



City of Pavlograd

Intercultural Profile

October 2017

This report is a result of a two day visit by the ICC independent experts Kseniya Khovanova-Rubicondo and Robin Wilson to the city of Pavlograd (Ukraine) that took place on 25 to 27 September 2017. This report will be accompanied by the ICC Index Analysis conducted in Pavlograd within the framework of the visit.

Introduction

The Ukrainian national Intercultural cities network members are dispersed across the country, which is significant given its historic regional tensions. The country's East-West divide which also has cultural/linguistic and geopolitical undertones, has culminated in the Russian annexation of Crimea and secessionist violence in the most eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk. While not in the conflict zone, Pavlograd does fall within Donetsk and the fate of 'refugees' from the violence (technically, internally displaced persons or IDPs) was a recurring issue, variously and spontaneously raised during the first Intercultural cities expert visit to the city. A recent memorial to local soldiers killed in the fighting was notable walking along the city's central streets.

Another contextualising factor was the new Law on Education, signed by the president on the first day of the visit. Article 7 of the Law stipulates that the language of instruction in public schools is Ukrainian, starting from the school year 5 (approximate age 12). Until year 5 schoolchildren can study in their own mother tongue, and starting from school year 5, minority languages can be studied as a separate subject. Currently in Pavlograd, there is education in Russian as mother tongue in three schools.

The law has since been criticised by the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly in a resolution (Resolution number 2189 or 12 October 2017) saying it "does not appear to strike an appropriate balance between the official language and the languages of national minorities. In particular, the new law entails a heavy reduction in the rights previously accorded to 'national minorities' concerning their own language of education". The resolution admitted that states have a legitimate right to promote learning of the official language, but also that this must go in hand with measures to protect the languages of the national minorities. The Assembly reminded that it is important to fulfil the commitments based on the European Convention on Human Rights, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, and to help re-establish a constructive dialogue between the different parties concerned

In terms of responses, within Ukraine this has been seen predominantly as part of the 'de-Russification' of a fully independent state, meeting only residual opposition from Party of Regions quarters. Externally, Russia has condemned the law as a violation of Ukraine's international obligations and Romania and other kind states are pursuing it as a minority-rights issue with the Council of Europe and the OSCE.

Pavlograd's make-up

Pavlograd is one of the oldest cities in the Dnipropetrovsk *oblast*. A small statue centrally placed commemorates the Cossack who in the 18th century is credited with its formal foundation. A plan was prepared in the 19th century by a Scottish-born architect and the city has a pleasingly walkable aspect of boulevards and public squares, convivial for intercultural exchanges, with a radius of under five kilometres on average.

In the 20th century Pavlograd became home to a Soviet factory for the production of rockets and missiles and western capital of the Donbass coal-mining region, which has been severely affected by the recent conflict. From a pre-war population of some 25,000, its strategic significance post-war drew many high-level specialists from all over the USSR for short-term appointments in the 1960s and 70s—but naturally many stayed. Many leading medical institutions in the USSR, for example, had to send one or two specialists to Donbass for a few years. So, today many from the former Soviet bloc countries reside in Pavlograd: Russians, of course, but also Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Belarusians, Georgians, Crimean Tatars, Kazakhs, Estonians and Poles. Roma, Koreans, Afro-Americans and members of other nationalities have added to the ethno-cultural mix of the city and—as evidenced by the visit—all play an active role in the social and economic life of Pavlograd. Today the city has a population of some 108,000, down from 131,000 at the end of the Soviet era.

According to the 2011 census, the population is 59 per cent Ukrainian-speaking, 40 per cent Russian-speaking. But this obscures the demographic complexity. A Jewish community going back to the 18th century was substantially reduced by the Holocaust, with a concentration camp in the city; in 2011, the Jewish cemetery, opened to Christian burials also with the agreement of the community, was desecrated. As highlighted however in an exhibition about Pavlograd notables at the municipal cultural centre on show during the visit, a Jewish mayor was elected by the citizenry to run the city for fully 25 years from 1892. The leading Orthodox cleric in Pavlograd, Father Valentin, claimed there were no religious conflicts in the city today, with members of his faith community participating



in round-tables with Muslim and Jewish representatives and co-operating, for example, in the marking of Holocaust Day.

While there was a revolt against Soviet rule in Pavlograd in 1930, an overhang from the Soviet era remains apparent in its day-to-day culture. This manifests itself as on the one hand a faith in peaceful coexistence as the normal, default state of everyday life, regardless of nationality—a kind of widely shared ‘common identity’. Public administrators routinely reported how their work embraced members of all nationalities in the city. Residentially, apartment blocks have tenants of diverse origins—rather than there being informal residential segregation as in some European cities—and a trade-union official spoke just as assuredly of workers of different nationalities rubbing along in the workplace as the Orthodox leader affirmed an absence of religious conflicts. On the other hand, there is a belief in distinct and homogeneous ‘national cultures’, represented in folkish ways such as through music and cuisine when it comes to minorities. The Roma community, which in Pavlograd is around 2,000-strong, mainly originating from Romania, is quite often represented (not just in Pavlograd) in this way—yet, interestingly, it defies some of the stereotypes.

The big demographic shift of recent times was, of course, the arrival of the IDPs in the last few years. The official responsible for social security in Pavlograd said that at one point his agency was financing 7,000 IDP households—that figure was now down to 3,000 or more, with some still unemployed. Some of the IDPs had gone back to their places of origin in Luhansk/Donetsk; some moved further to the central and western regions of Ukraine in a search for jobs or peaceful living. Nevertheless, for a city of Pavlograd’s modest size, this was a testing influx—much greater proportionately than the 2 million or so who [sought asylum](#) across the European Union (population 508 million) in 2014-16, widely represented as a ‘refugee crisis’. More information about the nowadays political, economic and social environment in Ukraine can be found on the ICC Programme webpage in the profiles of such cities-members of Ukrainian ICC Network as Odessa and Lutsk.¹

The intercultural municipality

This long historical trajectory explains a positive feature of Pavlograd, which can be a valuable foundation for an intercultural future. Far from exhibiting a typical, small-city provincialism, Pavlograd prides itself on its openness. The first session of the programme brought together officials of the municipality, representatives of the national minorities present in the city and those of relevant NGOs, setting the tone for the remainder of the visit. This embodies the coalition of stakeholders which is necessary for any intercultural city to thrive cohesively and to ensure the municipality’s intercultural commitment has traction on the ground. One journalist who covered the visit warned later that the project was seen by journalists in the city as ‘official’ and not connected to them. Another, also sympathetic, said she had been surprised to discover Pavlograd was part of this 121-member international network of cities. This despite the fact that Pavlograd had designated 2017 as Intercultural Year.

A notable aspect of this intercultural coalition, so to speak, straddling the municipality and civil society, is its gender make-up. In this session, as throughout, there was a good gender balance if not

¹ ICC-UA Network, ICC Programme of the Council of Europe <https://rm.coe.int/odessa-intercultural-profile/1680759d6c>, <https://rm.coe.int/lutsk-intercultural-profile/1680759d6b>

a female predominance—in sharp contrast to the all-male line of past mayors whose portraits adorned the walls of the room.

Starting the meeting, a deputy mayor (standing in for the mayor) pointed to the more than 30 nationalities represented in the city today and its acceptance of a significant number of IDPs from the conflict. Indeed, an official video presented subsequently billed Pavlograd (in English) as a 'cosmopolitan' city. This is highly innovative for a city of Pavlograd's geopolitical location: across the Soviet sphere, in the Stalin era of 'socialism in one country', 'cosmopolitanism' was represented as somehow anti-national and tainted with anti-Semitism. The video highlights the four institutions of further/higher education in the city, its strong media (especially internet) presence and its international partnerships.

The municipality's intercultural co-ordinator, Olena Shulika, noted how Pavlograd was not only involved in the Ukrainian network but had collaborated with Botkyrka in Sweden—Pavlograd is also twinned with Lubsko in Poland and San Sebastian in Spain (also an Intercultural cities member). As examples of how interculturalism was woven into the city's social fabric, she said many individual staff across public administration were engaged, the professional arena was diverse in nationality, members of minority populations were involved in voluntary work and a cinema club exhibited minority cultural products.

Ms Shulika's enthusiasm was palpable. She is also a deputy mayor of Pavlograd and she continually conveys a 'we are all one family, diverse, unique but united and talented' message across all meetings and at every occasion when she speaks in public. This is very important for an intercultural city, where the leadership understands the importance of mixing and values the diversity advantage—and sends the right signals to the wider public.

Kseniya Khovanova-Rubicondo explained to the first session the Intercultural Cities index. She stressed that it was not competitive but was to assist municipalities to benchmark (and so improve) their performance in areas of relative weakness identified. The index covered the broad swathe of municipal activity and she also stressed that interculturalism was not confined to the narrowly cultural arena. The succeeding session, focusing on the economy, proved just that.

The economy and the diversity advantage

The visit moved on to the city's Agency for Economic Development. Created as a business centre, the agency however links business and civil society and develops social enterprises. It is also involved in public renovation—elements of the public realm in Pavlograd are a little dilapidated in places—and it defines itself as a public, non-commercial and non-governmental organisation. It is supported financially by the municipality, which is represented on the board alongside business and civil society. Among its activities are developing skills and creativity, offering business consultations and individual advice. It supports projects variously of a social (including for people with disabilities and IDPs), community (with a competitive grant scheme) and intercultural character.

The meeting was again notable for the range of nationalities and faiths represented around the table, reflecting the diversity of the agency's service users. 'The intercultural dimension is our dimension too as we deal with the city's social fabric,' said Olena Mironenko, its director. And she added: 'If Roma or the Armenian community want to open an enterprise in Pavlograd, we readily

help them ... Today we are proud to be an open and intercultural city.’ Indeed, in Pavlograd they prefer to call the IDPs ‘newcomers’ and the agency runs a project ‘Everybody is our Family’ (20 different organisations are involved) to help newcomers integrate, adapt faster and become economically independent.

The agency organised the first Donbass-wide economic forum in 2016, with more than 130 participants. And according to the trade-union official, there are now only 34 coalmines operating in Ukraine, where once there were 112. Pavlograd coalmines provided 40 per cent of coal in Ukraine as of August 2017. With the coal industry not only severely disrupted by the conflict—mines having been closed or taken over by the separatists—but also in long-term decline for economic and ecological reasons, there is clearly a need for a new economic model for Pavlograd and its environs to articulate and pursue.

This would be based on finding a place in today’s global ‘informational’ economy, negotiating the transition from an older, historically protected, heavy-industrial, regional one. The four tertiary-education institutions mentioned in the city video are: a college of mining education (preparing individuals for employment there), a technical college, an inter-regional academy of human-resource management and a medical college. The first of these could be refocused on engineering over time and the facilities in combination provide a significant potential resource for equipping citizens with the various competencies required to thrive in an informational economy.

This is however where Pavlograd’s diversity and openness can be capitalised upon to enlarge that range of competences and problem-solving capacities. One speaker pointed out how Donbass was strategically important to Ukraine economically (and so the national government can be reminded of its stake) but Pavlograd’s development would remain hindered while violence continued nearby. Yet the city had opened up to outsiders and there was a potential to woo back students from Pavlograd and Ukraine who had graduated elsewhere. Interestingly, the speaker was the leading figure in the city’s Azerbaijani community.

Success in this regard is not only a matter of having sufficient individuals with the narrow technical competences demanded. It also requires a broader vitality of associational life, to stimulate the networks on which an informational economy depends if knowledge is to be a public good and information is to flow freely, rather than being hoarded competitively by individual enterprises. Here the wide remit of the Agency for Economic Development is of value and so too is the vibrancy of the NGO arena in Pavlograd—at this meeting were (among others) representatives of Positive Pavlograd (a youth organisation supported by the agency which encourages entrepreneurialism), a women-into-business organisation, an organisation for victims and people with disabilities and a project called ‘No Strangers Here’.



The cultural centre in Pavlograd—a major space for interculturality

Also essential, even in today's online world, is a critical mass of public institutions which can act as hubs of creativity and intercultural exchange. The first day of the visit concluded with a visit to the municipal cultural centre, which has plenty of rooms for public events as well as exhibition and performance spaces—the director committed himself to the programme throughout. Much more on this theme was to come on the second day.

An inclusive city

The second day began with a visit to the Pavlograd public library. The library has good spaces for children and young people, including with mothers in mind. It has an internet centre and it includes some books in Polish and in English. It could go further in promoting multilingualism, perhaps: Subotica's public library provides something of a model with its big sections in Serbian, Hungarian and Croatian, the three main languages in daily use in the city.

The librarian, who also showed her commitment to the intercultural cause in Pavlograd by her attendances during the visit, spoke of the value of the library as a haven for the IDPs, including children—addressing their anxiety and promoting integration, including via training programmes for women. Across the ICCs network intercultural projects involving women have successfully built on common experiences as women and the librarian instanced a project, 'From Heart to Heart', led by a female IDP, Svitlana Chechirko, to promote communication among women, with children's activities roped in. The head of the children's department of the municipality spoke of its efforts to make IDP children feel at home in Pavlograd.

IDPs themselves engaged in such projects spoke warmly of Pavlograd's hospitality towards them. One said that everyone had been open-hearted to her, including in helping her find accommodation and work and live, encouraging her to be a real member of society in reciprocation. Another said she now felt herself to be a citizen of Pavlograd and indeed had become involved voluntarily with the

library. A third, who confessed to having been in a depressed state on arrival, was now conducting a training course with the skills she had brought with her.

These were positive testaments to the municipality's self-declared openness and to how intercultural integration can be a win-win scenario for all, once it is recognised to be a two-sided process: there are now, for instance, two IDP pianists teaching in Pavlograd's music school (among a diverse group led by a Jewish head). 'We offer these people the opportunity to open up and to act,' said Ms Shulika, 'and many of them give back a few times more to the city community.' There are now some 100 Pavlograd-born children of IDPs in the city—showing how roots have been put down.



The Roma community in Pavlograd can tell a more positive story of the place it has made for itself than in many other central- and eastern-European cities. Yes, as often elsewhere, Roma children are concentrated in a particular secondary school where they comprise about 15-20 per cent of the population, and there is a challenge as elsewhere of a culture of work devaluing an educational orientation. But Biliana Ogly (18) initiated a series of 'lessons of tolerance' in this school to introduce the richness of Roma cultural practices to (non-Roma) pupils of different ages and to encourage more Roma youngsters to attend and remain in school, rather than drop out.

Indeed, in contrast to an image often held of Roma communities as resigned and fatalistic, it was very notable during the visit that there are assertive and effective Roma leaders in Pavlograd, who are well integrated and well recognised—the municipality is supporting a proposal to have a memorial to a local Roma leader. They offer important role models, and there are some 60 members of the community active in the Roma organisation. A weekend school to promote the Roma language is a project in train.

Sport can be a valuable arena for promoting interculturalism, especially among the more socially marginalised who may find exchanges on the field easier than in the classroom. Pavlograd has a sports school involving some 800 youngsters, with Roma and Armenians and Azerbaijanis (despite tensions between their countries of origin) well represented. The school gives the youngsters the opportunity to engage in national competitions.

Developing intercultural leaders

If these are positive affirmations of Pavlograd's inclusiveness, what was also evident in the discussion in the library, however, was a strong desire within the city to be included in the wider Europe, reflected in a curiosity about it as well as an orientation towards it. One would expect this to be strongest among the youth and a powerful presentation was made by members of the 'Europe Plus' club, a project of a secondary school in the city.

The young people involved have engaged not only with other European clubs across Ukraine but also with the Council of Europe. They have attracted interest within the EU and organise events and debates on Europe Day. Apart from making friends and enlarging their experiences, they have conducted investigations, for instance of the impact of the Holocaust on the Roma. In remarkably articulate comments, the young presenters said they recognised that one could not separate Ukrainian from European history and that tolerance was one of the most important European values. They were trying to open up Pavlograd to Europe, they said.

Every intercultural city needs such 'intercultural intellectuals'—who not only live the experience as normal but can articulate it and spread the message—and there was more of this at the next port of call. In a former college for the Pioneer youth movement of Soviet times today stands the Palace of Creativity for Children. The centre sees itself as providing access to broad European culture, art and history (although one could detect some reservation about a perceived Ukrainian 'national culture' being diluted as a result).

Specifically, it provides additional education after school hours for those who wish to pursue a level of excellence in English, dance, ballet, music or fashion. The centre shares its experience with international guests and has worked with the ICC city of Botkyrka (Sweden). The youngsters are drawn from various nationalities and included at time of writing members of 23 IDP households.

A discussion with teachers inevitably raised the Education Law signed by the president the previous day. According to [the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine](#), representatives of more than 100 nationalities live in Ukraine: 17 per cent of them are Russians, 0.6 per cent Belarusians, 0.5 per cent Moldavians, 0.4 per cent Bulgarians, 0.4 per cent Poles, 0.3 per cent Hungarians and 0.3 per cent Romanians and others. Almost 400,000 children of ethnic minorities study in Ukraine in 735 educational institutions. Most of them—almost 35,6000—study in 1,880 Russian-language schools; 2,693 study in nine Moldavian and 1,785 in four Polish schools.² Almost 16,000 Roma and the same amount of Hungarian kids study in their native language. In these schools the training is carried out exclusively in the languages of minorities, and Ukrainian is taught as a separate subject (two hours/week). As a result, the students of these schools do not speak Ukrainian and cannot enter a competition to be accepted to any higher educational institution in Ukraine.



'The cases are not rare,' said one of the meeting participants, 'when having acquired secondary education in their native language in Ukrainian public school, young people enter the universities of their historic homeland. Some of them, on the contrary, remain isolated in their own region following their graduation from a Hungarian or Romanian language school.' 'In the 1970s,' said

² There are 1,880 Russian-language schools in the country, 94 Romanian, 69 Hungarian, 12 Crimean Tatar, four Polish, nine Moldovan and 2,242 in two or more languages.

another, 'the USSR was following the Suslov-Brezhnev doctrine of a "single Soviet nation" formation, essentially destroying any manifestations of the national language. National languages were suppressed from education and broadcasting. In this sense, Article 7 of the Law is a "reverse action" in order to reinstate our own language, and not to attack someone else's. This article breaks the old Soviet system, yet, it is opposed by those who consider the disintegration of the USSR as the greatest catastrophe of the 20th century.'

The argument in favour of Article 7 of the new Law on Education was thus that it would allow members of the national minorities in Ukraine to be fluent in their state's official language, as this is critical for their full participation in the society's life, while still providing opportunities to learn their own languages in public schools as a separate subject. The matter will remain on the political agenda for a while, and hopefully cities such as Pavlograd will help build consensus around policies that both safeguard minority rights, and ensure equal opportunities in terms of learning and jobs in the official language.

Looking to the future

The visit concluded in the 'Intercultural Living Room' project. Two municipal veterans added authority to the many affirmations of a tolerant Pavlograd. An Armenian who had lived more than 35 years in the city described his rise from engineer to award-winning school director—one of his students, in the meeting, testified to his likeability. He became a deputy at Pavlograd City Hall having become a citizen of Ukraine (required by law of public servants) and today is head of an NGO of retired firemen (he was a fireman in the past too). He said: 'All my positions and titles confirm that I didn't meet any hostility in the community of Pavlograd.' Similarly, a Jewish former council member said what was important in Pavlograd was not one's nationality but the sense of being a 'citizen'.

Ms Shulika said that while Ukraine had been a closed society in Soviet times now it was receiving more migrants. And a part-Mongol woman described the change. When she was growing up she had felt different but open borders had brought other migrants and now she just described herself as 'Ukrainian', she said. She was currently representing IDPs, providing free English lessons and acting as an entrepreneur. She found that 95 per cent of Pavlograd residents were tolerant.

A further idea emerged in this final session which could be forward-looking. As indicated earlier, there is a residual multiculturalism in the tendency to talk about 'national cultures', both Ukrainian and vis-a-vis minorities, conceived as homogeneous entities. This can lead to Pavlograd's intercultural vocation being unwittingly presented in a negative and backward-looking way: 'we have never had any problems'. The city's video, by contrast, embodies a positive interculturalism, with its modernist branding of the city as open and cosmopolitan. This is the best way to capitalise on the economic potential of Pavlograd's growing diversity and that civic-minded sense of individual local citizenship.

The project is to create an international centre in Pavlograd. It would seek to widen the flow of cultural information and exchange, via a series of lectures to enhance understanding and share knowledge. Its advocate stressed the importance of multilingualism, in everyone in the city being able to understand one another, and he would like this proposed centre to become a place of meeting of representatives of the different communities and of citizens generally. 'We want to create an intercultural centre to have a place for meeting and mixing, for learning other languages

and traditions,' he said. That could become a hub for an intercultural Pavlograd and a magnet for attracting wider interest across Ukraine and beyond.

