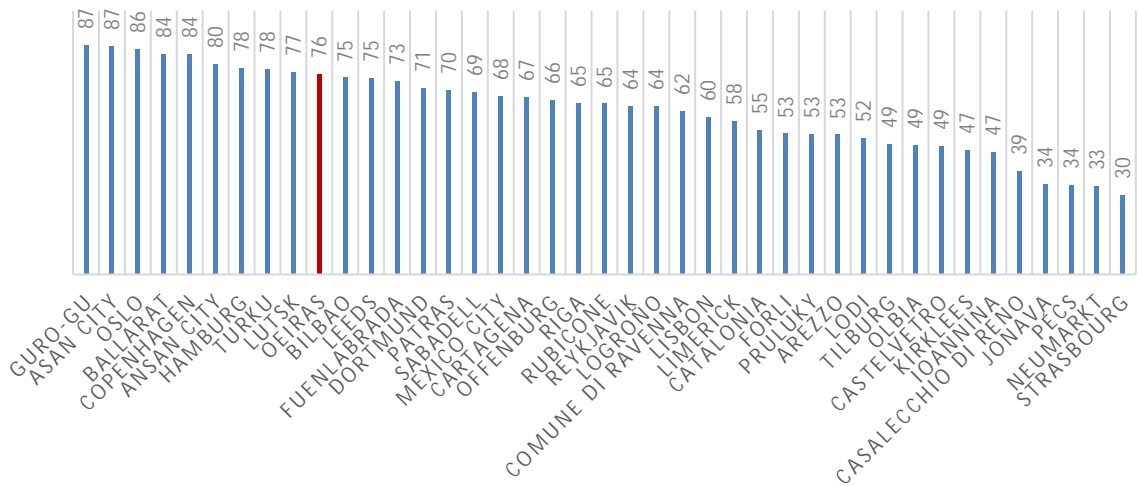


² The original Intercultural Cities Index contained 69 questions. The Intercultural Cities Index was updated in 2019, when additional questions were added, some questions were removed and completely new indicators were added (anti-discrimination, interaction and participation), resulting in the extended 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.

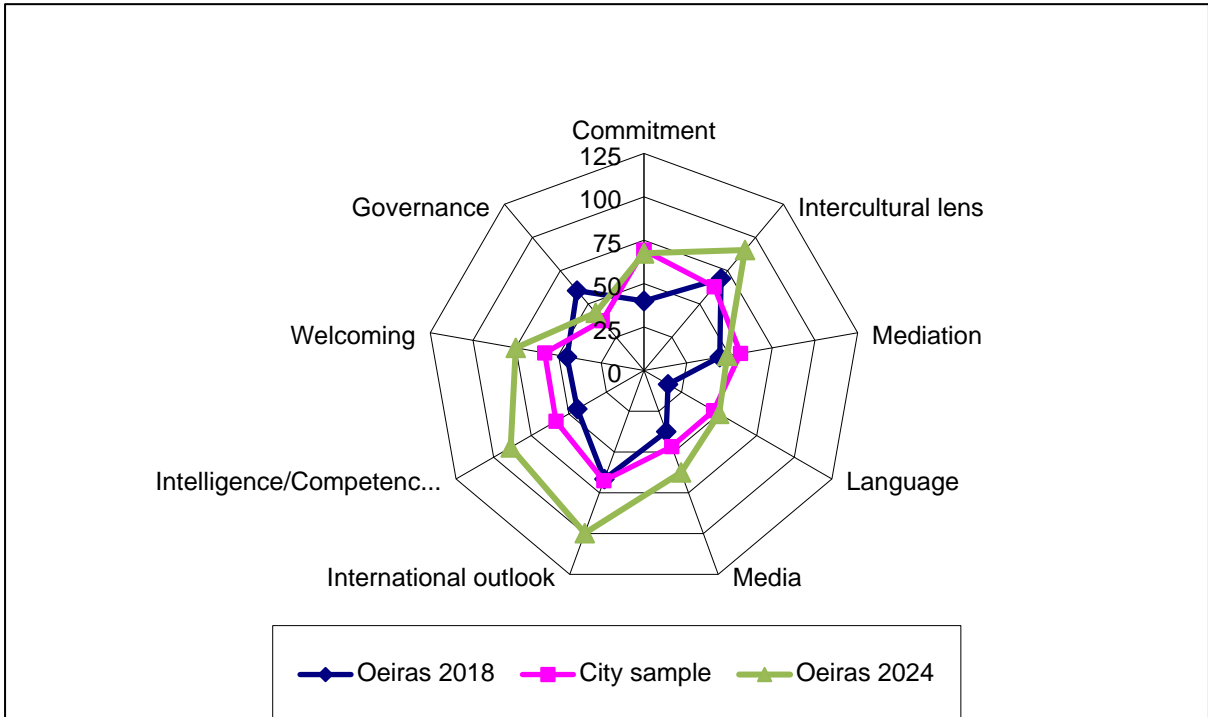
In addition, the scoring from the extended Intercultural Cities Index is provided in an explanatory footnote for all indicators where it is relevant. This scoring encompasses the assessment of the questions of the original Intercultural Cities Index as well as the new questions of the extended Intercultural 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 diversity

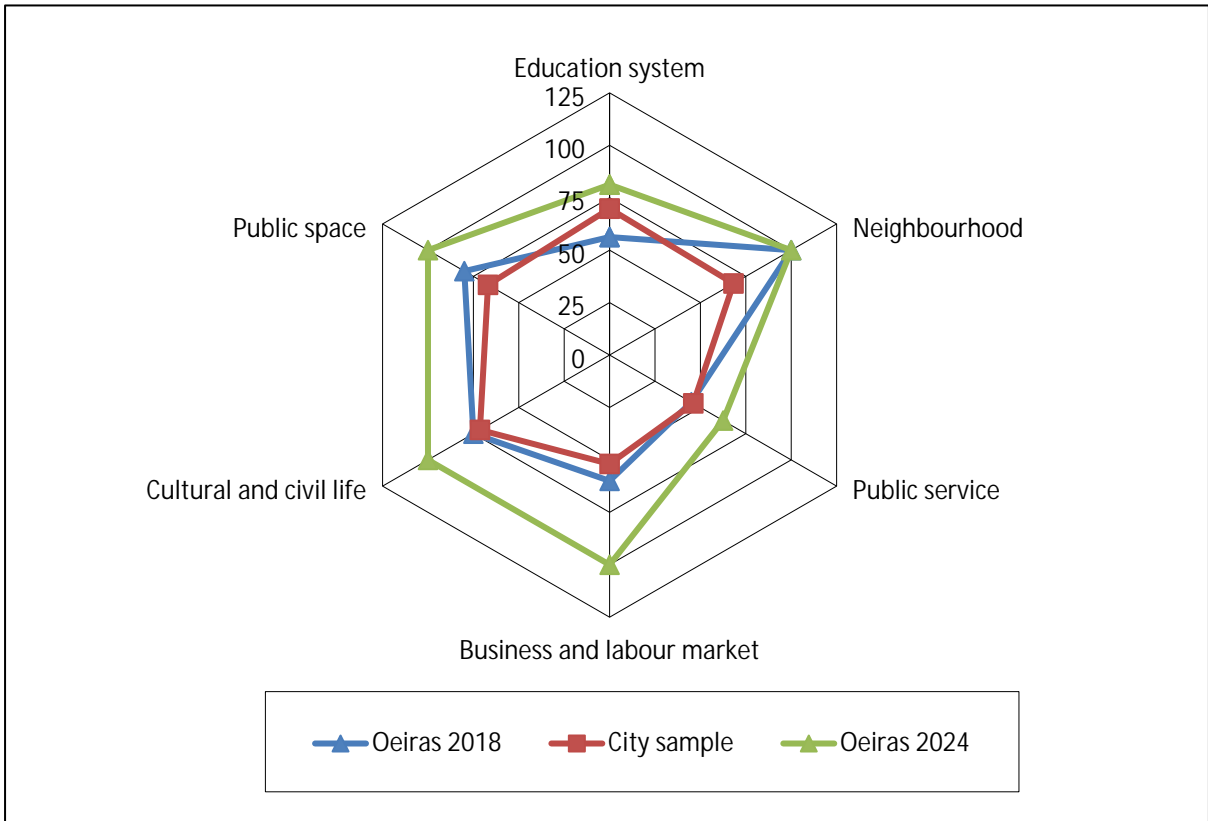
INTERCULTURAL CITY INDEX (ICC) CITY SAMPLE (NON-NATIONALS/FOREIGN BORN 10%-15%)



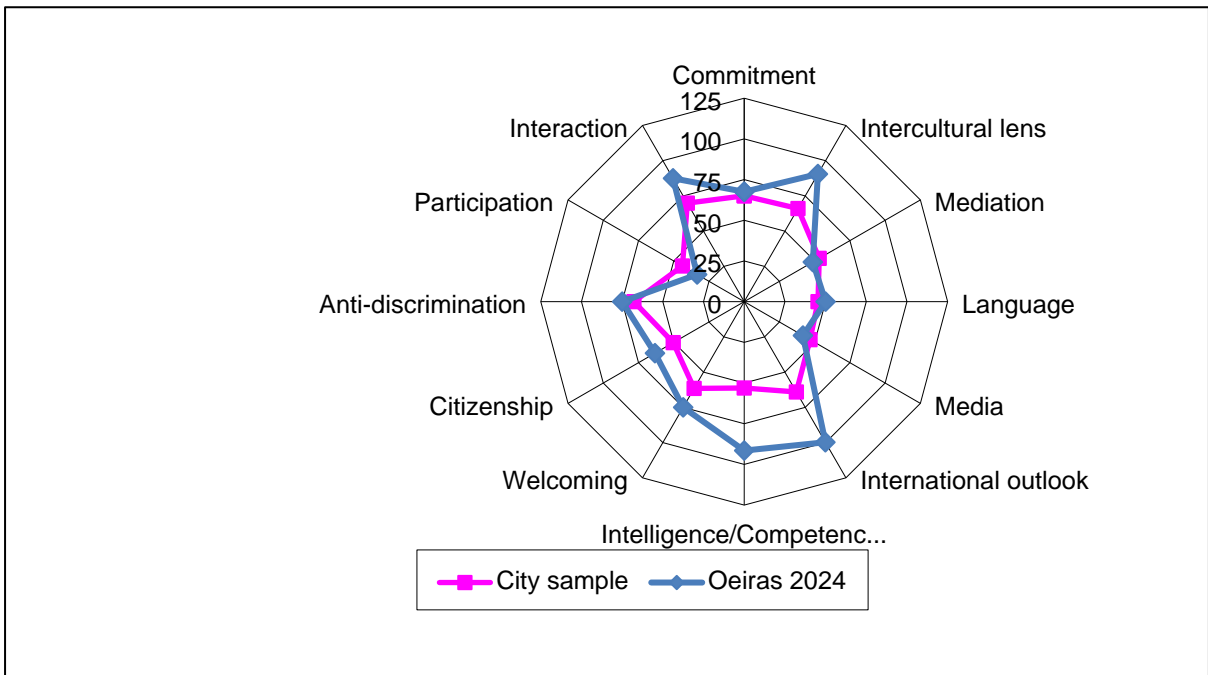
Core index



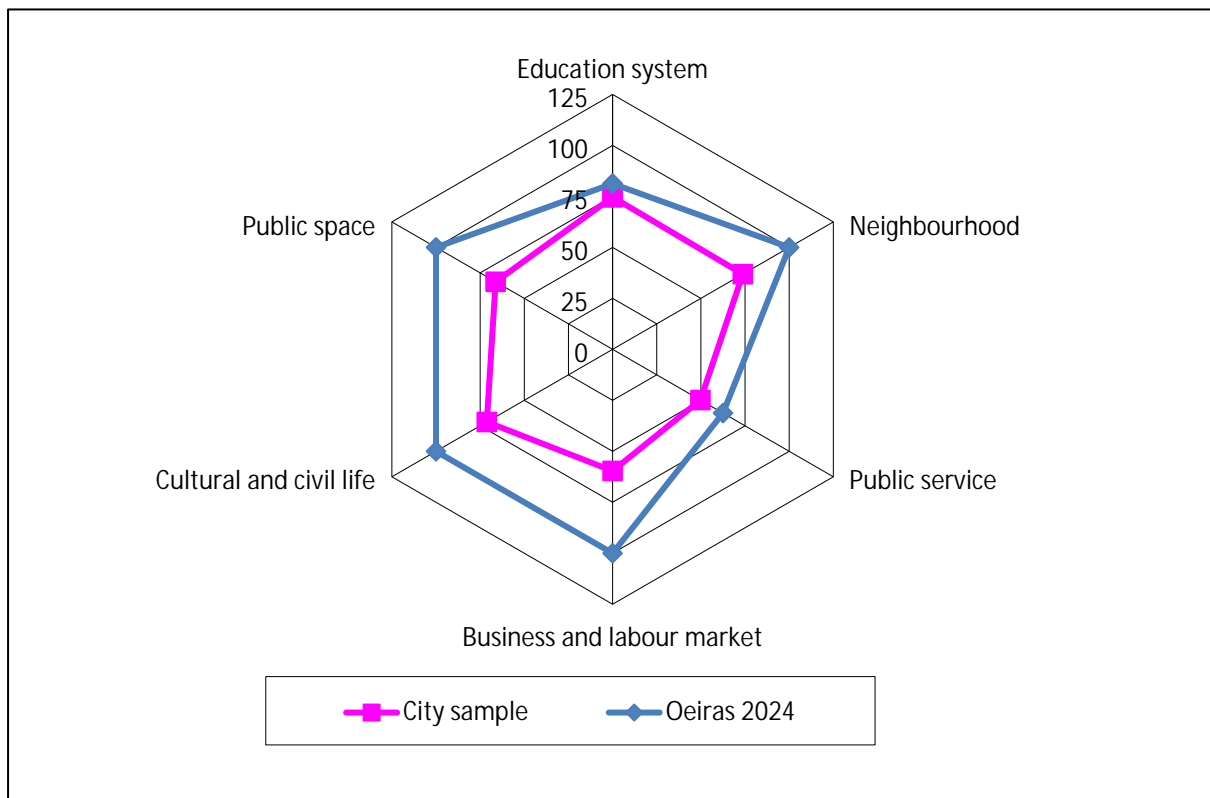
Intercultural lens with core index



Extended index



Intercultural lens with extended index



OEIRAS: AN OVERVIEW

In the postwar period, especially under the pre-1974 dictatorship, Portugal was very much a country of emigration, particularly to France. Oeiras, as with fellow ICCs members [Oslo](#) in Norway and [Neuchâtel](#) in Switzerland, has however become an instance of a prosperous urban location for high-technology modern enterprises, attracting a cosmopolitan workforce from which a 'diversity advantage' derives. With some 117 nationalities represented among a population of 176,000 – there were 5,371 applications for residence in 2023 alone – it enjoys a purchasing power almost two-thirds above the national average. Its (unsuccessful) bid to become European Capital of Culture 2027 affirmed:

The Oeiras of today is a territory created by people who have come from outside for very different reasons: internal migrants attracted by the region's economic growth from the 1950s onwards, the Portuguese who returned from former colonial territories following the Carnation Revolution [in April 1974], a wave of immigration from Portuguese-speaking countries in the early 1980s, and finally, migrants who come from all over the world to work for the economic powerhouses that were established in Oeiras throughout the 1990s.

Oeiras is not however universally affluent. It comprises five parishes: Barcarena; Porto Salvo; União de Freguesias de Algés, Linda-a-Velha e Cruz Quebrada Dafundo; União de Freguesias de Carnaxide e Queijas, and União de Freguesias de Oeiras São Julião da Barra, Paço de Arcos e Caxias. Carnaxide and Porto Salvo contain poorer neighbourhoods – reflected in dependence on social housing, drop-out from school and unemployment – with greater concentrations of visible minorities.

Indeed, as the municipality acknowledged in its proposal for a project called Todos Somos Oeiras ('We are All Oeiras'), most migrant employees do not occupy high-technology, high-salary posts but have jobs in catering, domestic services, distribution, security and civil construction. Their main difficulties, it reports, are in access to housing and health and other services, precariousness, limited proficiency in Portuguese and lack of recognition of professional qualifications.

While recognising (see footnote 1) that this is an underestimate of the diversity of Oeiras' population owing to naturalisation of migrants from the former colonies (who would, of course, have been treated as Portuguese

nationals in colonial times), almost 20,000 of its residents (11.2%) are of foreign nationality. Of these, more than half are from Brazil (43%), Cape Verde (8%) and Angola (4%). (There would be too, as indicated above, still some *retornados* who were Portuguese-born but returned after 1974.)

The linguistic dimension of cultural diversity has tended to be understated, given a shared Lusophone milieu, although the global span of more recent immigration is changing that – one in ten of the foreign-born population is from other European Union member states – and will indeed for some, particularly around Oeiras' technology enterprises and science institutions, introduce an English *lingua franca*. In addition, there is the asylum-seeker population, with 1,271 applications by Ukrainian refugees alone, mainly young women, being registered in Oeiras by 1 August 2023.

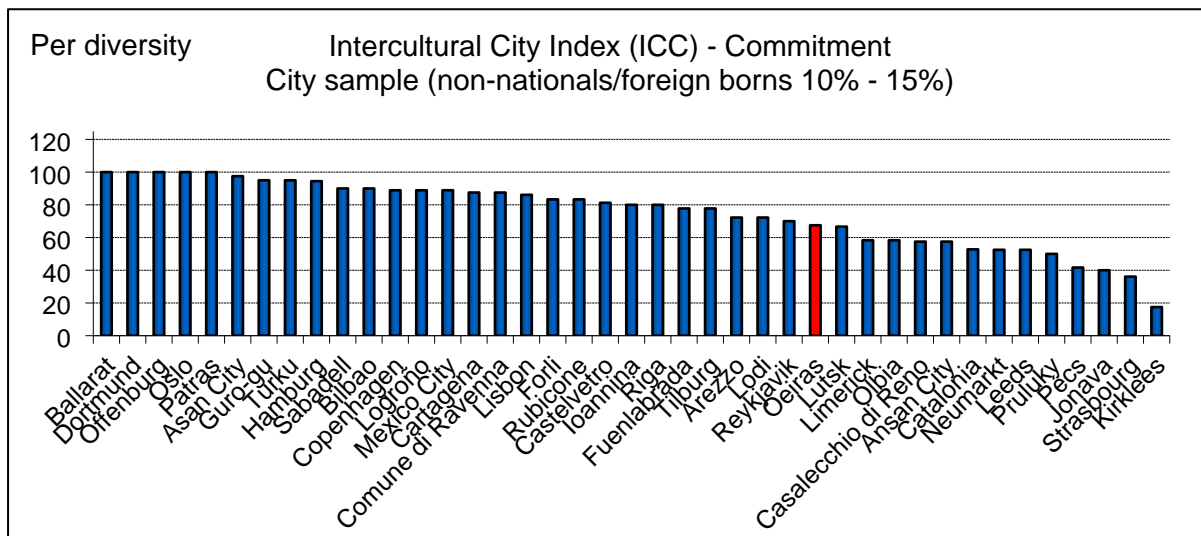
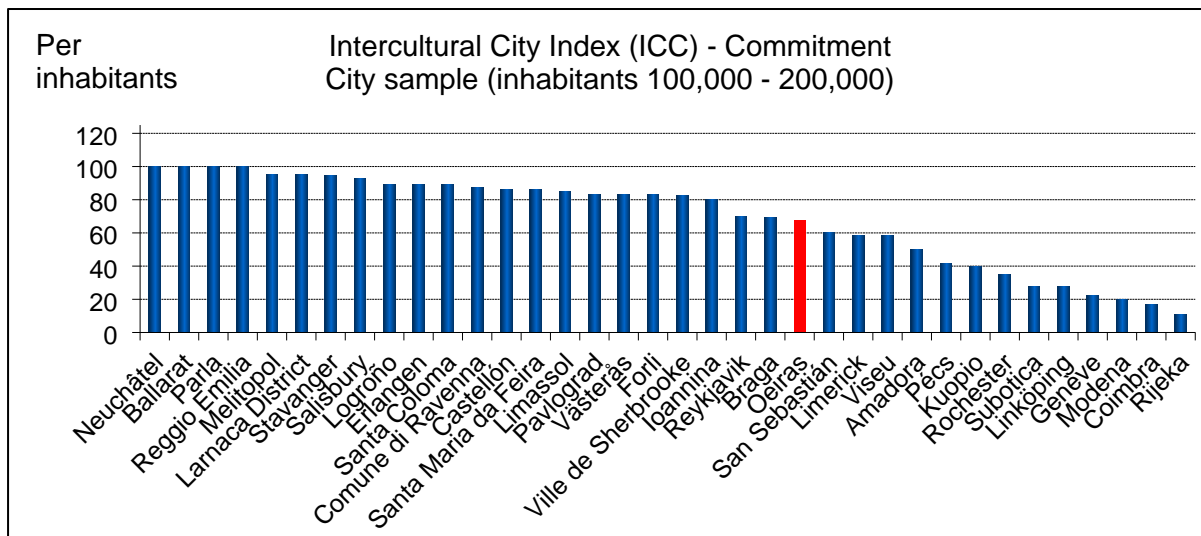
The municipality is adjoined to Lisbon and is also bounded by Cascais and Amadora. All three are fellow members of the Portuguese network of intercultural cities ([RPCI](#)) – as are the non-contiguous Loures and Setúbal within the greater Lisbon conglomeration – which as elsewhere provides a useful national forum for mutual learning. For example, along with Amadora and Loures, Oeiras participated in an RPCI [project](#) in 2021 developing a handbook on inclusive labour-market recruitment.

The national context includes two relevant strategies: the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination (ENIND) and the National Strategy for the Integration of Roma Communities (ENICC), which have a longstanding presence in Portugal, including in Oeiras, while experiencing social exclusion. At time of writing, Oeiras was developing in this context its own Municipal Equality and Non-Discrimination Plan 2024-2030, embracing racism as well as gender issues.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 68 (out of 100), which is slightly lower than the city sample's rate of 69. This was a significant improvement on the 2018 index score for Oeiras of 40, for which the municipality is to be congratulated.³



Oeiras does show [commitment](#) to its intercultural vocation. One of the values underpinning its Strategic Development Plan is 'diversity, openness and tolerance'. And on its relevant web page it says:

Interculturality, or interculturalism, one of the expressions of cultural pluralism, goes far beyond mere multicultural coexistence. In addition to defending the principles of equality and difference, it promotes positive interaction, dialogue and the construction of bridges to build a society in which all people have a say.

³ Oeiras' achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 68, while the city sample rate is 65.

One concrete manifestation of this is the Local Centres of Support for Migrant Integration (CLAIM), especially a full-time centre in the disadvantaged neighbourhood of Carnaxide. These are part of a [national network](#) across Portugal, supported by the Agency for Integration, Migrations and Asylum (AIMA).

Oeiras agreed a Municipal Plan for the Integration of Immigrants a decade ago. But this was set to run only until 2017 – whereas a contemporary plan for Lisbon with a similar title was [updated](#) for 2020-22. A 2024 bid by the municipality to the European Commission Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, linked to an update of the plan, was unsuccessful. The Todos Somos Oeiras proposal recognised that this, and the absence of a dedicated resource, represented a constraint. Moreover, it is important to recognise that intercultural integration is a ['two-sided process'](#) in which the whole society is implicated, not just those who are newcomers to it as the title of the plan suggested.⁴

The intercultural work of the authority is conducted by the Social Cohesion Division of its Department for Social Development. And the Social Development Plan agreed by the Municipal Executive and presented to the Social Network representing the NGOs (see below) in February 2025 points towards enhanced commitment.

The plan includes an axis on interculturalism. This pledges that an intercultural strategy will be prepared, allied to structured training for professionals and organisations as well as awareness-raising and information campaigns.

The mayor, Isaltino Morais, is recurrently and publicly associated with this work. Yet there is a strong case, given the transversal nature of intercultural integration, for leadership to come from the highest level of the municipality, indicating to all departments – beyond the arena of social policy into the economy, arts and culture, and so on – the part that they are expected to play. An intercultural strategy endorsed by the elected representatives and led from the office of the mayor has a key role in making this possible.

[Recommendations](#)

The Oeiras'27 Bid Book admitted that, while 'home to highly diverse communities', Oeiras 'nevertheless lacks a distinctive cultural personality'. This is where a municipal intercultural strategy can act as a vector: the aim designated for such a strategy, after widespread deliberation, can identify the goal the authority seeks to realise, as a positive self-affirmation. The strategy agreed by [Valletta](#) in Malta in 2015 provides an example of the defining role such a (one-sentence) aim can play.

Oeiras might also look in this context at the [Barcelona](#) example. Its second intercultural plan, running through this decade, includes an Interdepartmental Interculturality Committee 'to promote interculturality in a cross-cutting manner within the municipal organisation' and to 'ensure governance with an intercultural perspective in the city'. Such co-ordination is essential to secure a 'joined-up' approach.

⁴ See also the case law of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities pertaining to Article 6 of the Framework Convention, including [Thematic Commentary No.4](#) (2016) and its opinions on Portugal: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/portugal>.

THE CITY THROUGH AN INTERCULTURAL LENS

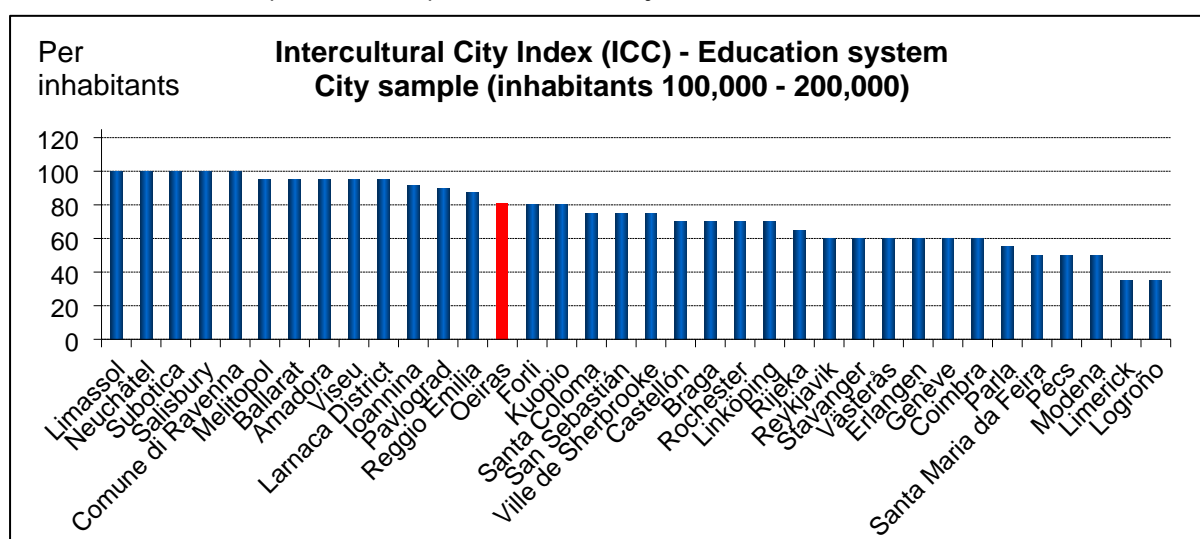
Although the formal functions cities and other local authorities assume vary considerably from one country to another, all cities have the primary responsibility for maintaining social cohesion and preserving the quality of life in the city. The policies designed to achieve these goals will therefore 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.

When assessed through an 'intercultural lens', the overall score for the urban policies of Oeiras is 91, considerably higher than that for the city sample (63). Indeed, it is also a considerable improvement on the figure accorded to the municipality in 2018 in this regard (69).

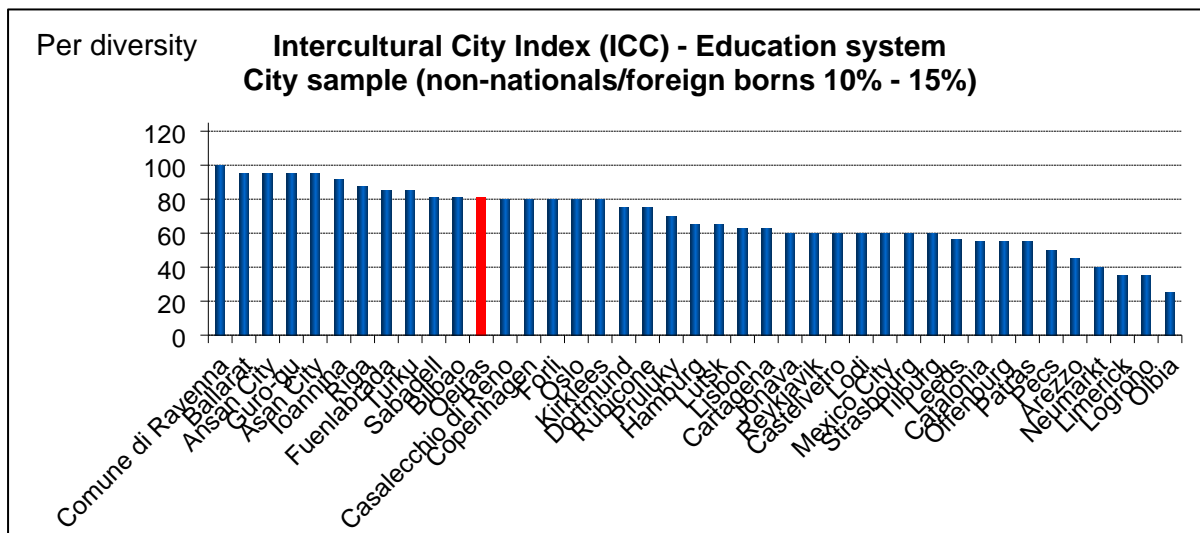
EDUCATION

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 81 (out of 100), which is higher than the city sample's rate of 70, reflecting its specific efforts in this arena. It represents an improvement on the city's score in 2018, where it achieved 56.



The Oeiras Educa+ programme, established in 2022, seeks to capitalise on the particular value of non-formal education projects when it comes to promoting intercultural integration among young people. To support the work teachers do every day in the classroom, the municipality has developed a portal through which



ch they can search for activities and projects according to level of education or subject area and request available resources and activities, such as workshops and pedagogical activities. A transport service is included. The programme targets non-formal education actors (theatres, bookshops, parks and libraries, cultural associations and others) and links them with educational professionals to provide an offer across several areas: the performing arts, the visual arts, language and literature, science and technology, history and heritage, society and citizenship, environment and sustainability, sport, health and wellbeing.

Training and workshops on identity, world dances, preventing and combatting sexual violence, gender equality and so on have been delivered thanks to this portal. By the end of 2023, the project had attracted the participation of 32,500 students, 1,700 educational professionals and more that 50 partners. A total of 1,355 training sessions had been facilitated.

There has also been a specific focus on the Aquilino Ribeiro group of schools in Porto Salvo, which has a very high concentration of Lusophone students from around the world and is a member of the Portuguese Network of Schools for Intercultural Education (REEI). It has for some time run a project called Terra Colorida ('Coloured Earth'). The work in the classroom is informed by UNESCO and Council of Europe guidance and anti-racist and human-rights norms, addressing for example the historical backdrop of Portuguese colonialism and the independence signalled by the April revolution. Outside, it seeks to involve the parents of children of migrant origin, supporting their academic achievement in a welcoming environment.

Within the context of its Local Plan for the Integration of Roma Communities (PLICC), Oeiras is developing a pilot project with a school in Carnaxide, of whose students one in four is Roma. The project will seek to enhance the engagement of Roma children and their families with their education via mediators/facilitators of Roma background, providing support to the teachers while also attending to the students. It will also seek to raise awareness among the educational community schoolwide about Roma communities while presenting associated cultural manifestations.

Finally, in 2024 Oeiras was one of the partners managing a [project](#) of the Portuguese Network for Intercultural Cities called Intercultural Schools, to raise awareness among staff and students, sharpen the application of the intercultural lens and promote intercultural skills.

Suggestions

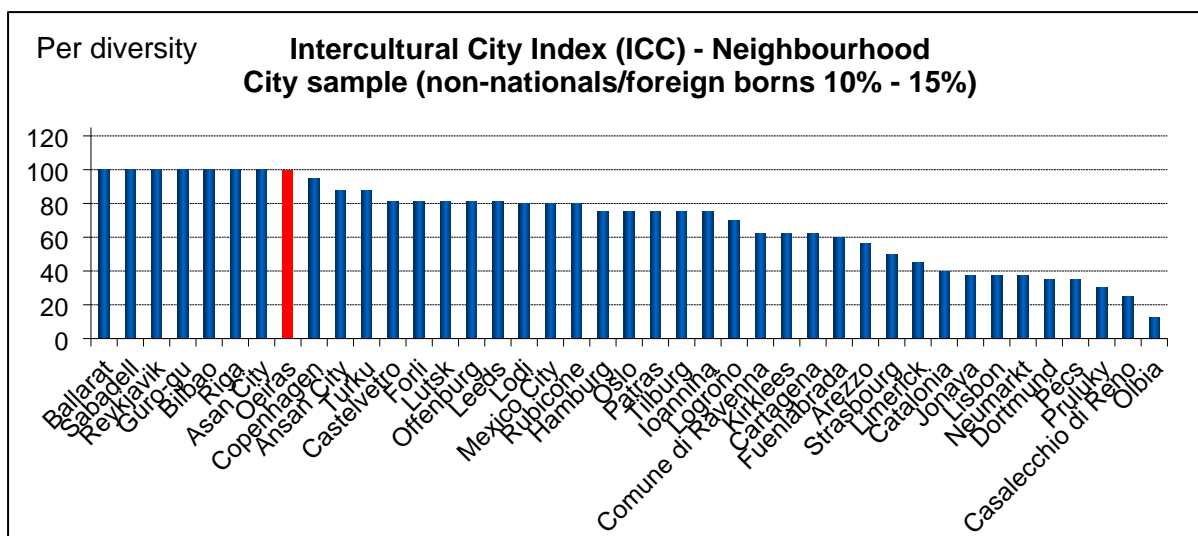
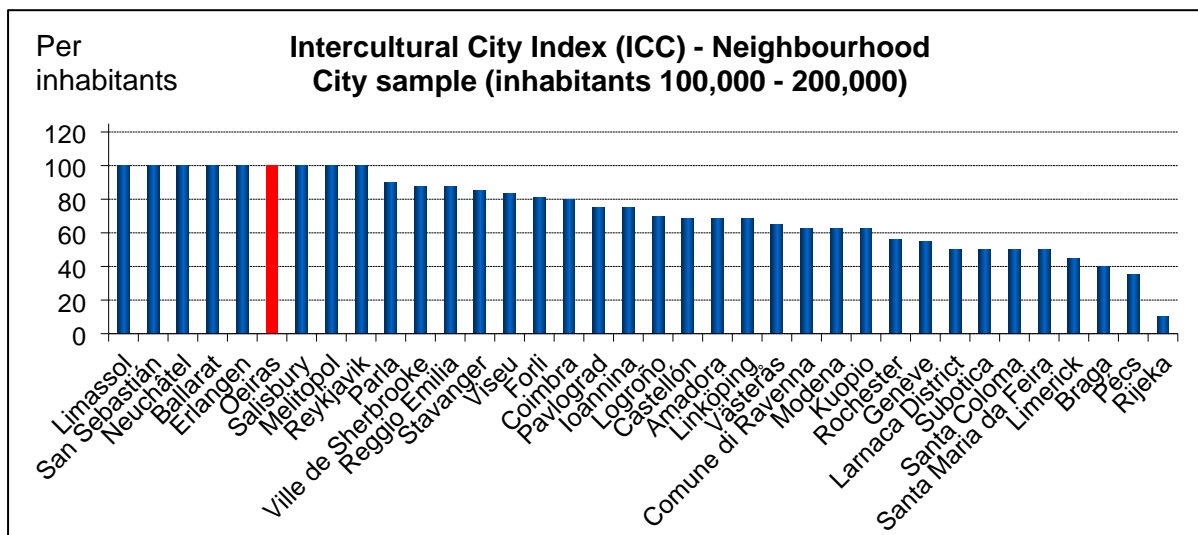
Oeiras might find it useful to share its experience of Oeiras Educa+, and associated good practices, with [Sabadell](#), in Spain, which runs a City and School programme. There too the municipality acts as a broker in non-formal education activities, offering teachers a menu of nearly 400 propositions – for instance, storytelling around the Roma population – engaging almost 80 entities in their delivery.

Given that the challenges facing Aquilino Ribeiro are only somewhat more 'extreme' than those facing other schools in Oeiras, the municipality might consider encouraging more links between and among the Porto Salvo group and other schools across Oeiras, focusing on intercultural education. As inter-school links have generally [proved of value](#) in school improvement in Britain, it might find of interest the experience of multi-ethnic [Bradford](#) in developing such connections locally.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 68 and matches the maximum score achieved also in 2018. It is to be commended on this maximum score.⁵



Oeiras seeks to avoid the ghettoisation of social housing in two ways. It allocates dwellings consciously to provide for dispersal of populations. And it seeks to integrate new housing developments into the urban fabric.

In precarious neighbourhoods in Carnaxide and Porto Salvo, Oeiras actively engages the neighbourhood and migrant associations, alongside a plethora of public agencies, via the [Local Security Contract](#) (CLS). This national programme embraces a 'social investment' approach to welfare policy, recognising the benefits of early intervention in enhancing adult life-chances. It has a working group on multiculturalism and integration.

Oeiras' 'I Am from the Neighbourhood' campaign, launched in 2020, seeks to counteract stereotypes about social-housing areas, inspiring young people in these neighbourhoods to feel pride in their communities and believe in a bright future. The campaign features prominent public figures and professionals sharing stories of how these

⁵ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 100, while the city sample rate is 60.

neighbourhoods shaped their successes. One is Marcelino Sambé, now principal dancer at the Royal Ballet in London; his and other testimonials provide positive role models to inspire and uplift their communities of origin.

Suggestions

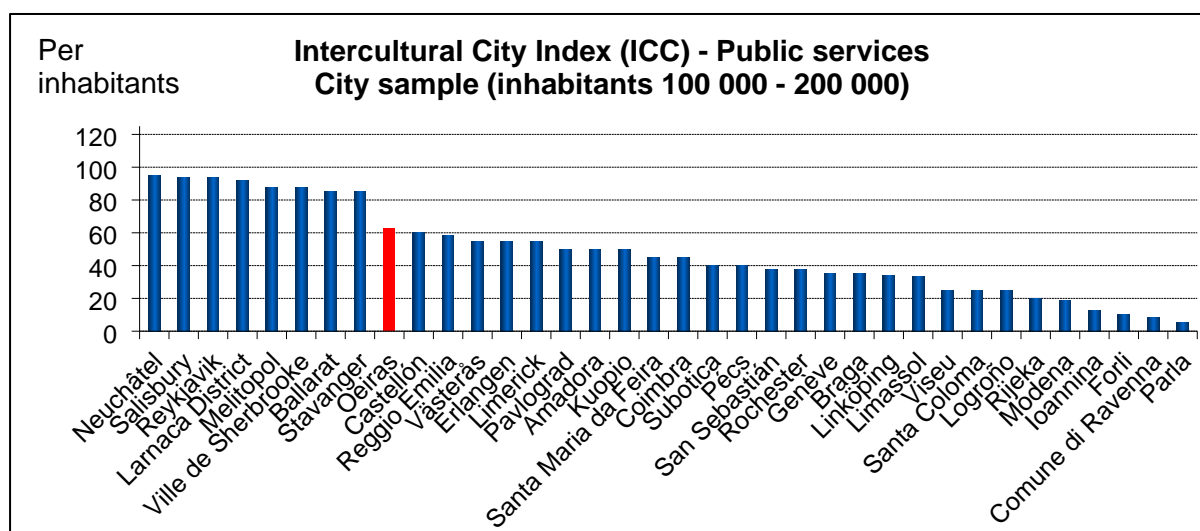
Oeiras might find of interest how [Barcelona](#) has integrated its intercultural and neighbourhood plans – with the latter mandated to include the perspective of the former. This also brings together officials involved with the different plans and helps to make the intercultural plan real on the ground.

An advantage of this approach is that it can help avoid unwittingly identifying and focusing on 'problem' neighbourhoods rather than the city as a whole. It is with this in mind that [Lisbon](#) moves its Todos festival around the city each year, rather than holding it annually in Mouraria. The fact that Oeiras is hosting the Lusofolia Festival this year is an opportunity to take this broader perspective.

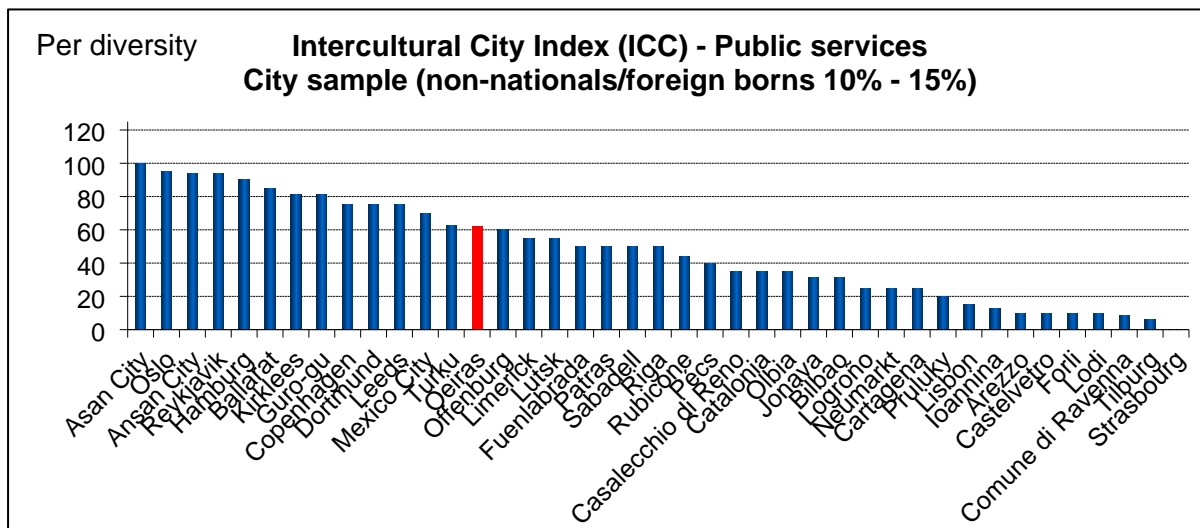
PUBLIC SERVICES

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 63, which is higher than the city sample's rate of 46 and improvement on the 2018 rate of 45. While recruitment follows national frameworks, within that the municipality seeks to raise awareness among its staff of the implications of diversity.⁶



⁶ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 63, while the city sample rate is 71.



The municipality believes that its workforce is representative of the population of the locality at all levels and (correspondingly) has no strategy to ensure the adequacy of that diversity. It has however signed the Portuguese Charter for Diversity, which (see below) it encourages companies to endorse, and it has an Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion to equip its existing workforce with the associated tools and competences.

Within the framework of the plan, training sessions seek to raise awareness, challenging stereotypes and sharing information. A project has been elaborated with the ICCs member Leeds (United Kingdom) to develop a comprehensive understanding of LGBT+ issues within the respective workforces.

The RIOMI network (see below) of NGOs could provide a sounding-board for co-design of public services more generally in future, to ensure their responsiveness to diverse users.

Suggestions

Oeiras might seek to promote workforce diversity more positively still: this goes beyond non-discrimination to cross-cutting encouragement of the kind of heterogeneity from which [innovative ideas flow](#). [Auckland](#) in Aotearoa/New Zealand is committed to the idea of being an 'inclusive workplace'. From that flows a proactive approach to diversity across the municipality, for example through divisional diversity and inclusion plans and association of the authority with high-profile external events such as Pride.

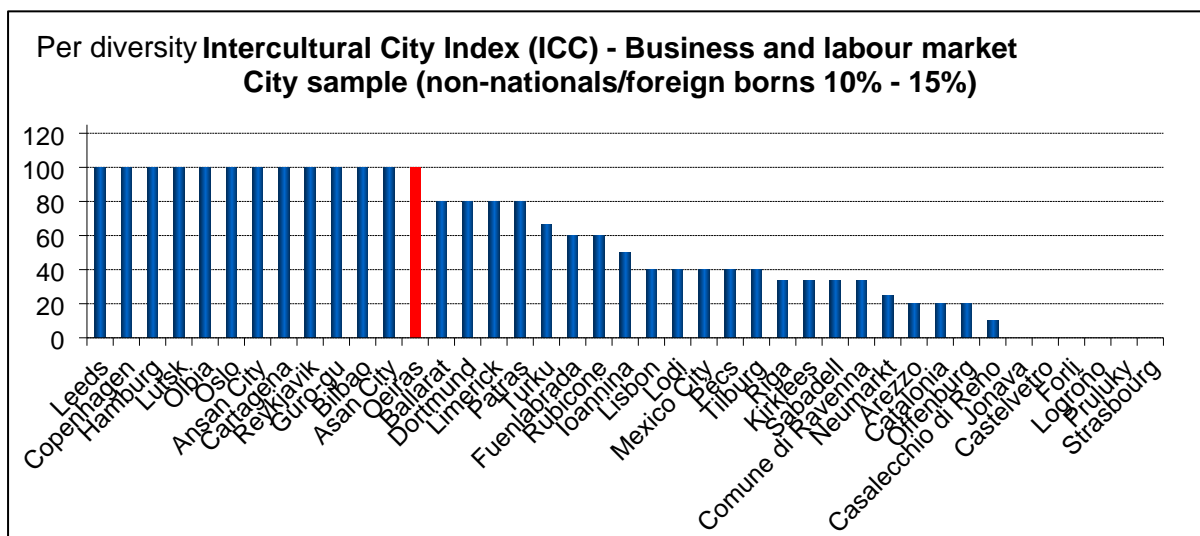
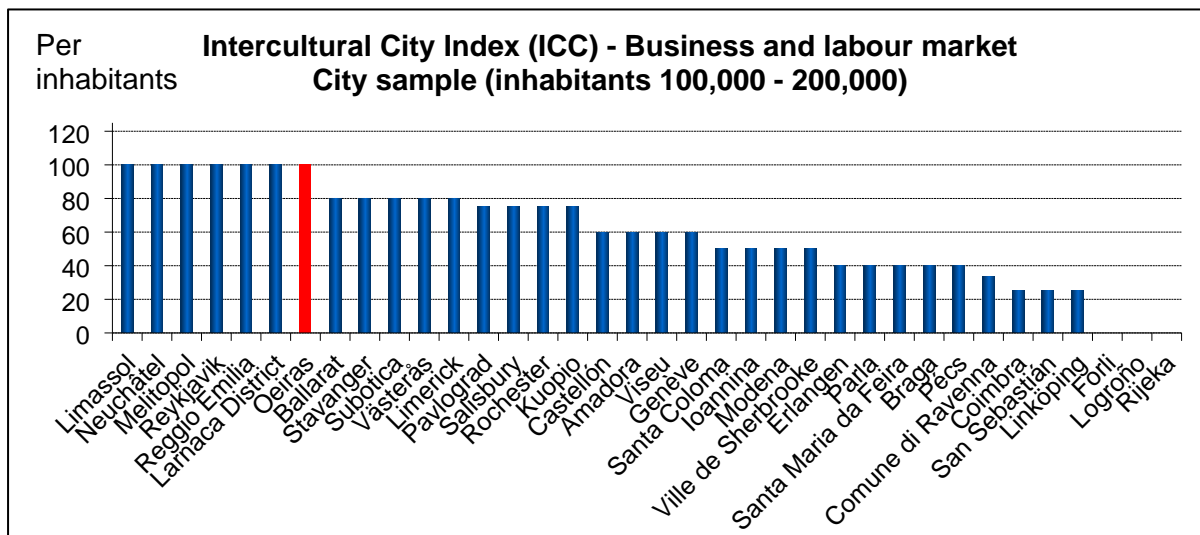
On the sensitivity of public services to users, Oeiras might look to how [Swansea](#) in the United Kingdom developed an array of methodologies for public engagement in this regard. These range from online panels to forums drawn from minority communities.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 52. This represents a big improvement on 2018 when the municipality scored 60. The municipality is again to be congratulated on this maximum score.⁷

⁷ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 100, while the city sample rate is 67.



Oeiras has sought support from private-sector employers for the Charter for Diversity. It regularly promotes [events](#) in conjunction with the Portuguese employers' organisation supporting corporate social responsibility, [GRACE](#), which has more than 330 affiliated businesses. GRACE is in turn a member of the advisory council of [Oeiras Community Valley](#), the corporate-social-responsibility programme developed by the municipality.

Oeiras supports social enterprise, working in partnership with the Agency of Social Entrepreneurs (SEACOP), which was created by a collective of social entrepreneurs and is based in neighbouring Cascais. The joint Fábrica do Empreendedor ('Factory of Entrepreneurship') project helps putative entrepreneurs – disproportionately of migrant origin – develop business plans, raise credit and so on. The municipality also makes available commercial spaces at affordable rents.

Specifically, Oeiras supports a community kitchen, Da Horta para o Prato ('From the Garden to the Plate'), in a social-housing neighbourhood in Porto Salvo. The mayor [was present](#) at the opening, officially recognising the significance of social enterprises in such diverse, disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Oeiras does not make intercultural commitment a criterion in decisions on public procurement. This would not be permitted by the regulatory regime in Portugal.

Suggestions

There are now many [diversity charters](#) across European Union member states. Oeiras might find it useful to share experiences with those of [Oslo](#), in Norway, an ICC member which has closely linked its intercultural work to business development in the city. It could also learn perhaps from the efforts of [Kirklees](#), in the United Kingdom, to champion diverse workplaces, with a 'Diversity = Innovation' network of local employers it has established.

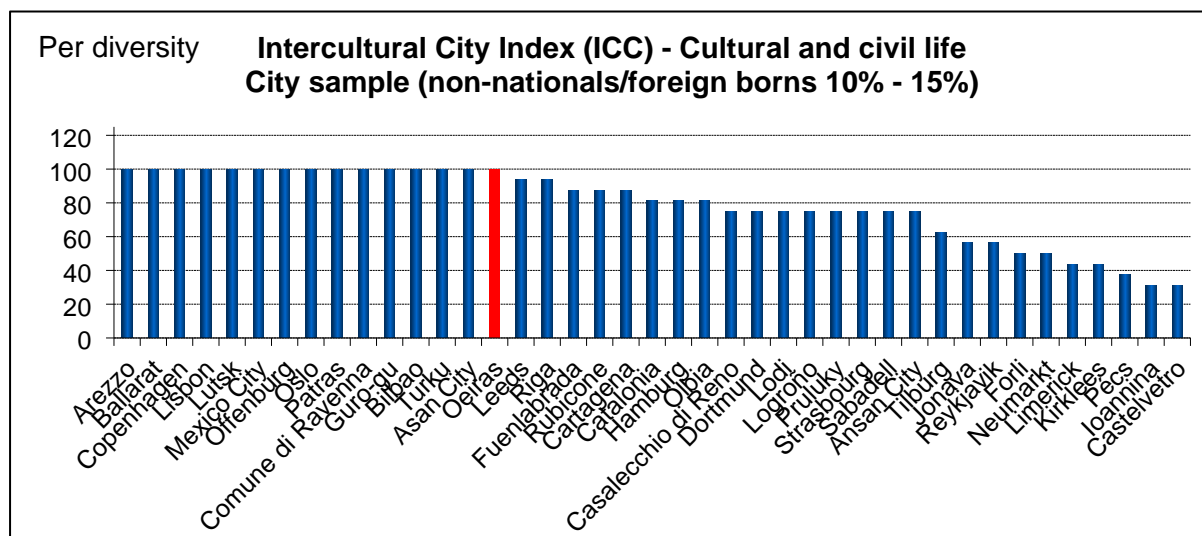
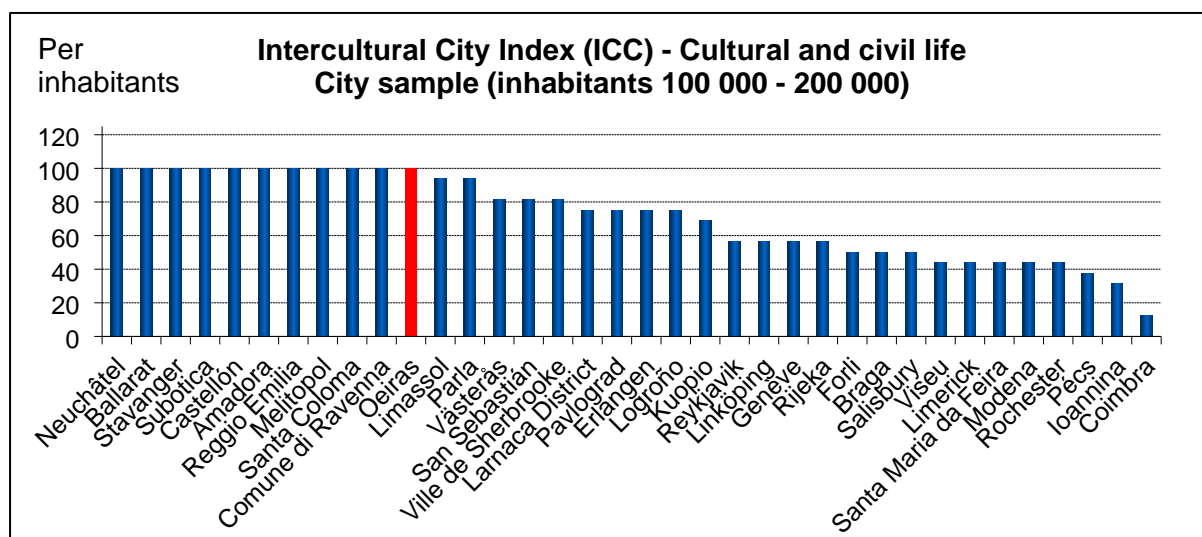
When it comes to labour-market interventions, Oeiras could usefully extend its interlocutors beyond those representing socially oriented employers to those speaking on behalf of workers. The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP), which emerged from the April revolution, [challenges](#) a 'security view of migratory politics', adopting a 'humanistic and integrative vision' aligned with the intercultural perspective.

On migrant and social entrepreneurship, Oeiras might also make links – if these have not been made already – with the DNA [Cascais](#) business incubator nearby. The same could be said of Da Horta para o Prato and the Cozinha Popular da Mouraria ('People's Kitchen of Mouraria') in [Lisbon](#) itself, also run by a not-for-profit association.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 71 and a big improvement on 2018 (when the municipality scored 75). For this maximum achievement the municipality is once more to be congratulated.⁸



⁸ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 100, while the city sample rate is 54.

A project called O Bairro EnCena ('the Neighbourhood on Stage'), developed by a cultural association in the municipality called [Palco Unânime](#), engages nearly 300 young people, mainly in social-housing neighbourhoods in Carnaxide and Porto Salvo, in developing capacities across the range of the performing arts and associated production skills. Activities range from coaching to cultural visits, with an annual showcasing of the work.

This project links nicely to the 'I am from the Neighbourhood' campaign (see above), of which the primary role model highlighted is the ballet dancer Marcelino Sambé. It provides a good example of what the 'diversity advantage' means in the socio-cultural domain: by removing any barriers to individuals' flourishing it raises the collective performance of the population concerned. A 2024 regulation promulgated by the municipality on its support for culture notes 'the dynamics that are being generated and developed by the diversity of agents' involved, including 'in terms of creativity, initiative and cooperation', as well as their contribution to social development and local economic policy.

Oeiras thus gives preferential support to associations which work with migrants and members of minority communities, such as Roma. It organises a 'Sport with Values' programme, focused on clubs in two multicultural neighbourhoods, using sport to promote community spirit. It is worth remembering in this context that involvement in associations, while modest overall, is higher than average among minorities in the municipality.

Suggestions

Given the plans of the municipality to expand its work in relation to Roma communities, Oeiras might draw on the experience of [Pavlohrad](#), in Ukraine, to encourage individuals from Roma backgrounds to become protagonists and even role models (this was before the full-scale Russian invasion of Donetsk in 2022). Pavlohrad sought to counter stereotypes by supporting a Roma organisation whose representatives could use that platform to become more actively involved in the life of the city.

There are numerous resources of the Council of Europe which could also provide both inspiration and tangible assistance to Oeiras in working together with Roma communities. The handbook '[A manual for the development of local resources, joint action and empowerment of Roma communities – ROMACTED](#)' from 2019 is a particularly valuable resource.⁹

The [NOS Alive](#) international summer popular music festival provides the municipality with an excellent opportunity not only to promote Oeiras but, specifically, its intercultural commitment. Without being heavy-handed, Oeiras could use its support for the festival to leverage branding and messaging by the organisers emphasising that this cosmopolitan audience was being brought to a welcoming intercultural location, with specific sites or experiences visiting participants might wish to sample. More generally, Oeiras might learn from the Danish [Centre for Arts and Interculture](#) (CKI), a kind of think-tank for the cultural domain, which embeds interculturalism in the sector including by linking up performers of newcomer backgrounds and existing arts institutions.

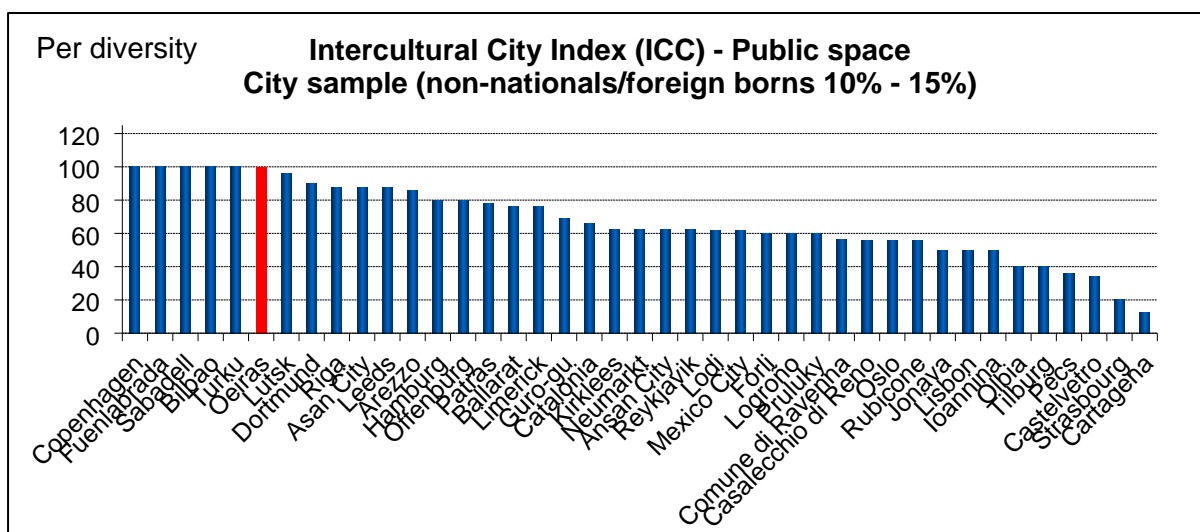
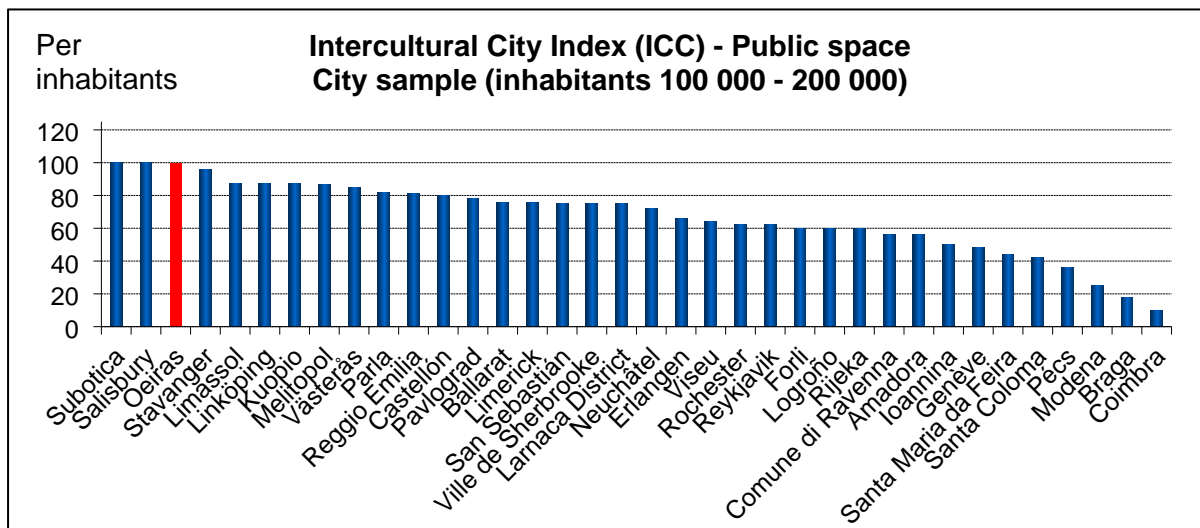
PUBLIC SPACE

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 67 and a big improvement on the score from 2018 of 80. Yet again, this maximum achievement should be recognised.¹⁰

⁹ Further resources are available on the Council of Europe's Roma and Travellers website: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/roma-and-travellers/resources>.

¹⁰ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 100, while the city sample rate is 45.



As indicated above under Neighbourhoods, Oeiras has adopted a granular approach to urban policy, which makes it easier to bring together intercultural and other social policies in a way which has traction on the ground and which engages the socially marginalised. It has made good use of the CLS instrument, through which Portuguese municipalities can develop bespoke packages with particular localities and for which it has [won a national award](#).

It is under this aegis that Oeiras has developed the Bairro EnCena project described in the last section. Other activities have included training of teachers and other professionals in intercultural communication when it comes to Roma children and language classes for those outside of the Portuguese-speaking world.

Suggestions

Oeiras might find of value the parallel efforts of the London borough of [Lewisham](#) in planning intercultural spaces with public engagement. It produced a toolkit for intercultural placemaking to encourage a wide diversity of people to interact in the borough, such as through parks, allotments and community gardens.

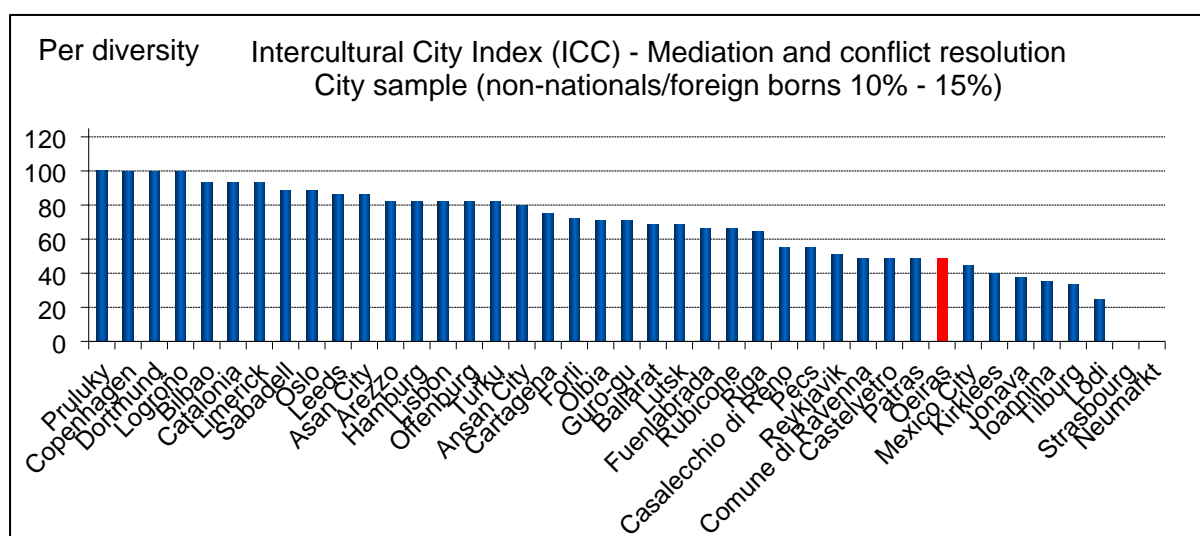
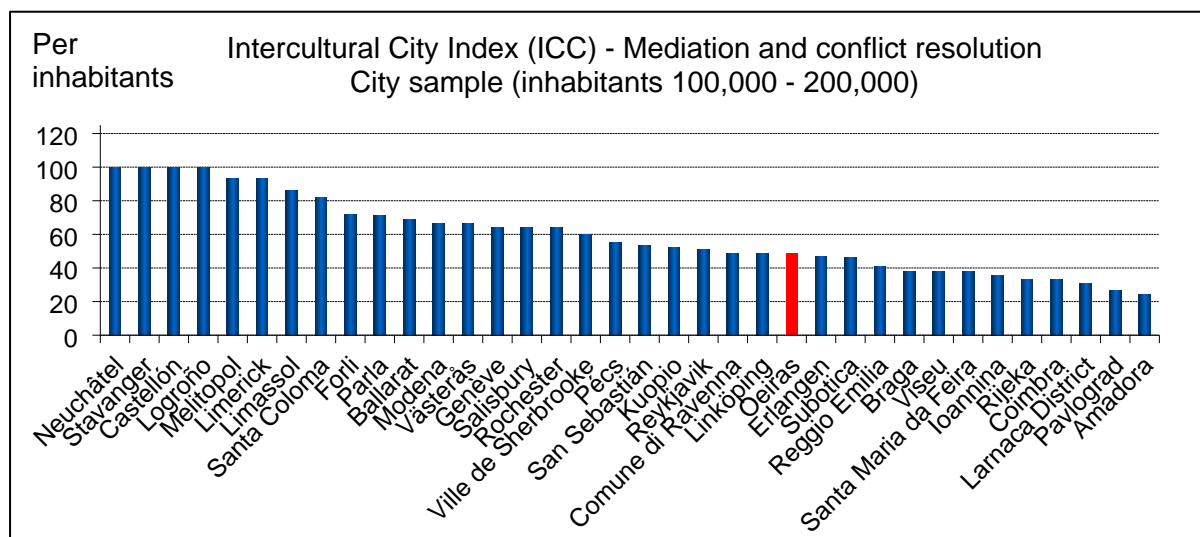
Similarly, [Barcelona](#) understands public spaces as ‘spaces for relations’. Within the framework of its Intercultural Plan it has involved public professionals, such as architects and planners, in designing elements of public space which may stimulate spontaneous interaction – children’s play areas, for instance.

Oeiras may wish to engage also with fellow RPCI member Vila Nova de Famalicão, a municipality which has recently taken part in the [“Cities in Placemaking”](#) project with Placemaking Europe. Other Intercultural Cities Members have also taken part in this project – including Wroclaw, Vinnytsia and Reggio Emilia – and the shared learnings of these cities could be useful for Oeiras as it moves forward, especially the Agenda for Making Placemaking Systemic.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 49, which is slightly lower than the city sample's rate of 56 but an improvement on Oeiras' 2018 rate of 44. This reflects progress by the municipality in supporting intercultural mediation.¹¹



Oeiras does not have an intercultural-mediation service as such. But such mediation is at the core of the work of the CLAIM centres, with trained professionals bridging gaps between public agencies and migrant users and addressing issues of equality of access and mutual understanding. The municipality also supports migrant-led associations which help with job placement, legal advice and so on.

A project called Intercultural Mediation in the School Context, promoted by the Local Security Contract (see above), is run in conjunction with a Roma association in the Carnaxide-Portela schools cluster. Roma mediators work with students, parents and staff to promote intercultural dialogue, prevent discrimination and pursue educational success.

¹¹ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 49, while the city sample rate is 53.

Oeiras has established a project focused on inter-religious dialogue called [Singing for Peace](#). Launched by the Choir of Young Singers of Nova Oeiras, it seeks to bring together children and youth from diverse religions and Christian denominations through music.

[Recommendations](#)

Were Oeiras to develop an intercultural strategy, as advocated under Commitment (see above), this would entail employment of, or support for, intercultural mediators among the actors needed to deliver it on the ground. It is one of the helpful 'disciplines' of working on such a strategy that such gaps make themselves apparent.

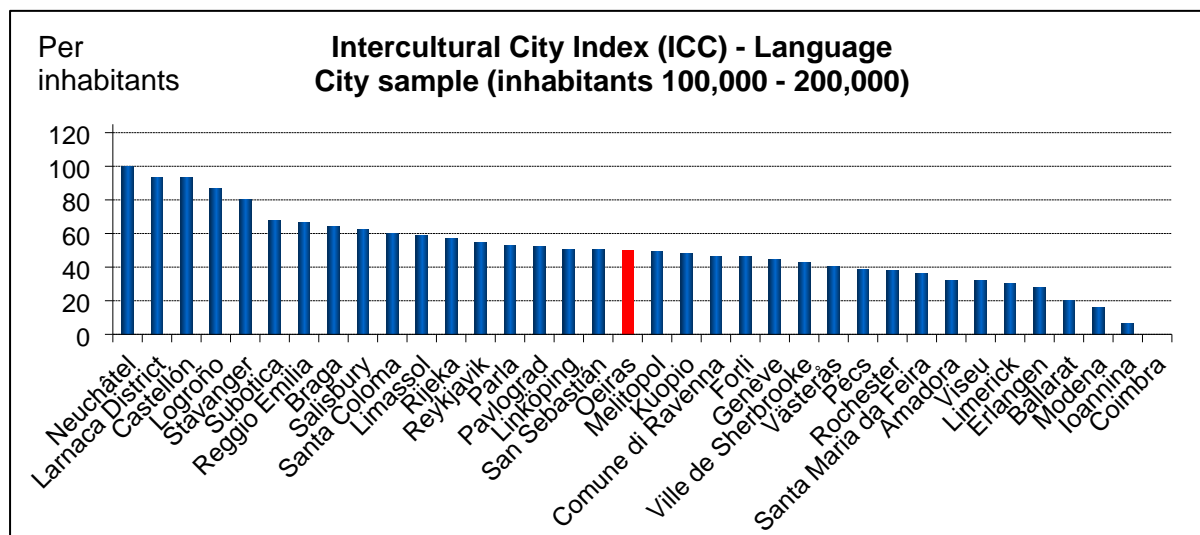
Oeiras might look in this regard to the example of [Barcelona](#), which has a comprehensive intercultural mediation strategy within the framework of its Intercultural Plan. This covers a range of themes, including mediating between service professionals and users and the resolution of disputes; and it operates in a variety of institutions, from hospitals to police stations.

On the issue of policing specifically, Oeiras might want to draw on the adjacent experience of neighbourhood policing in [Lisbon](#), including in the multicultural, social-housing location of Alto de Lisboa. This is an exemplar of the problem-solving approach to policing, working with the local community rather than over against it, which the Council of Europe has [espoused](#) in the Intercultural Cities guide on community policing.

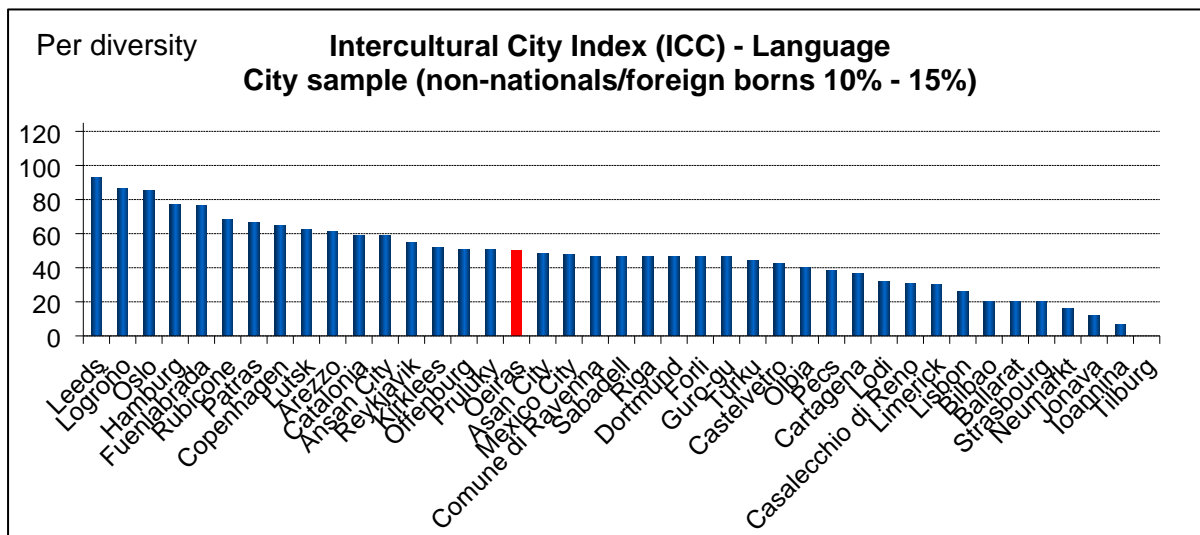
LANGUAGE

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 50, which is slightly higher than the city sample's rate of 46 and a major improvement on the municipality's 2018 score of 16. The predominance of Lusophone immigration in the past has made this a relatively minor issue but contemporary people movement is bringing greater linguistic diversity.¹²



¹² Oeiras' achievement rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 50, while the city sample rate is 45.



On language policy, the focus of Oeiras has been on improving literacy among already Portuguese-speaking migrants, including via adult education and training centres in Paço de Arcos and Carnaxide. But the Paço de Arcos school group participates in the national Bilingual Schools Programme. And the demography of the municipality is changing.

Within the parish of Oeiras, in particular, there is significant representation of European migrants, such that children of other-EU parents match the proportion of those from Africa in the schools. So schools in Oeiras offer Portuguese as a non-native language. The Aquilino Robeira school group (see above) has a multilingual language club offering students the opportunity to develop foreign languages through extramural activities. And the municipality supports associations variously promoting Portuguese, mother-tongue and other languages, including in exchange and mixed contexts.

Oeiras has also recognised how literature may promote relevant minority languages. For instance, in 2023 it published a memoir by a woman from Cape Verde, written partly in Cape Verdean creole.

Suggestions

The logic of this, including if Oeiras is to aim, like Oslo, to attract modern-technology professionals from around the world, is to move further from a linguistic policy of Portuguese assimilationism to one which favours effective multilingualism. As an ICC workshop on multilingualism as a resource for cities, held in Bilbao in 2014, [reported](#), 'it is no longer useful to approach language learning in a compartmentalized fashion (first/second/foreign languages etc.), within a native speaker model which aims at full proficiency, but rather to foster transculturality, partial competences and pragmatic multilingualism in addition to specialist language learning'.

A more recent Committee of Ministers Recommendation calls for schools to adopt a plurilingual and intercultural approach in order to foster democratic culture, in particular insofar as it encourages critical reflection on cultural diversity, supports the inclusion of disadvantaged and marginalised learners on an equal footing with other learners, and promotes language awareness and language sensitivity across the curriculum.¹³ The Platform of resources and references for plurilingual and intercultural education also includes useful inspiration and concrete tools to further develop this work.¹⁴

Here [Reykjavik](#) may provide a model. In the context of diverse immigration to the Icelandic capital in recent years, it has developed a specific approach to language development through its Centre of Language and Literacy. Its support for language pluralism and involvement of parents (and non-teaching staff), including in pre-school and after-school settings, transcends the assimilationist approach focused on schooling 'foreign' children into, and into learning through, the national language. It also supports a Mother Tongue Teaching Association and a bilingual association, as well as 'Café Lingua' events in places such as the city library.

¹³ Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the importance of plurilingual and intercultural education for democratic culture. Available at: <https://search.coe.int/cm/?i=0900001680a563ca>

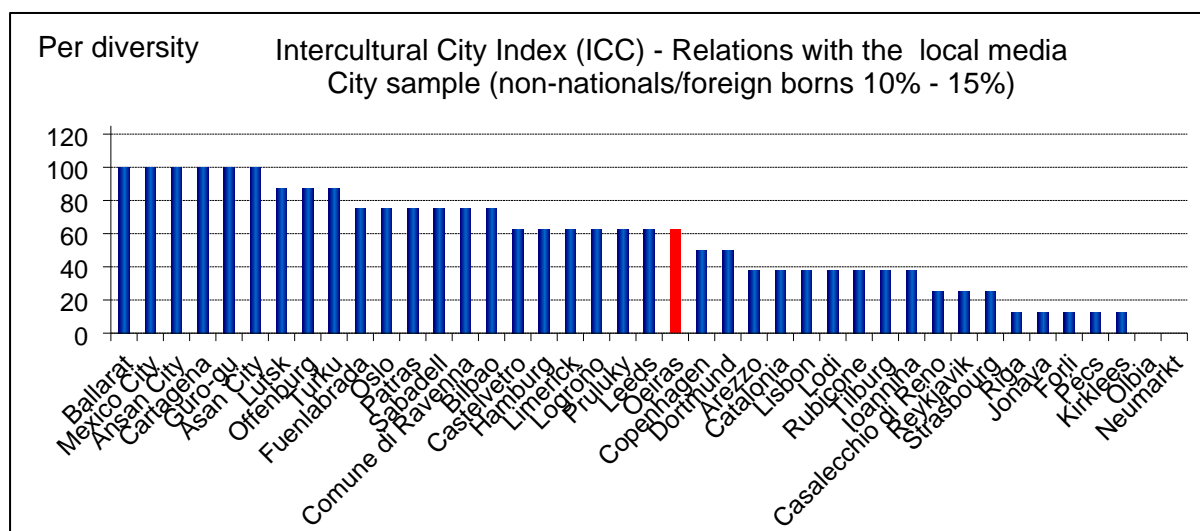
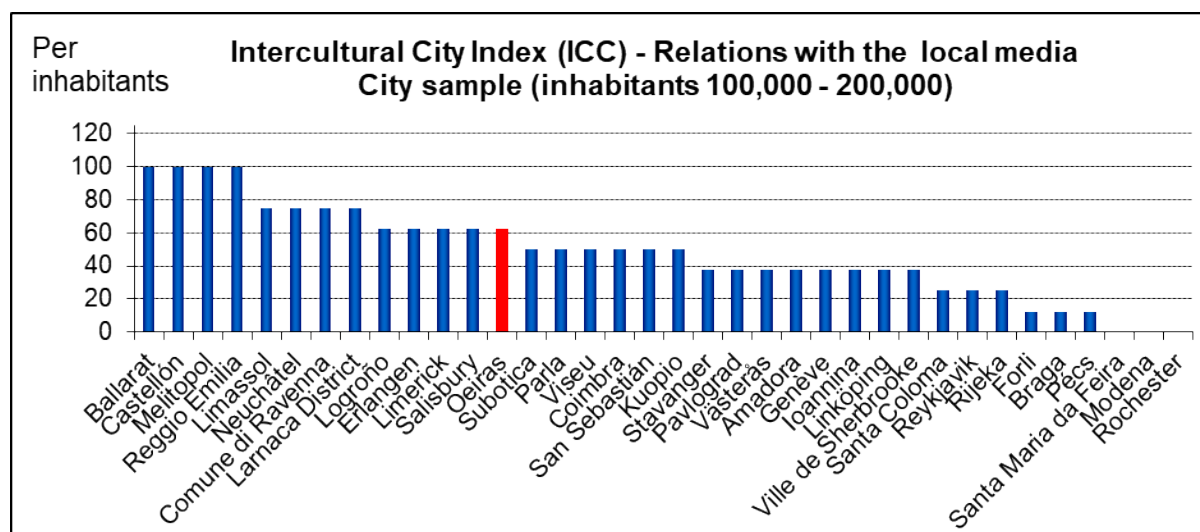
¹⁴ <https://www.coe.int/EN/web/platform-plurilingual-intercultural-language-education/>.

Libraries can be specific locations for the promotion of effective multilingualism, as [Sherbrooke](#) in Canada and [Subotica](#) in Serbia have recognised. Oeiras might wish to draw on these ideas.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 63, which is higher than the city sample's achievement rate of 47 and a major advance on the municipality's 2018 score of 38, for which it should be congratulated.¹⁵



According to the Municipal Plan for the Integration of Immigrants, the media project 'a very negative perception' of migrants in Oeiras, associating them with crime, poverty, unemployment and housing problems. As indicated above, the municipality's 'I Am from the Neighbourhood' campaign seeks to challenge the social stigmatisation of what are represented as 'problem' neighbourhoods. Another campaign, 'In Oeiras You are Everything', promotes the municipal scholarship programme, again showcasing young role models – such as a Cape Verdean economist educated to master's level – to stimulate aspiration among youngsters of similar background.

¹⁵ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 42, while the city sample rate is again 47.

The personal as well as political commitment of the mayor, Mr Morais, means that he repeatedly refers to Oeiras' commitment to interculturalism in his media statements. The municipality does not however monitor the representation of diversity in the media (and 'social media') locally.

Suggestions

Some ICC members have used the power of events to raise awareness of the work of the municipality for intercultural integration via the media and with the takeover for a day or a week of a part of the city's public space. [Oslo](#) provides the model here with its 'OXLO' (Oslo Extra Large) campaign, celebrating its demographic diversification over a generation. But, given its smaller scale, Oeiras might look, for instance, to [Sabadell](#), which organises an annual festival, Mescla't ('Mix It Up'), to promote a positive image of diversity in all its aspects and foster interaction. The day is planned months in advance with a range of NGOs, such as those representing Roma and youth, so it can add their commitment and engagement to the municipality's resources.

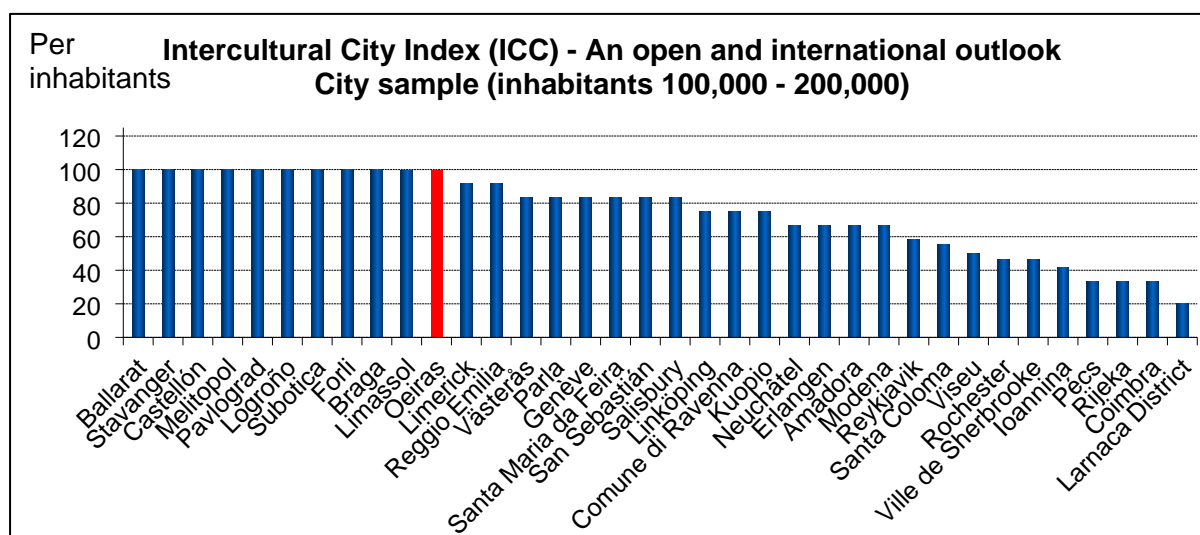
Another approach, through which Oeiras could build on 'I Am from the Neighbourhood', is capturing and publicising intercultural narratives, as adopted in neighbouring [Cascais](#) with its similar demography (substantial Brazilian and Cape Verdean presences). Here the municipality urged pairs of individuals from the area – one from Cascais originally and one not – to describe the arrival of the latter, how they had met and their relationship. In 2014, [Lublin](#) organised a campaign called 'Faces of Lublin', in which a photographer-journalist generated an exhibition of portraits of diverse individuals in the city interviewed to present their stories. This had been done in response to research showing little public awareness of diversity in Lublin and was accompanied by awareness-raising material at public places such as bus stops.

More ambitiously, [Braga](#) has made such storytelling, here through videos and audio interviews, part of a dedicated project, DiverCidade Braga, with its own [website](#), collating a wealth of material about the city's 'intercultural journey'. The project is pursued in partnership with migrant associations. Were Oeiras to develop its own intercultural strategy, as suggested above, this approach might inspire in terms of bringing the strategy to life.

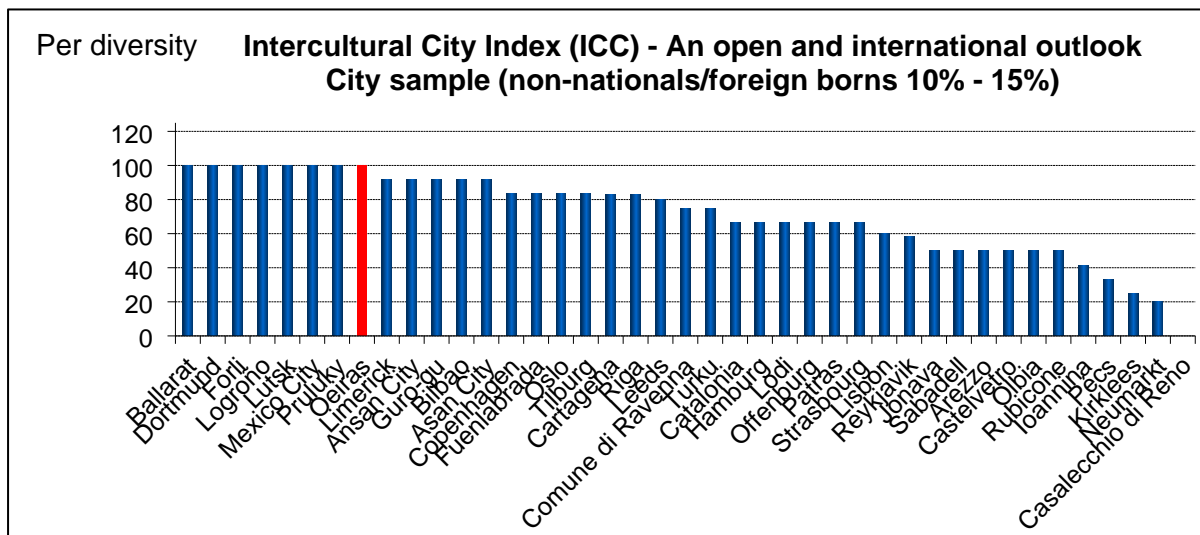
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 100, which is considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 68 and a big improvement on Oeiras' 2018 score of 67. Once again, the municipality is to be congratulated on a maximum score.¹⁶



¹⁶ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is again 100, while the city sample rate is 61.



The Oeiras Valley Investment Agency (OVIA) seeks to project local companies on to the international level and to attract investment from external firms. In 2021 the mayor signed a protocol with the national secretary of state for Portuguese communities to establish an Emigrant Support Office in Oeiras. This aims strategically to attract investment from the Portuguese diaspora, enhancing the economic potential of the municipality. The protocol also aims to support returning Portuguese citizens in their social and professional reintegration and to promote investment and development projects in Oeiras under the National Support Programme for Diaspora Investment.

Oeiras has a large network of twinned local authorities internationally, mainly in former Portuguese colonies. The Oeiras Poetry Award is promoted across the Lusophone world.

Suggestions

Oeiras might find of interest the experience of [Santa Maria da Feira](#) in brokering international company relationships, in both directions – via the diaspora abroad and via immigration. Santa Maria da Feira has sought to develop a platform, BizFeira, with the requisite information about potential partners – a virtual collaborative business space registering companies online, providing contact points with the Feira diaspora, indicating business opportunities and so on. It is a product of the municipality's Bureau of Economic and Corporate Development.

Orthodox economics assumes that all economic agents have complete information about markets but in reality relationships have to be facilitated. Research in Sweden [showed](#) how foreign-born workers could boost exports of services firms particularly. This was incorporated into the Finnish integration programme of 2016-19, led by the Ministry of Employment and Economic Affairs, which [encouraged](#) employment by firms of the foreign-born, including placements for foreign students.

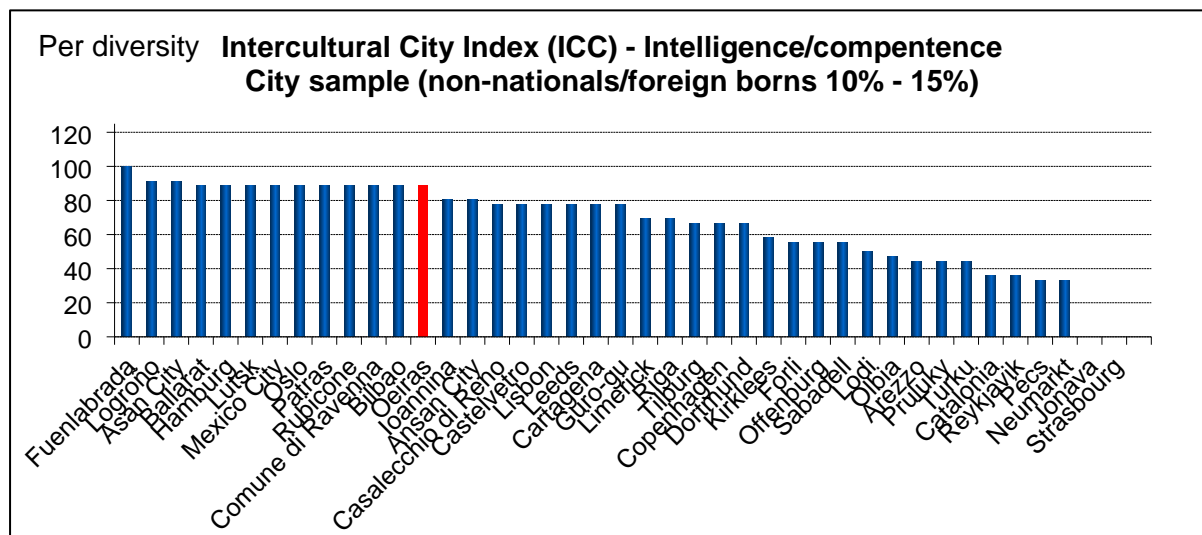
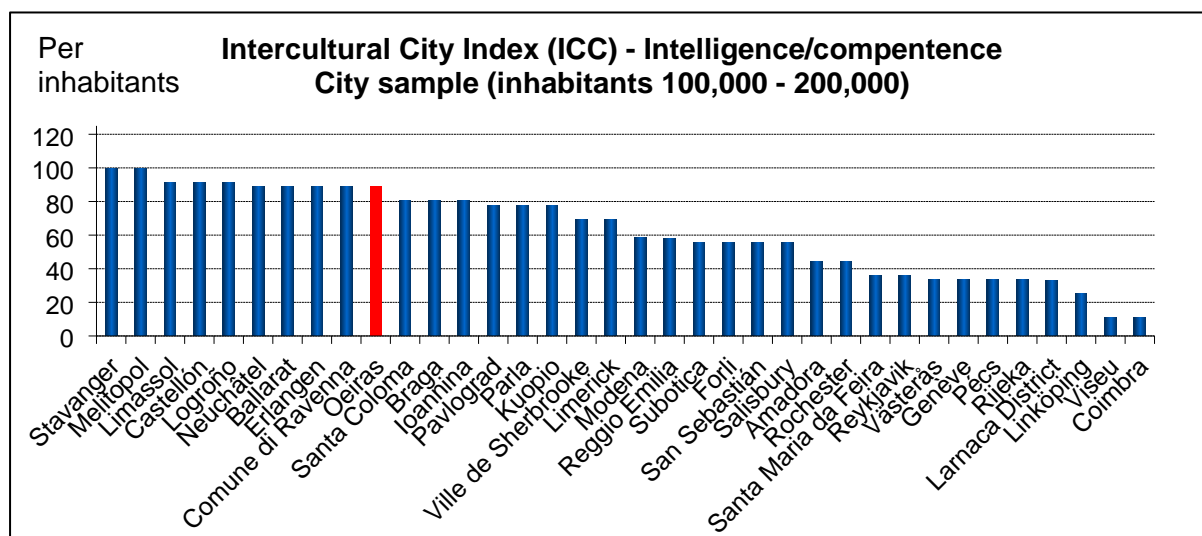
Oeiras might consider in this light the work by the [Stavanger](#) Chamber of Commerce and Industries in Norway to promote hospitality towards migrants by the city. The high-technology region's welcome centre organises events and activities to provide information for newcomers and to foster an inclusive culture in firms.

Given the strong representation of national scientific institutions in Oeiras and of high-technology firms, the municipality could also seek, for instance by promotional displays, to corral the skills of foreign students, visitors and contract staff these institutions attract via permanent residence and employment. It might find of interest the efforts of [Braga](#) to retain in the city students attending the International Iberian Nanotechnology Laboratory there.

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 is 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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 89, which is considerably higher than the city sample's rate of 59 and a major improvement on the 2018 rate of 44. This reflects the municipality's strength of underlying understanding of the issues.¹⁷



Oeiras is committed to diversity, inclusion and equality when it comes to its own workforce (see above). More than 50 employees across 16 departments have been trained to counter stereotypes and recognise individuality, as well as to share experiences in these regards. The municipality's efforts were recognised in its receipt in 2024 of a 'Seal of Diversity' [national award](#).

The municipal plan for Roma inclusion, awaiting official approval at time of writing, is based on information obtained and analysed within the framework of the CLS. Oeiras does not however carry out surveys of perceptions of migrants in the municipality or those of members of minority communities about their own security.

Suggestions

Oeiras might like to compare notes with [Reykjavik](#) on developing intercultural competence among its staff. Reykjavik devised a training course across all departments –titled 'Can't I say or do anything anymore?' – focusing on everyday experiences while anchored in equality and human rights.

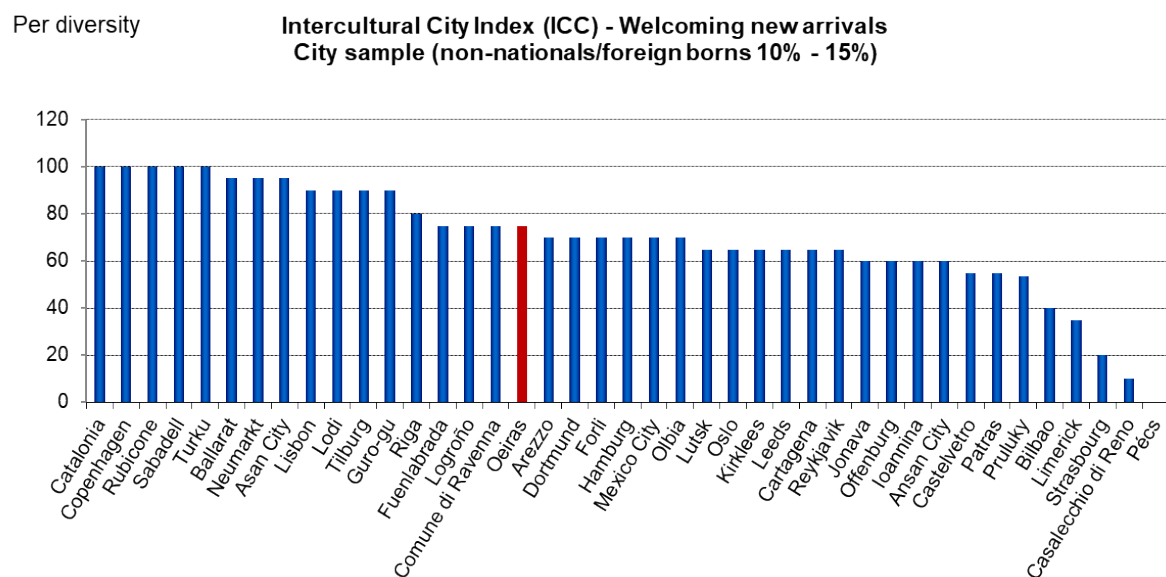
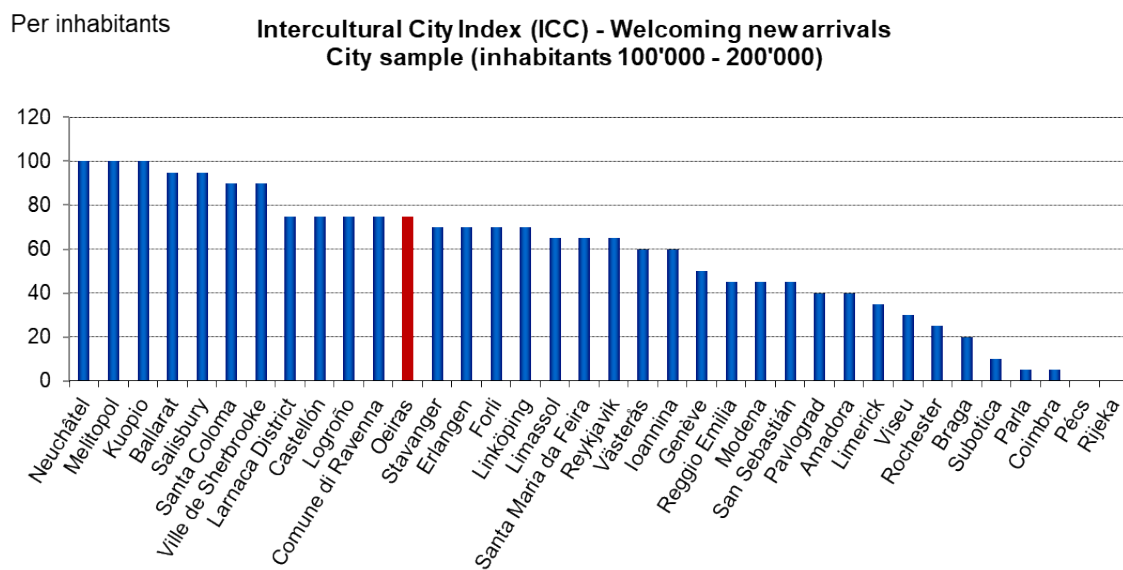
On the inclusion of Roma, Oeiras might share experiences with [Bradford](#) in the United Kingdom. There the municipality, recognising its lack of intelligence about the Roma community, including its own diversity, engaged local Roma people in the co-design of its strategy and continues to involve them in its monitoring. This approach could be one which Oeiras might extend to enhancing its knowledge of other minority communities in the local network it envisages.

¹⁷ Oeiras' rate in the extended Intercultural Cities Index is 92, while the city sample rate is 50.

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.

Oeiras achieved a rate of 75, which is higher than the city sample's rate of 58 and a significant improvement on the 2018 score of 45, for which the municipality should be applauded.



The CLAIM centres offer advice to newcomers on issues such as residency status and family reunification, as well as referring individuals to other services as relevant. They also support migrant associations which themselves provide tailored information.

The network of such centres across Portugal is one of its distinctive strengths when it comes to intercultural integration, particularly in providing a one-stop shop to which migrants lacking in information about available services can turn. All members of the Portuguese ICCs network have access to the [welcoming app](#) and associated guide developed by RPCI.

The CLAIM centres also liaise with the municipality's Social Support and Case Management Service (SAASI). Operating on a decentralised, parish level, this offers integrated support – reception, rights awareness, social protection, community integration – to socially vulnerable newcomers in particular.

Suggestions

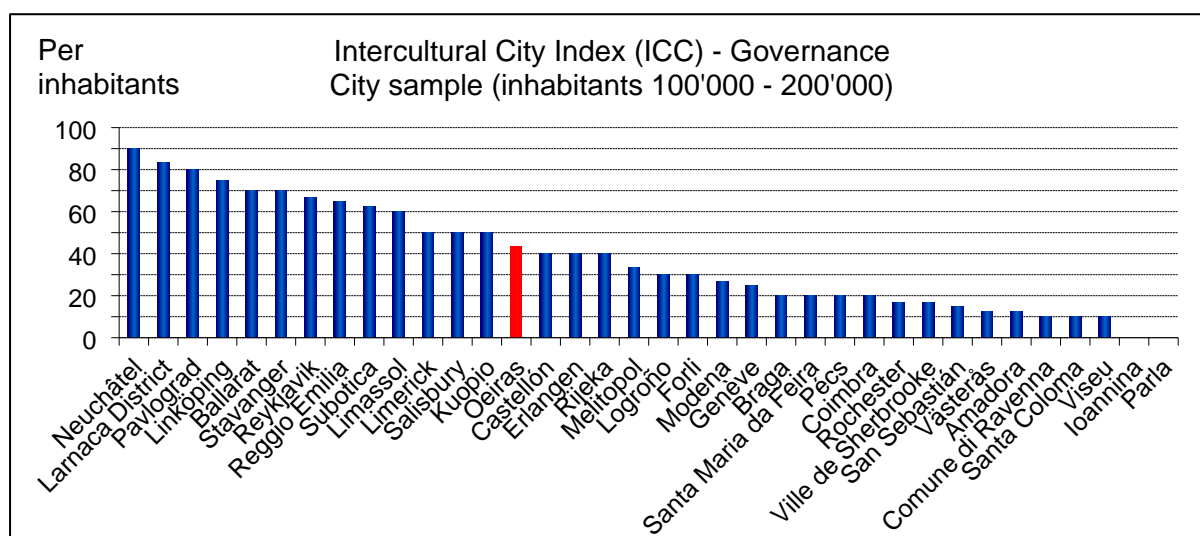
Oeiras might look at how [Sabadell](#) has developed a proactive reception service. Recognising the importance of initial experiences, it organises welcome sessions around the city for newcomers, with the support of relevant NGOs and with multilingual materials. Focused sessions are organised for women and for young people.

Oeiras might also consider if it could take its advice work further by exploring the example of neighbouring [Setúbal](#). Beyond dealing with quotidian queries from migrants, its Office for Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities (GIME) acts as a bridge between migrant associations and the municipal structure. This gives the former an entrée into the latter while also having the potential to act as a lightning conductor in identifying issues emerging on the street. Such a development might fit with Oeiras' new RIOMI network (see below) of migrant associations.

GOVERNANCE

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.

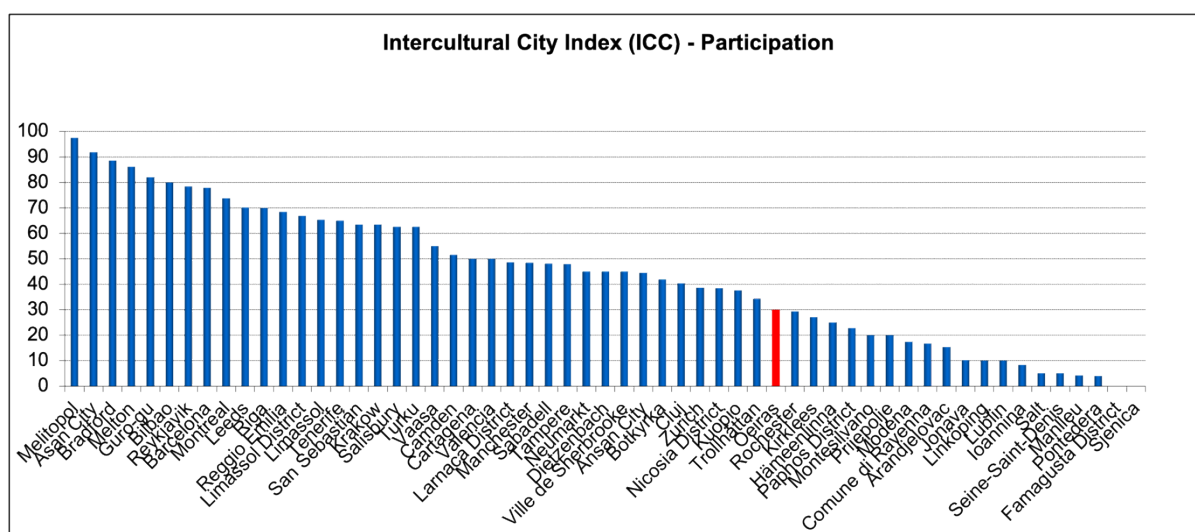
Oeiras achieved a rate of 43, which is slightly higher than the city sample's rate of 37 but lower than it scored in 2018 when it achieved a rate of 60. The municipality scores much better on the extended index here.¹⁸



¹⁸ Oeiras' rate in the extended index is 63, while the city sample rate is 50.

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 are not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 57 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Oeiras' achievement in participation is 33, compared with a city sample average of 44. Again, the municipality shows commitment but perhaps could make a particular effort here to enhance performance.



Oeiras does encourage public participation through networks for civic engagement, as with the Integrated Network for Migration and Interculturality in Oeiras (RIOMI). Comprising 11 associations representing migrants or promoting integration, RIOMI evolved from the prior Platform to Support Migrants' Integration. It provides an advisory and planning body for all actions by the municipality on migration and interculturalism.

The platform, which was responsible for the design, implementation and evaluation of the earlier Municipal Plan for Migrants' Integration, itself emerged from the Oeiras Social Network. The network has operated for over two decades to foster synergies among the various public and private agencies active in the social arena and has expanded to include 209 partners. This civil-society infrastructure provided a basis for widescale consultation on, and participation in, the Social Development Plan agreed by the municipality earlier in 2025. Oeiras can also avail itself in this regard of its annual [Democracy Day](#) and its Youth Municipal Assembly, to engage school students in this debate.

Evidence from elsewhere is that in preparing an intercultural-integration strategy, [at whatever level](#) of government, the process is as important as the outcome in terms of the opportunities provided, including in implementation and evaluation, for the widest possible participation of interested NGOs, experts and practitioners. Were Oeiras to develop a bespoke intercultural strategy, this would be a very tangible means to put its commitment to civic collaboration and citizen engagement into practice.

Recommendations

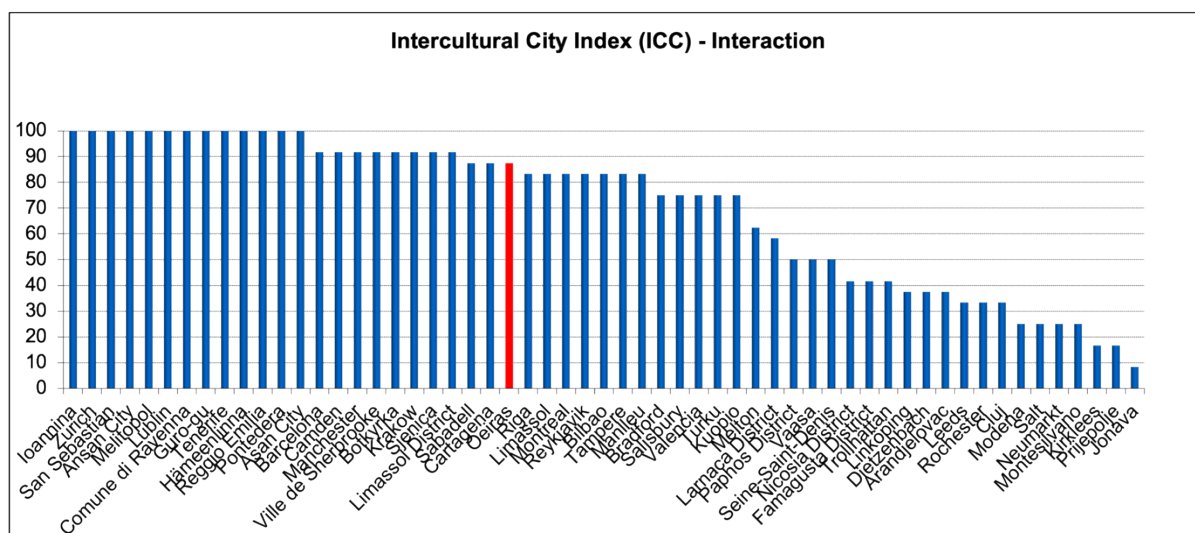
Oeiras might look to the extensive experience of [Valladolid](#) in Spain, which has produced a succession of intercultural strategies over the last two decades. For its 2019-2023 iteration, Valladolid not only evaluated (qualitatively and quantitatively) the precedent strategy but prepared the new document via a working group drawn from the Municipal Council of Immigrants, to include representatives of the associational arena and relevant practitioners, with academic input from the Human Rights Observatory of the local university.

Oeiras could also consider the methodology of [Bradford](#) in developing its Together for Stronger Communities strategy. Bradford adopted a largely qualitative and pluralist approach, including roundtables, commissions, focus groups, online surveys, recorded interviews and 'vox pops'. Pursuing different sources using different methods in this way – what social scientists call '[triangulation](#)' – gives more validity to the evidence emerging if it proves to be consistent.

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 are not yet relevant for statistical purposes. So far, 57 cities have replied to this new Intercultural Cities Index chapter. Oeiras' achievement in interaction is 88, significantly higher than the city sample score of 70, reflecting its deep engagement with the associational world in the municipality.



Two locations which contain relatively concentrated populations of migrant origin, Bairro dos Navegadores in Porto Salvo and Bairro da Outurela in Carnaxide, are the focus of work to encourage intercultural mixing across neighbourhoods in the context of the CLS. Through summer programmes, involvement in tennis, a local orchestra and so on, residents are encouraged to move outside, and outsiders to visit, these neighbourhoods. Also within the CLS, various efforts are pursued by the municipality to 'shorten distances' between Roma communities and the rest of the citizenry, such as the educational mediation referred to above or via the involvement of Roma youth in sports projects.

Suggestions

Elsewhere it has been found useful to promote interaction via initiatives focused on women. Oeiras might look for example to the work of [Sabadell](#) in brokering connections among diverse women, drawing on common concerns around women's subordination.

Oeiras might also consider the experience of [Reggio-Emilia](#) in Italy of addressing the segregation of Roma dwellings and school drop-out. Supporting the thrust of the pilot project in Carnaxide (see above), this found that educators working in schools and with the Roma community were able to play a 'bridging' role to the wider society in the municipality.

Placemaking initiatives, including the work done in the “Cities in Placemaking” pilot project, can also be of value in promoting interaction between diverse individuals and groups. The work of Reggio Emilia in placing the value of diversity at the heart of its approach to placemaking could be particularly interesting. The city of Wroclaw, Poland has also a number of initiatives which promote interaction across difference, including the Passage of Dialogue as shown during the recent ICC study visit to the city.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Oeiras achieved an aggregate Intercultural Cities Index achievement rate of 76, placing it higher than the majority of cities in its population bracket.

COMMITMENT	✓	The municipality exhibits a clear understanding of interculturalism and the mayor has associated himself with activities in this area of work. In the context of a Social Development Plan agreed earlier this year it has committed itself to develop an intercultural-integration strategy.
EDUCATION	✓	The Oeiras Educa+ project offers teachers a menu of non-formal intercultural education projects, including a transport service, from which to choose. A particular school group with a high concentration of Lusophone migrant children has developed a model 'Coloured Earth' project to address this diversity.
NEIGHBOURHOODS	✓	Oeiras seeks to avoid the ghettoisation of social housing by allocating dwellings to provide for dispersal and by integrating new developments into the urban fabric. In precarious neighbourhoods in Carnaxide and Porto Salvo, Oeiras actively engages neighbourhood (and migrant) associations via the Local Security Contract (CLS).
PUBLIC SERVICES	✓ ✗	The municipality believes its workforce is representative of the population locally at all levels. An Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion equips that workforce with the associated tools and competences. Oeiras has however no strategy to ensure the adequacy of its workforce diversity.
BUSINESS AND THE LABOUR MARKET	✓ ✗	Oeiras promotes the Portuguese Charter for Diversity among local employers. It supports social entrepreneurs, disproportionately of migrant backgrounds. Oeiras does not make intercultural commitment a criterion in decisions on public procurement. This would be outside of the regulatory regime in Portugal.
CULTURAL AND SOCIAL LIFE	✓	Oeiras gives preferential support to associations which work with migrants and members of minority communities, such as Roma. It organises a 'Sport with Values' programme, focused on clubs in two multicultural neighbourhoods, using sport to promote community spirit.
PUBLIC SPACE	✓	Oeiras has adopted a granular approach to urban policy, which makes it easier to bring together intercultural and other social policies on the ground and engage the socially marginalised. It has made good use of the CLS, through which municipalities can develop bespoke packages with localities.
MEDIATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION	✓ ✗	Intercultural mediation is at the core of the work of the CLAIM centres, bridging communication gaps between migrant users and public services. A project with a Roma association provides intercultural mediation in a school context. Oeiras has not established an intercultural-mediation service as such.
LANGUAGE	✓	The focus of Oeiras hitherto on language has been on improving literacy among Portuguese-speaking migrants, including via adult education and training centres. Against the backdrop of increased other-EU immigration, schools in Oeiras offer Portuguese as a non-native language.
MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION	✓ ✗	The municipality runs a campaign called 'I Am from the Neighbourhood' to challenge the social stigmatisation of 'problem' neighbourhoods. The mayor repeatedly refers to Oeiras' intercultural commitment in media statements. The municipality does not monitor the representation of diversity in the media.
INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK	✓	An Emigrant Support Office aims to attract investment from the Portuguese diaspora, enhancing the economic potential of the municipality. Oeiras has a large network of twinned local authorities internationally, mainly in former Portuguese colonies.

INTERCULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND COMPETENCE	✓ ✗	More than 50 employees across 16 departments have been trained to counter stereotypes and recognise individuality, as well as to share experiences. Oeiras does not carry out surveys of perceptions of migrants in the municipality or those of members of minority communities about their own security.
WELCOMING NEWCOMERS	✓	The CLAIM centres offer advice to newcomers on issues such as residency status, as well as referring individuals to other services. The Social Support and Case Management Service (SAASI) offers integrated support to socially vulnerable newcomers in particular.
LEADERSHIP AND CITIZENSHIP	✓ ✗	Oeiras' Municipal Plan for Migrants' Integration was drawn up and evaluated by the Platform to Support Migrants' Integration, bringing together local government and relevant non-governmental organisations. Oeiras does not ensure public boards reflect the diversity of the municipality today.
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION	✓ ✗	Oeiras has shown a strong commitment to gender equality. For this it has been the recipient of awards from the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality. The municipality does not systematically monitor the character of discrimination locally. Nor has it audited its rules and regulations for any discriminatory aspect.
PARTICIPATION	✓	An Integrated Network for Migration and Interculturality (RIOMI) has replaced the Platform to Support Migrants' Integration. It provides an advisory and planning body for all actions by the municipality on migration and interculturalism.
INTERACTION	✓	Within the framework of the CLS, two locations which contain relatively concentrated populations of migrant origin are the focus of work to encourage intercultural mixing across neighbourhoods, while various efforts are pursued by the municipality to 'shorten distances' to Roma communities.

In view of the above, we wish to congratulate Oeiras for the efforts taken and we are confident that if the city follows our guidelines and other Intercultural Cities' practices the results will rapidly be visible and tangible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Commitment: The Oeiras'27 Bid Book admitted that the city 'lacks a distinctive cultural personality'. We recommend the municipality to develop an intercultural strategy, as pledged in its new Social Development Plan, whose aim can identify the goal the city pursues, as a positive self-affirmation. Oeiras might look at [Barcelona's](#) intercultural plan, which includes an Interdepartmental Interculturality Committee to ensure a joined-up approach.

Education: Oeiras might share its experience of its Oeiras Educa+ project of brokering inon-formal intercultural activities for schools with [Sabadell](#), which runs a similar City and School programme. The municipality might also encourage more links between the Aquilino Ribeiro group, with its 'Coloured Earth' project, and other schools across Oeiras, looking to the experience of multi-ethnic [Bradford](#) in developing such connections locally.

Neighbourhoods: Oeiras might find of interest how [Barcelona](#) has integrated its intercultural and neighbourhood plans – with the latter mandated to include the perspective of the former. This also brings together officials involved with the different plans. This approach can help avoid unwittingly identifying and focusing on 'problem' neighbourhoods. It is with this in mind that [Lisbon](#) rotates its Todos intercultural festival around the city each year.

Public services: Oeiras might learn from the commitment of [Auckland](#) to the idea of being an 'inclusive workplace', its proactive approach across the municipality including divisional diversity and inclusion plans. On the sensitivity of public services to users, Oeiras might look to how [Swansea](#) has developed an array of methodologies for public engagement. These range from online panels to forums drawn from minority communities.

Business and the labour market: On the Charter for Diversity Oeiras might share experiences with those of [Oslo](#), which has linked its intercultural work to business development. It could also learn from the efforts of [Kirklees](#) to champion diverse workplaces, with a 'Diversity = Innovation' network of local employers. On migrant and social entrepreneurship, Oeiras might also make links with the DNA [Cascais](#) business incubator nearby.

Cultural and social life: Given Oeiras' plan to expand its work in relation to Roma communities, it might draw on the (prewar) experience of [Pavlohrad](#) in encouraging Roma individuals to become protagonists and even role models. More generally, It might learn from the Danish [Centre for Arts and Interculture](#) (CKI), which embeds interculturalism in the cultural domain including by linking performers of newcomer origin and arts institutions.

Public space: Oeiras might find of value how [Lewisham](#) plans public spaces, with wide engagement, to encourage diverse people to interact, such as through parks, allotments and community gardens, and how [Barcelona](#) involves public professionals, such as architects and planners, in designing elements of public space which may stimulate spontaneous interaction – children's play areas, for instance.

Mediation and conflict resolution: Oeiras might look to the example of [Barcelona](#), whose comprehensive intercultural-mediation strategy covers a range of themes and operates in a variety of institutions, from hospitals to police stations. On policing specifically, Oeiras might want to draw on the adjacent experience of neighbourhood policing in [Lisbon](#), an exemplar of the problem-solving approach which the Council of Europe has [espoused](#).

Language: Amid increasing diversity, Oeiras might seek to move further from a language policy of Portuguese assimilationism to one which favours [effective multilingualism](#). It could look to [Reykjavik](#), with its support for language pluralism in education and involvement of parents (and non-teaching staff), including in pre-school and after-school settings. Libraries can be valuable locations here, as [Sherbrooke](#) and [Subotica](#) have recognised.

Media and communication: Oeiras might look to [Sabadell](#), which organises an annual festival, Mescla't ('Mix It Up'), to promote diversity positively and foster interaction. The day is planned with a range of NGOs. [Braga](#) has made storytelling part of a dedicated project, DiverCidade Braga, which might also inspire, collating a wealth of material about the city's 'intercultural journey'. The project is pursued in partnership with migrant associations.

International outlook: Oeiras might find of interest the experience of [Santa Maria da Feira](#) in brokering international company relationships, via the diaspora abroad and via immigration. Santa Maria da Feira has sought to develop a platform, BizFeira, with the requisite information about potential partners. Also worth considering is the work by the [Stavanger](#) Chamber of Commerce and Industries to promote hospitality towards migrants.

Intercultural intelligence and competence: Oeiras might compare notes with [Reykjavik](#), which devised a training course for its staff, across all departments, focusing on everyday experiences of diversity at work and among users, anchored in equality and human rights. On the inclusion of Roma individuals, Oeiras might share experiences with [Bradford](#), which engaged local Roma in the co-design of its strategy and continues to involve them in its monitoring.

Welcoming newcomers: Oeiras might look at how [Sabadell](#) has developed a proactive reception service, organising welcome sessions around the city for newcomers with the support of relevant NGOs and multilingual materials. It might also consider how neighbouring [Setúbal](#) wraps up its advice work in an Office for Immigrants and Ethnic Minorities (GIME), which acts as a bridge between migrant associations and the municipal structure.

Leadership and citizenship: Oeiras might seek to develop its RIOMI network, looking to the Immigration Council in [Bilbao](#), with its dedicated working groups as well as plenary sessions, for possible inspiration. Oeiras might also consider the approach adopted by [Camden](#) in London to tackle under-representation on public bodies beyond the municipality, including by community outreach and diversity training for board chairs.

Anti-discrimination: Oeiras could not replicate the [Barcelona](#) Discrimination Observatory but it could support surveys of discrimination experienced by members of minority communities. It might learn from how [Kirklees](#) uses impact assessments to identify potentially adverse impacts on particular groups of any major council decision. And it might copy [Cascais](#) in designating a counsellor for gender equality, scrutinising *inter alia* its intercultural work.

Participation: If it were to develop its own intercultural strategy, Oeiras might look to [Valladolid](#), which prepared its last iteration via a working group drawn from the Municipal Council of Immigrants, representing the associations and practitioners. Oeiras could also consider the largely qualitative and pluralist approach of [Bradford](#) in developing its intercultural strategy, including roundtables, commissions, focus groups, surveys, interviews and 'vox pops'.

Interaction: Oeiras might look to the work of [Sabadell](#) in brokering connections among diverse women, drawing on common concerns around women's subordination. It might also consider the experience of [Reggio-Emilia](#) in

Italy of addressing the segregation of Roma dwellings and school drop-out – it bore out that educators working in schools and with the Roma community were able to play a 'bridging' role to the wider society.

Oeiras 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. Almost two decades 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.

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

