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Promoting human rights at local and regional level

Monitoring Committee

Rapporteur:¹ Harald BERGMANN, Netherlands (L, ILDG)
Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights at Local and Regional Level

Resolution 427 (2018)2

Summary

This resolution builds on the activities of the Congress with a view to assisting local and regional authorities in promotion and application of human rights in grass-roots' policies on the basis of examples of good practice of implementation of human rights at local and regional level in member States of the Council of Europe.

A wide variety of successful examples of human rights promotion and protection at grass-roots' level are presented in the Handbook on Human rights for local and regional authorities. It aims to serve as a practical tool for local and regional authorities and their administrations to respond to human rights challenges in their municipalities and regions in an effective and sustainable manner, through examples of good practice.

This first volume of the Handbook focuses on the right to non-discrimination, in particular, that of three target groups: refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; Roma and Travellers; LGBTI people. The selection of these three groups was proposed by the Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights to the Monitoring Committee which approved it at its meeting on 16 February 2017 in Athens. The second volume of the Handbook highlighting other themes will be prepared in the near future by the Monitoring Committee, in co-operation with other Congress bodies and relevant bodies of the Council of Europe.

1 L: Chamber of Local Authorities / R: Chamber of Regions
EPP/CCE: European People's Party Group in the Congress
SOC: Socialist Group
ILDG: Independent and Liberal Democrat Group
ECR: European Conservatives and Reformists Group
NR: Members not belonging to a political group of the Congress

RESOLUTION 427 (2018)²

1. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe refers to:

a. Resolution 365 (2014) on the “Best practices of implementation of human rights at local and regional level in member States of the Council of Europe and other States”;

b. Resolution 296 (2010) Revised and Recommendation 280 (2010) Revised on the “Role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of human rights”;

c. The reply adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011 at the 1118th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies on the role of local and regional authorities in the implementation of human rights (CM/Cong(2011)Rec280 final) whereby the Committee of Ministers welcomes the Congress initiatives in the field of human rights at local level;

d. The first volume of the Handbook on Human Rights attached to this resolution;

2. The Congress, convinced that the application of human rights in grass-roots’ policies will serve to achieve the goal of strengthening local and regional democracy throughout Europe:

a. endorses the Handbook on Human Rights as a user-friendly compendium of good practice for local and regional authorities and their administrations to respond to human rights challenges – concerning refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; Roma and travellers and LGBTI – in their municipalities and regions in an effective and sustainable manner;

b. invites local and regional authorities and their administrations in member States and non-member States of the Council of Europe with whom the Organisation carries out co-operation activities to disseminate, promote and use this Handbook on Human Rights in their local and regional policies for the benefit of the citizens of their communities;

c. asks its Monitoring Committee, in co-operation with other Congress bodies and relevant bodies of the Council of Europe, to prepare the second volume of the Handbook on Human Rights.

² Debated and adopted by the Congress on 27 March 2018, 1st sitting (see Document [CG34\(2018\)10](#), Promoting human rights at local and regional level), rapporteur: Harald BERGMANN, Netherlands (L, ILDG), Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights at Local and Regional Level.

APPENDIX

CONGRESS HANDBOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Gudrun MOSLER-TÖRNSTRÖM
President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the
Council of Europe

Nobody questions any longer the role of local and regional authorities as important actors at the forefront of human rights protection.

I have been able to witness, through my experience as regional and European representative, the progress achieved in the field of promoting human rights in our municipalities and regions. As a member of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities since 2009, I remember how challenging it was for us, at the very beginning, to advocate human rights protection as not solely a prerogative of national governments; to us, local and regional authorities must share responsibility for implementing human rights at the grass-roots level.

Today, as the first female President of the Congress, I am proud of the direction in which ideas have evolved owing to the commitment and tireless work of Congress members and our partners in the area of human rights. Congress members in their different functions as mayors, councillors and governors are responsible for a variety of public services such as education, health and housing which go hand in hand with human rights implementation.

The question now is how to better secure human rights while implementing the local policies that most closely affect the citizens in our communities.

Fulfilling this responsibility is in no way an easy task. We must comply with our human rights duties against the backdrop of an economic crisis, unprecedented migrant flows and the rise of extremism. Every day we face the competing interests of various social groups and we need to tackle conflicting situations in a non-discriminatory, transparent and inclusive manner, all the while observing human rights.

International human rights standards are constantly developing and new international treaties come into force covering new generations of human rights. This makes it crucial for all policy makers to keep up with the pace.

What do we, as local and regional representatives, need to know in order to respect human rights in our everyday activities? What opportunities do human rights open to us? What responsibilities do they entail? And what are the challenges we must face?

I felt that contributing to find solutions to these issues is not only my duty as President of a Congress that brings together over 200 000 local and regional authorities in 47 European states, but also my passion as Vice-President of the Regional Parliament of Salzburg. Harald Bergmann, the Congress

Spokesperson on Human Rights and Mayor of Middelburg (Netherlands), and I believe that solutions may be found through exploring a wide variety of successful examples of human rights promotion and protection at grass-roots level, implemented by various local authorities in the Council of Europe member states.

That is how the idea of this handbook was born.

In the course of its preparation we received precious support from the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. I extend my warmest thanks to them for their excellent work and co-operation.

We decided to make the right to non-discrimination the main focus of this handbook, dedicating it to specific groups of people who need our particular attention, such as refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, Roma and Travellers and LGBTI people.

It is our firm conviction that solidarity should guide our policies at all levels of government in order to ensure stability and social progress in the whole of Europe. To achieve this goal, we encourage the local and regional representatives as well as the personnel of territorial administrations to make use of this handbook in their everyday work and in the interest of the welfare of their citizens and the strengthening of grass-roots democracy.

Let's make today's challenges tomorrow's opportunities!

Harald BERGMANN, Netherlands
Congress spokesperson on Human Rights

As Congress Spokesperson on Human Rights, Mayor of the city of Middelburg in the Netherlands and, most importantly, as a citizen with a firm commitment to the fundamental values and rights upon which Europe was built, I am proud to present the Congress Handbook on Human Rights for Local Authorities.

Under the umbrella of the Congress Human Rights Action Plan 2016-2017, the Handbook on Human

Rights for Local and Regional Authorities is a hands-on guide, prepared for local and regional decision-makers, which aims at raising awareness, presenting best practice examples and providing concrete guidance on how to shape a human rights approach in our municipalities and regions. The Congress is the only international body so far to develop such an instrument for the promotion of human rights at local and regional level.

After an introduction on the application of human rights in grassroots policies, the handbook analyses the challenges for local and regional authorities and presents best practices.

The focus of this edition of the handbook is on the right to non-discrimination, in particular, towards three target groups: refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; Roma and Travellers and LGBTI people.

The choice of these focus groups was endorsed by the Monitoring Committee of the Congress, after extensive consultations with its members, when the Congress Human Rights Action Plan was discussed at one of its meetings in 2016. Since then, the work on this Handbook has been a regular item on the Committee's agenda, and the Committee will soon be invited to discuss the choice of themes for the next edition.

I would underline that this Handbook is not intended to be and will never be exhaustive, either with regard to the choice of themes, or with regard to examples of best practice. It has rather been designed as a work in progress, which will continue to develop, as it is enriched by new suggestions and experiences.

The thematic analysis for these three groups is structured in four sections: a short definition of the respective group, a description of their rights, the challenges they face in practice, and finally, a collection of best practices implemented with success in European cities and regions.

All in all, we have collected more than 65 practice examples from more than 23 countries, ranging from small villages to cross-border regions. Under every practice example you will find the contact details of the responsible authority. We

invite you to use the contact information and approach the authorities, give your feedback, exchange information and discuss possible future co-operation. After all, the practice examples are there to inspire and encourage you to draft your own human rights-based policies or adapt the examples presented here to your own local needs!

Finally, we also make reference to several local, national and international initiatives developed by organisations, associations and NGOs. Also this could be a starting point for co-operation with your community.

We do not need to reinvent the wheel: initiatives and best practices already exist and all of us deal with issues containing human rights components on a day-to-day basis. This handbook shows that promoting a human rights perspective in our daily work does not necessarily mean more resources or legal and technical constraints. Instead, embracing the human rights component is a political opportunity to strengthen social cohesion and reinforce the effectiveness of our policies.

As a mayor I will certainly use this handbook in my work and I invite you to do the same.

WHY CONGRESS HANDBOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS?

WHY ENGAGE WITH HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are universal. They concern us all, but you in particular. No matter whether you are an elected politician or member of an administration, or whether you work at the local or regional level. As representative of, or civil servant within, a public authority, you have a central role in guaranteeing the rights of your citizens. Human rights imply responsibilities, but above all, they bring opportunities. Understanding and integrating human rights in your daily work is not simply a means to comply with your legal obligations. On the contrary, embracing rights can mean more effective policies, more social cohesion. It necessarily leads to more content citizens, a more resilient and positive image of your administration and can increase economic development, citizen participation and promote your political image.

Integrating human rights is not simply a good cause but a political opportunity.

When exercising your competences, you take actions and decisions that concern the daily life of your citizens and consequently the enjoyment of their basic rights. To put it simply, human rights concern the relationship between citizens and public authorities. Your level of governance is the one closest to citizens, the one that people interact with on an everyday basis. Your decisions affect them most directly, and you are at the level that best knows the problems they face and how to find lasting solutions in the interest of your citizens. At the same time, you are also accountable to your citizens and primarily responsible for safeguarding their rights. This responsibility is an undeniable fact. You are a human rights champion: whatever the degree of competences of your authority, you protect and promote your citizens' rights every day.

Embracing this responsibility and taking the opportunity to put the rights and interest of your citizens at the centre of your policies is what we call a human rights approach. In times of financial cuts, an increase in competences and new political challenges, such as the reception and integration of refugees, radicalisation or rural depopulation you may ask: But what about the costs of human rights? In fact, embracing human rights does not necessarily mean more financial costs. Often it is about rethinking, reassessing and adapting what you do and how you do it.

Understanding human rights and integrating them in your policy-making is not only a tool for improving the impact of existing politics but also for solving new problems — better, faster and importantly, less expensively. You do not have to reinvent the wheel but instead build on existing structures and policies. Exchange practices with your colleagues or reach out to NGOs, associations or educational institutes in your city or

region. They will support you with their expertise throughout the process! Be assured, that doing human rights is probably less complicated and costly than you may think.

This handbook will show you why this is the case and how to proceed decisively.

A Human Rights approach allows you to better solve current and prevent future problems. Acting now is always cheaper than responding to the consequences of problems, which will not only be financial but also political and social.

HOW CAN YOU MAKE USE OF THE HANDBOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS?

The Handbook on Human Rights will allow you to understand human rights and their implications for your city or region, whether you are a local or regional decision maker or an administrative staff member. It will allow you to better understand the human rights aspects in your daily work and grasp how you can respond to challenges in a sustainable manner, all the while promoting the human rights of your citizens. After a section illustrating what human rights are and what they mean for you in practice, a comprehensive collection of best practices of local and regional authorities will show you how to take decisive action. Irrespective of whether you have already been active with human rights or not, and whatever the size or competences of your authority, this handbook builds upon a collection of projects, policies and initiatives on human rights, launched by your colleagues in different countries, and therewith provides you with practical guidance on how to respond to similar issues in your city or region.

This Handbook is a practical guide that will show you what a rights-based approach is, what this means in practice, why it can be useful for you and how it can allow you to respond decisively to local challenges.

Did you know ?

...that today, countries have adhered to hundreds of human rights treaties around the world?

Some are universal treaties...

like the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (1966).

Some relate to groups that require specific protection...

Like the **Convention of the Right of the Child** (1989).

And some are limited to certain regions...

Like the **European Convention on Human Rights** (1950).

WHAT ARE HUMAN RIGHTS?

Human rights are inherent to all human beings, regardless of their legal status as non-citizens, refugees, migrants or foreign residents, regardless of whether they are women, men, children, elderly or have disabilities, regardless of their religion, ethnic background, political views or sexual orientation. We all have the same basic rights and freedoms protected by law – simply because we are humans. Those rights are universal and egalitarian, meaning they are applicable everywhere and are the same for everyone.

The concept of human rights is not idealist or vague, but represents clear-cut legal obligations that bind states and their organs, at all levels of governance.

After the atrocities of the Second World War, states decided to define existing human rights concepts through written legal norms, leading to the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and hundreds of international human rights treaties and declarations in the following decades.

An **international human rights system** developed: states develop and ratify treaties laying down human rights and put in place international bodies that oversee their implementation, such as the United Nations or the Council of Europe. Once a state ratifies an international human rights treaty, meaning that it signs and implements it nationally, the human rights obligations therein have an effect as if they were national law. They are binding for the state – including all sub-national authorities - in relation to all people present in their territory.

Today, a wide spectrum of human rights is guaranteed by law in your country, deriving not only from international treaties, but also your constitution, national legislation and court decisions. Of course, those rights cover core provisions such as the prohibition of torture, freedom of expression or the right to non-discrimination, all commonly referred to as **civil and political rights**. At the same time, there are also **economic, social and cultural rights**, such as the right to adequate housing, education or health care. Those provisions can be found in different legal texts but in practice they are of equal importance and effect and they are all interdependent and interrelated.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES: WHAT DO HUMAN RIGHTS PROVISIONS MEAN FOR YOUR CITY OR REGION IN PRACTICE?

As citizens we have rights and obligations. We may have to pay taxes or complete military service but at the same time the state provides us with services, grants us security, and ensures our rights and freedoms. Those rights correspond to competences, which are increasingly delegated from the state to local and regional authorities that carry them out under the principle of self-governance.

Human rights are part of your competences and you translate international obligations into practice.

Only states ratify international human rights treaties but in practice human rights obligations mean shared responsibilities among all authorities. Whether you are a local or regional politician, civil servant or public actor whose action directly affects citizens, keep in mind the following:

Non-compliance is not only detrimental for the population, but can trigger national and international legal consequences.

So where are those human rights aspects in your daily work? Whatever the degree of self-governance in your country, your competences always correspond to human rights. Think about your competences, whether they are shared or autonomous and try to identify policy areas that include a human rights notion. General areas could include housing, health care, education, social care, security and public order, or urban planning – the list of topics that directly concern the human rights of all of your citizens is endless.

As a second step, let us look at **groups that require specific attention** as they may face discrimination in accessing their rights or because their rights are simply more likely to be violated: children, elderly people, national minorities, people with disabilities or migrants.

Children, people with disabilities, elderly people – **at some points in our lives all of us are part of a group that requires specific attention. So do not think of minorities as “the others”, but try to put yourself in their shoes instead!**

Having identified some competences and groups let us now see what some international human rights obligations can translate to in practice:

The right to housing: providing access and maintaining proper places of living for all members of your community, **irrespective** of their background, ethnicity or nationality

The right to education: ensuring that all citizens send their children to a school that corresponds to **national** standards

The right to health: facilitating access to health institutions for all people in your city/town/region, even if they are undocumented, without residence or insurance. Human rights are the **same** everywhere but conditions under which those rights are ensured naturally differ. Likewise, different contexts require different solutions. Looking at human

rights responsibilities of local and regional authorities, there can never be one best approach to respond to an issue and there is also not one universal threshold at which a right is fulfilled. You know best the needs of your citizens, existing challenges and the most efficient approaches solving them. A human rights-based approach means understanding the notion of human rights in your work and seeing the lasting impact that a rights-sensitive policy will have, not only for the immediate beneficiaries but your population as a whole. Ensuring human rights does not have to mean costly policies, or reforms: organizing a one-day event, supporting a local association or simply standing up and making a clear statement to the press can have an immense impact.

HOW CAN YOU RESPOND TO LOCAL CHALLENGES WITH HUMAN RIGHTS?

You have assessed your context, considered the problem, stakeholders and the human rights component, so what comes next? How do you actually implement rights-based policies? Whatever groups or rights your intended activity, project or policy concerns, implementing responses is not always easy!

Challenges in implementation depend of course on your local context. In any case, before proceeding keep the following operational challenges in mind and think in advance about how best to approach them.

Welcoming refugees – revitalizing the village

(Millevaches, Corrèze / France)

In late 2015, the Mayor of Millevaches decided to welcome 60 refugees in his village of 800 inhabitants. “It was not simply a humanitarian gesture but also a local development project” he argues. With the funds received for hosting the newcomers, four new jobs were created, a retirement home could be renovated - without a local tax raise of 10 % - and a primary school class was prevented from closing.

Convincing your administration

Even if human rights have never appeared on your agenda, you will surely already have implemented activities that concern human rights. Still, strengthening a rights-based approach may feel for many like entering “new territory”. Your staff may lack expertise and experience; there may even be a resistance to take new approaches. Providing training, streamlining internal communication and exchanging practices with other cities or regional authorities can be crucial to overcoming problems.

Convincing the political level

The decision to proceed with human rights-tailored policies can of course also trigger major political resistance. Clearly, this relates above all to your electorate. Receiving refugees in your city, designating housing for Roma or organising a yearly gay pride event may not be welcomed by everyone. That is normal. Talking facts instead of prejudices and including

your citizens in

taking those decisions is crucial. Communicating the *why* and *how* of human rights policies, together with the long-term benefits of such measures is also important. At the same time, there may be resistance in your local or regional council concerning the necessary financial and technical support for your policies.

Finding solutions with the people concerned

There is a third problem area: how does one actually develop and effectively implement a human rights-related policy or project? With regard to all issues and in particular the question of how to actually “do human rights” **exchange of best practices** is key.

Throughout the many activities of the Congress, experience has shown that a three-step model is the most efficient way for integrating human rights at local and regional level. Assessing the local context, pertinent issues and identifying the human rights aspects involved; considering best practices; shaping new or adapting existing policies.

Your colleagues in different parts of Europe sometimes not only have to deal with the same (human rights-related) challenges, they also have to overcome the hurdles mentioned above when implementing solutions. There is not one universal recipe, but exchanging experience is very often the most effective and least costly way of dealing with new topics or approaches, such as human rights.

This Handbook on Human Rights will guide you in this endeavour.

Did you know ?

...that one human rights obligation can mean four different responsibilities

RESPECT: Refrain from interfering human rights

i.e. prohibiting religious communities to assemble peacefully

PROTECT: Ensure that third parties do not infringe a right

i.e. ensure that children are not prevented from others to go to school

FULFIL: Facilitate the enjoyment of rights and freedoms i.e. establish ombudsmen or anti- discrimination agencies in your city

ENGAGE: Reach out to your citizens when ensuring their rights i.e. organise round- tables, include your citizens’ views and stress also their role in responding to human rights issues

WHY IS THE ISSUE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION AT THE CENTRE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT LOCAL LEVEL?

A rights-based approach means protecting the rights of all by integrating a “human rights view” in your daily work. The same rights for everyone means that whatever their race, ethnicity, sex, religion, political views or sexual orientation, all people in your city or region can enjoy the same rights, receive services in the same way and are not discriminated against, directly or in-directly. Discrimination happens, at individual or institutional level, directly or indirectly, but it is not always the result of bad intentions or inappropriate actions. In each community everybody is part of one group or another: a religious group, an ethnic group or a linguistic group. We may be newcomers or have a disability, be part of a national minority or simply need special assistance because of old age. In brief, being part of a group can make us more vulnerable, which makes it more difficult to access our rights.

This is diversity and a characteristic of all societies. Understanding differences and putting in place mechanisms that prevent unequal treatment is not only at the center of human rights policy making, it is also the key to tackling many global challenges with – sometimes negative – local consequence. Radicalisation, racism, hate crimes and also problems with the reception and integration of refugees are too often the result of discrimination and social exclusion. Non-discrimination is a human right in itself; but the concept relates simultaneously to so many other topics and rights, particularly when looking at your day-to-day work at local level.

Therefore, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe decided to dedicate the first edition of the Human Rights Manual to the theme of non-discrimination at local level. As a pan-European assembly, representing over 200 000 local and regional authorities in Europe, human rights have been of a wide range of its activities for years, whether it is monitoring local and regional democracy, co-operation activities or election observation. The concerns raised in the Congress’s daily interaction with local decision makers increasingly come back to human rights and the role of certain groups in the community. As a result of wide-ranging consultations, the Congress decided to focus in the first edition of the handbook on how to solve human rights-related challenges concerning **refugees, asylum seekers and migrants; Roma and Travellers** and **LGBTI people**.

How can you find adequate housing solutions for refugees in your community? How can you improve school attendance rates of Roma children? What rights do gay, lesbian and transgender people have and how should those rights be integrated into a city/town/region’s activities? How can successfully living together and social cohesion be promoted by local and regional bodies?

The chapters deal with the following three areas:

- **explaining people’s rights** and what this means for you in practice;

- **identifying key challenges** relating to everybody's equal participation in community life;
- **providing concrete examples** of best practice.

REFUGEES, ASYLUM SEEKERS AND MIGRANTS

DEFINITIONS

The right to seek asylum, meaning the right to protection from prosecution, is a concept that has existed since ancient times and is now enshrined in many major human rights conventions. Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are three terms that are often used interchangeably. One thing they all have in common is that they left their country of habitual residence; however, each of the three legal categories implies a different status and corresponding rights, which is important to understand before developing policies.

REFUGEES

A refugee is a person who has a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to - or owing to fear - is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country. In other words, a person is referred to as a refugee from the moment he or she is granted the right to protection from prosecution by a third state (or in specific situations the UN High Commissioner for Refugees).

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Asylum seekers have applied for protection as refugees in a particular state but are yet waiting to receive a determination of their status. States have put into place different systems and procedures to determine whether an individual qualifies as a refugee. Under certain situations, a person that does not receive refugee status may nevertheless be granted the right to stay in that state, if he or she faces a real risk of suffering serious harm upon return to the country of origin. This specific form of protection is called subsidiary protection.

MIGRANTS

A migrant is any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a state away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of that person's legal status, whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary, what the causes for the movement are or what the length of stay is. Migrants can be **regular**, meaning that they have obtained the necessary authorisation to enter the country of destination. If they do not fall under this category, we speak of **undocumented migrants**. **Irrespective of whether they are regular or undocumented, migrants have the same basic human rights as all other individuals in your territory.**

Understand the three categories but do not think in terms of boxes! Different legal categories may exist, but in reality the reasons to leave a country for many people arriving in Europe are mixed. Prosecution, general violence, economic and social misery

all go hand in hand and make people leave their country of origin. We call this phenomenon mixed migration. Migration is a phenomenon inherent to mankind and an integral part of European history. Today we can be part of the receiving community; tomorrow we can be forced to leave a place we call home.

Do not forget that nobody flees from his home country voluntarily.

Every refugee is a migrant but not every migrant is a refugee! Understanding the different categories and making appropriate use of them in your public discourse is a fundamental first step in shaping policies.

Myth: *Migrants steal jobs and undermine the welfarestate.*

Fact: *Research shows that most migrants do jobs that local populations shun or lack the skills for. Furthermore, the proven reality is that migration brings benefits, fuelling growth, innovation and entrepreneurship in both the countries people come from and in those they move to, if managed smartly. Migrants and refugees contribute to the economy both as employees and as entrepreneurs, creating new firms and businesses. Migrant and refugee integration into labour markets and societies can be expensive at first but it is an investment with a high return. Moreover, migrants contribute to their home countries through money sent back home: these remittances help foster growth, develop communities and increase access to schooling and health care. Migrants act as bridges between two places, transferring knowledge and skills, all of which can contribute to their home communities.*

Myth: *Irregular migration is a criminal act.*

Fact: *International law has clearly established the principle that foreign nationals whose only offence is the violation of provisions relating to migration should not be treated as criminals or potential criminals by host states. The irregular entry and stay of an alien should in principle be an administrative offence, and not a criminal one. Irregular migrants are in no sense offenders and they enjoy certain rights under international law, which need to be respected, such as the right to basic health care and education, the right to protection against arbitrary detention, as well as their right not to be sent to countries where they risk ill-treatment and torture.*

WHAT ARE THEIR RIGHTS?

No matter whether a person falls into the category of refugee, asylum seeker or migrant, they are all part of a vulnerable group, as accessing their basic rights is in reality more difficult. Why? A new language, culture and customs, not knowing about their rights or a lack of documents render them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Whereas the scope of rights granted to newcomers differs in detail from one Council of Europe state to another, we should nevertheless identify some of the most important minimum standards concerning migrants, whether undocumented or not, asylum seekers and refugees.

MIGRANTS

From the outset, all foreigners – irrespective their status – obtain the same set of basic human rights, as all citizens. It is not a person's status but their **presence** in the territory and therewith the jurisdiction of your state, being bound itself to international human rights standards, that entitles them to the protection of all rights enshrined therein. In addition to the most fundamental human rights and freedoms, such as the **right to life**; **protection from torture**, inhumane or degrading treatment; the **prohibition of slavery** and **forced labour**, **freedom of expression** and **assembly**; the **right to demand asylum** or **respect for private and family life** – migrants should also have access to social and economic rights linked to life and dignity, such as the **right to adequate housing** and **shelter**; the **right to health, social and medical assistance**; the **right to social protection**; where it is necessary to ease poverty and preserve dignity, particularly for migrant children, the **right to primary and secondary education**; and **employment rights**, such as fair wages and working conditions. The right to non-discrimination is obviously particularly important: the specific status of migrants does not justify any **discrimination on grounds of race**, colour, national or social origin, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion or any other status.

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

In addition to those rights, refugees and asylum-seekers are entitled to further protection. Refugees have the right to safe asylum, which means that they may not be forcibly returned to a country where they face danger (prohibition of refoulement). Generally, they should at least receive the **same rights and basic assistance as any other foreigner who is a legal resident**, including the **right to wage-earning employment**, **access to property** or **freedom of movement** within the state of destination.

CHALLENGES IN PRACTICE

An influx of newcomers to your city or region can imply new challenges that require new responses, both in the interests of your citizens and the arriving population. The degree of new challenges and need for action obviously depends on your local context, existing infrastructure, policies and various other factors. Still one thing is clear: ensuring a successful integration that can be of lasting benefit for your area is only possible through understanding and embracing newcomers' rights when developing policies. As a pan-European assembly, representing over 200 000 local and regional authorities in Europe, the Congress has identified a set of challenges relating to the reception of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants that have been repeatedly addressed by local and regional decision makers in the framework of the Congress's activities.

An obvious first issue is the effective integration into local community life. Ensuring social cohesion is not easy, as newcomers often do not speak the local language, are not acquainted with the local culture or customs or lack political participation and understanding of national procedures. At the same time, an influx of new people can be challenging for the resident population and can generate misunderstandings and prejudices. Furthermore, providing adequate housing and access to wage-earning employment constitute further issues that local and regional authorities have to respond to at an early stage. Safeguarding the rights of vulnerable people, including women, people with disabilities and unaccompanied minors also requires specific attention, as does providing access to education. Moreover, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants are particularly vulnerable to discrimination, hate speech or acts of violence. Unease or hesitation to accept among the resident population in regard to newcomers is normal. However, this requires political action to prevent violence, promote intercultural understanding and ensure social cohesion.

Protecting the rights of newcomers is not an end in itself! It is fundamental for ensuring integration and social cohesion and therewith the wellbeing of your community as a whole.

There is never one perfect solution, but there are many inspiring practices, allowing you to develop your own responses to the diverse challenges your city or region may face with the reception and integration of newcomers. The following collection of practices is meant to inspire you to take action, by integrating or replicating approaches or strategies, in a way that best suits your context.

RESPONSES

FACILITATING INTEGRATION INTO YOUR COMMUNITY

Integration is a multi-layered process. Understanding the language, culture or local administration but also facilitating direct encounters and exchanges among new and resident population, creating means of participation for newcomers in the community or simply helping in completing the day-to-day tasks in a new environment are all fundamental for enabling successful coexistence. This section brings together several inspiring initiatives that contribute(d) to a better integration of newcomers at local and regional level, often spanning different sectors and thematic areas.

Migrant Integration Councils, Chios, GREECE

Population: 51 930

In light of a high influx of migrants and lack of integration into community life, the municipality of Chios (Greece) set up Migrant Integration Councils that contributed to better involvement of newcomers in the area and a more positive perception of migrants among the resident population.

During the last few years, Chios has experienced an extremely high influx of refugees, coinciding with an economic downturn and a change in perception among the population towards realizing that migrants would stay on the island longer than expected. With the objective of improving economic and social integration, the municipality of Chios aimed at influencing public opinion positively towards the migrants arriving on the island. Within the framework of the local government reform (“Kallikratis” Programme) launched in 2010, Migrant Integration Councils (MICs) were established in 325 Greek municipalities. MICs are entrusted with a consultative role on issues regarding migrant integration into local communities. They include elected municipal counsellors, representatives of migrant communities in each municipality and representatives of related non-governmental organisations. As a preliminary outcome the initiative contributed to a better perception of migrants among the local population, enhanced political participation of newcomers and improved cohesion between both groups.

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SPRAR facility in Satriano, Calabria region, ITALY

Commune: 3 341; town: approximately 1 000

Addressing the problem of informal settlements, the small town of Satriano renovated a historic building to host refugees and supported a local cooperative staffed almost exclusively by former migrants, in an effort to integrate refugees, revert decades of decline of its population and bring growth back to the town.

Satriano, a town whose population has shrunk by 75% since the 1960s, receives €35 per day from the Ministry of Home Affairs per refugee that is hosted in the town. The local co-operative *Mediazione Globale*, which is staffed almost exclusively by former migrants who have obtained Italian citizenship, manages the welcome-project for newcomers on behalf of the municipality. *Mediazione Globale* helps refugees to buy food, find housing, study Italian and deal with the day-to-day challenges they face in their new environment. Through the initiative some of the refugees find work with the municipality and others have received work grants from the municipality, all of which support both the integration of refugees into the community and the development of local private enterprise. Most of the refugees live in a historic building called the Palazzo Condò, renovated with European Union funds. The basement of the building hosts a daytime centre for elderly residents. It was a deliberate choice to have the refugees and seniors share the same building, intended to enhance integration. Some of that has been happening organically already. Satriano hopes to grow its programme by renovating some of the empty houses in town into new shelters to host even more asylum seekers. The houses would be used either on a temporary basis for people passing through, or perhaps be rented out directly to those who choose to stay. The results of Satriano's efforts are small-scale, but the inclusive approach serves as a model for cities and towns across Europe.

“Thank God they brought us these people”, said Luigi Marotti, the village’s 68-year- old sacristan, a layman charged with caring for the local Roman Catholic church. “Satriano was dead. Thanks to them it’s alive again. The village can start growing.”

“We aim to get this process of integration even better (...) we want to make the asylum seekers really feel like citizens of Satriano and part of the local community.” Michele Drosi, Mayor of Satriano

Michele Drosi, Mayor of Satriano

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Satriano - ITALY

SPRAR (Protection System for Refugees and Asylum Seekers)

Satriano, together with many other Italian cities, towns and villages is part of **SPRAR**^v, a network of secondary reception facilities, to where asylum seekers are transferred once they have made their asylum applications in Italy. SPRAR was created by national Law No 189/2002 and is being implemented by local institutions by undertaking an individually designed “integrated reception”, aimed at bringing together SPRAR’s guidelines and standards with the characteristics and specific factors affecting the local area and the needs of each individual asylum seeker/group/family, in order to achieve socio economic inclusion. The minimum capacity of the centres is 15 people. Big cities such as Milan, Turin and Rome have SPRAR centres for several hundred people each.

As of 2 February 2017, 640 projects (501 ordinary, 95 for unaccompanied minors, 44 for people with mental disabilities or disabilities) were allocated to 546 local project holders (482 municipalities, 21 provinces, 14 communes, 4 mountain communities) and around 25 838 places were financed (23 239 ordinary, 2 007 for unaccompanied minors, 592 for people with mental disabilities or disabilities). Functioning as an example of a co-ordinated approach between the national and local level, the advantages for towns and cities opening a SPRAR facility include amongst other things funds and technical assistance from the state. As a preliminary outcome, SPRAR facilities contribute to assisting all asylum seekers to better integrate into society. Municipalities that choose to welcome asylum seekers and refugees in the framework of SPRAR are more likely to take “ownership” of the project, provide good quality services and enhance lasting integration at the local level.

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Syrian refugee help desks in the districts of Şişli and Sultanbeyli, Istanbul, TURKEY^{vi}

Şişli: 318 217; Sultanbeyli: 302 388

With an estimated 90% of Syrians in Turkey living outside camps in urban or rural areas^{vi}, many of Istanbul’s locally elected belediyes (municipalities) provide Syrian refugees with support-centres, which employ Arabic speaking sociologists, psychologists and skills and needs assessors, with the aim of enhancing general socio-economic and political integration and providing support in asylum questions.

Within the Şişli belediye’s social services department the Göç Yardım Masası ve Merkezi (Migrant Help Desk and Centre) opened in October 2015. It employs sociologists, social workers, and psychologists who work not only with Syrians but also with other vulnerable

refugee and migrant groups in the area. In addition to its own migrant centre, the Şişli belediye collaborates with a number of other NGOs, such as the Refugee Rights centre, Human Resource and Development Foundation (IKGV) and the Turkey Family Health and Planning Foundation to provide information services and workshops on legal rights and women's health to Syrians. The Şişli belediye also co-ordinates its work with the Social Market Foundation, a volunteer-led NGO that provides donated food, clothing and household goods to people in need of help. In order to receive supplies from the foundation, Syrians need to supply registration card, indicating a legal presence in Turkey. The *Sultanbeyli belediye** has a *Refugee Co-ordination Centre* with full-time employees, including some Syrians that have already received work permits. After registering with the security directorate (emniyet), Syrians go to the centre, where the General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM) provides a registration number alongside a specific belediye-issued ID number. The centre provides a range of services to Syrians, including informing them of their rights and providing basic needs assessments.

Sultanbeyli belediye

Abdurrahmangazi Mahallesi Belediye Caddesi No:4

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Şişli belediye:

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Logistics Centre: streamlining the supply of goods in the Attica Region, GREECE

Population: 3 828 434

Addressing the need to regionally co-ordinate civic action and the process of collection, storage and supply of donated goods for refugees, the Logistics Centre in Attica provides official lists of supplies needed and publishes guidelines for citizens and municipalities so as to optimise the donation process and protect refugees from fraud.

This centre is the first one in Greece to offer support services that ensure that goods are received and collected properly, in order to protect refugees from fraud and co-ordinate the solidarity effort of the population. In particular, the centre co-ordinates and manages the storage and supply of goods to the refugee accommodation facilities in the entire region, by creating official lists of all the supplies needed and by publishing guidelines both for individuals and municipalities, informing them about special opening hours of the centre for large or heavy donations and laying down a set of rules to make the donation process as efficient as possible. The list of the supplies needed includes clothing/shoes, food, consumable goods (such as single-use plates and disposable food packaging), items of personal hygiene, travel items (sleeping bags, backpacks, and tents), and cleaning supplies. Every individual that donates goods like this will receive a receipt that can be submitted to the tax office.

Such centralised and regionally co-ordinated initiatives are of great importance

compared to single, fragmented actions, both in the interests of donors and recipients. Further, as a result of the work of this centre, the regional accommodation facilities also operate more efficiently. This is due to the fact that their needs are best met when donations and civic actions are centrally co-ordinated. By donating only the goods included in the above-mentioned lists, the sorting of the donations is made easier; “useless” items do not take up space in the accommodation centres and ultimately, a waste of resources is prevented.

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Online map of local Italian language courses, Milan, ITALY

Population: 1 368 590

In view of the difficulties for people from overseas in navigating through the numerous offers of language courses, the city of Milan has set up a website providing information on available Italian courses, thus facilitating the process of finding a course and learning the local language, which is one of the cornerstones for a successful integration.

Proper proficiency in the local language is indispensable for the effective social inclusion of newcomers. However, finding the right courses and all the necessary information before learning the language and getting to know the city can be challenging. To facilitate this process for foreigners arriving in Milan, the city has set up a very handy website, available in different languages, to help migrants understand more about the many Italian language courses on offer by clearly presenting all available courses for foreigners. The site www.milano.italianostranieri.org includes an online map of courses, which Italian language schools can fill with their offers. The schools can also upload their own materials, videos and photographs of their activities inside their profiles. This way foreign residents can find the most suitable course adapted to their personal needs. Users can select a language course from among those organised by different providers, such as civil society organisations, who often offer courses and practice-workshops free of charge, and commercial companies, based on a set of variables: costs, timetable of the courses, language level and the type of certificate to be awarded. This initiative has been supported by the City Council of Milan through its project “Integration access and its management at local level”, financed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies – General Directorate for Immigration and Integration Policies.

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Easy-access French courses,^{xi} Lausanne, SWITZERLAND

Population: 135 629

In order to simplify the process of learning the local language, the Bureau lausannois pour l'intégration des immigrés (BLI) organises easy-access French summer courses, which people can attend without registering beforehand and irrespective of their origin or social status.

Since 2010, for the duration of a month and a half in the summer, the Municipal Integration Office of Lausanne has been offering French language courses at a beach on the edge of the Lake of Geneva. From Monday to Friday, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., without registration, participants are introduced to the French language in a relaxed atmosphere. The courses are designed to facilitate everyday life: shopping, presenting oneself, asking for directions etc., and are aimed at promoting the participation of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in community life. The particular importance of this practice lies within the often-overlooked fact that, despite the numerous language course often available in cities and the willingness of newcomers to participate in them, the requirements of enrolling in advance or having a social status often decrease actual participation rates. The practice has proved to be a success and for the past seven years courses have been offered every summer.

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Booklet for the local population: “Dare to face your prejudices”, Boden, SWEDEN

Population: 18 705

The municipality of Boden has published a booklet entitled “Dare to face your prejudices” which is continuously distributed among the local population. With this publication the city aims to raise the awareness among people in Boden as to the reasons for immigration, the situation for immigrants and the benefits of integrating them into the local community.

The municipality of Boden asked the Swedish central Statistics Bureau to conduct a survey on the issue of immigration. Some 191 people in SFIs – Swedish

language learning centres for immigrants – participated in the survey. The results were published in the booklet and were demonstrated as local reality-based facts on the history and reasons for immigration in the 21st century, on the education and housing situation of immigrants, and on the importance of immigrants as a “prerequisite for the future of Boden”. In the publication, the city stresses the need for immigration to Boden in order for the city to maintain economic growth. In view of the labour shortage in Sweden, immigrants can greatly contribute to economic development and the creation of new jobs and therefore minimise structural unemployment. According to the integration co-ordinator, the booklet has been very well received by the citizens of Boden and facilitated encounters between newcomers and the resident population.

Contact

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”Dare to face your prejudices”

(Våga möta dina fördomar)

An online tool for better orientation and access to services in Vienna, AUSTRIA

Population: 1 741 246

Information on services for refugees is often not easily accessible nor transparent for those in need. New Here a multilingual and digital interactive map connects refugees to existing services and functions as a central and easy accessible information source. New Here was created by a group of volunteers with the support of the City of Vienna.

Once newcomers arrive in a city they often face the same questions: How can they enrol in language courses? Where can they get legal aid? Which doctor speaks my language? Independence and orientation are indispensable for integration. New Here allows its users to orient themselves in a new town or city independently. They can find information in their own language and via simple pictograms about their asylum procedure, language courses or how to join a football team, among hundreds of other possibilities. It is not only a practical tool but also promotes empowerment, allowing refugees to independently settle into a new place. New Here will also increase the resilience and sustainability of civil society, taking over information dissemination work which NGOs have shouldered in recent years, allowing them to refocus on core tasks.

Contact

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Multisectoral integration policy in Gdańsk, POLAND

Population: 463 754

With the “Gdańsk model of integration”³⁰ the city of Gdańsk became the first Polish city to implement a cross-sectoral policy with a proactive approach to refugee integration.

The “Gdańsk Model” of integration, which was developed by the municipality of Gdańsk as a proactive approach to the integration of migrants is a multisectoral policy developed by the city administration and approved by the city council in June 2016. More than 150 people from 70 different organisations (public institutions, companies, associations, journalists, etc.) work together to implement various actions, focusing on, among other things, housing, training, access to employment, education and language courses. The project is supported by the European Union and the Funds for Asylum, Migration and Integration. The municipality also launched the “Council of Immigrants”, made up of 13 advisers who regularly share their remarks and consult the mayor on issues concerning asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Currently, the Gdańsk Model is in its implementation phase.

Various services have been made available to beneficiaries and an association has been selected to co-ordinate the actions and to provide support to migrants, including thematic conferences and workshops, for example, the city developed the “Become a mentor for a refugee” programme and organised round-table conferences for citizens on the topic of migration and integration.

Gdańsk is an active member of the “EUROCITIES” network, particularly in the Working Group on Migration and Integration, and received support for the implementation of its strategies from network partners. A delegation from the city visited Oslo and Bremen to learn more about the different approaches in those cities and transferred practices into Gdańsk’s local context.

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EUROCITIES: a network of major European cities

An initiative of the European cities network EUROCITIES (www.eurocities.eu), the CITIES-GroW (integration of migrants through economic activity in cities) project will provide practical advice to municipal leaders and decision makers in Europe on how best to address migrant integration challenges and develop effective integration strategies.

The project will last 24 months and started on 1 February 2017. A successor of the ImpleMentoring project, CITIES-GroW will be co-ordinated by EUROCITIES with the support of the Migration Policy Group, Migration Work-CIC and the Migration Policy Institute, and will involve 16 European cities: Athens, Barcelona, Birmingham, Brighton and Hove, Dresden, Gdańsk, Ghent, Helsinki, Lisbon, Munich, Nantes, Nicosia, Riga, Rotterdam, Tampere, and Utrecht. Participating cities are paired up (mentors/ implementers) to ensure transferability of results and long-term policy and practice impact. The mentoring schemes will aim to: match buyers and suppliers by facilitating access to public and private contracts for immigrant entrepreneurs; engage with businesses, local job agencies and local educational institutions to promote job skills matches for the employment of young people from a migrant background; provide services to help migrant entrepreneurs; and implement anti-discrimination strategies in local job markets.

Further information:

<http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/projects/CITIES-GroW&tpl=home>

PROVIDING ADEQUATE HOUSING

Adequate housing is fundamental for newcomers to feel at home and integrate in the host society. At the same time, providing accommodation to refugees, asylum seekers and migrants can give rise to a lot of controversy in affected neighborhoods and opposition or suspicion among locals. With limited resources often going accompanying with sudden influxes of new arrivals, finding permanent housing solutions can be challenging for towns and cities and often requires innovative initiatives. Providing dignified housing solutions corresponds not only to a core human right but is also key to preventing conflicts and fostering integration in the host society.

Decentralised housing in private apartments in Dresden, GERMANY

Population: 543 825

The city of Dresden co-operated with Vonovia, one of Germany's largest housing associations, and with 132 private owners, in order to house asylum seekers in private apartments, instead of impersonal accommodation centres. With this initiative Dresden managed to house more asylum seekers than any other major city in Germany.^{xii}

In the context of this initiative, 3 404 (61 per cent) of 5 461 refugees are currently accommodated in decentralised apartments. A total of 507 of those apartments are provided by Vonovia and 132 by private owners. When renting an apartment for an asylum seeker, the city looks for rental offers for apartments that could not be rented for a period of six months. This practice is of benefit both to the city and to the housed families: the opportunity to be reside in a private apartment allows people to keep their own habits, prepare their own meals and have a sense of home, while reducing the feelings of displacement commonly experienced in alien environments. At the same time, renting apartments from housing associations or private owners is much less expensive accommodation strategy for the municipality than opening and running an accommodation centre. Difficulties that have been reported only concern complaints by neighbours, for example with regard to waste separation or disturbances of the peace.

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This housing initiative is part of Dresden's efforts as a member of the "European Network of Cities of Solidarity" (Réseau européen des villes solidaires), which is linked to a recommendation made by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in its 29th session. This recommendation responded to an appeal launched on 3 October 2015 by the municipalities of Strasbourg, Catania and Rovereto.^{xiV} The first concrete outcome of the

"European Network of Cities of Solidarity" initiative was a vade-mecum^{xV}. Its purpose was to list the good practices relating to public policies on the reception and integration of refugees that are being implemented at local level.^{xVi}

Renovation of abandoned houses for migrants, Riace^{xvii} **ITALY**

Population : 2 800

The former “ghost town” of Riace managed to revitalise the local economy and community while solving the problem of derelict housing by offering abandoned houses to immigrant families, accompanied by professional training for refugees and the development of a local currency to be used by refugees.

Fifteen years ago, the medieval hilltop village of Riace on Italy’s south coast was almost a ghost town. Houses were derelict and the local school was near to closing. The village was in danger of becoming extinct as residents disappeared to northern Italy, and abroad, for jobs during the economic boom. Since then, Riace has seen a change in its destiny, by openly welcoming a controlled number of migrants, who live and work in the community. About 450 migrants, drawn from more than 20 countries beyond Europe, are living in Riace, amounting to about a fifth of the village’s population.

This transformation was instigated by the mayor, Domenico Lucano, who in 1998 founded the association “città futura” (city of the future), which was funded by the Italian government and local funds to offer refugees abandoned apartments and training, such as ateliers in which they could learn artisanal techniques. This has helped to rebuild both the town’s population and economy. Further, the Riace model is refined with the issuance of a local currency that benefits the local economic activity. The multiculturalism, the variety of skills and personal stories which people have brought to Riace has given the town a new lease of life. In 2016 mayor Lucano was named by Fortune magazine as one of the world’s 50 greatest leaders.

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Peyrelevede, Corrèze département, central FRANCE

Population: 840

About 60 asylum seekers were housed in an old retirement home, bringing life back to the village of about 840 inhabitants, creating new job opportunities for the local community and contributing to the efforts to keep the local primary school open.

What if the refugees do not “take away our jobs”, but actually create them? With this question in mind, Pierre Coutaud, the mayor of Peyrelevede initiated the opening of a refugee reception centre in his village, where about 60 asylum seekers are hosted. The results? The post office, which was about to be closed, has seen its attendance increase by 30 %, since each new resident opened a bank account. Thanks to the compulsory

registration of refugee children in the communal school, a class that was scheduled to be abolished was kept open and an additional teacher post was created. The number of pupils has increased from 44 to 62, in a corner of the province characterised by demographic erosion and falling birth rates since the 1960s. As a result, the village's economy was boosted and five new jobs created.

This project was not an easy task. During public meetings the inhabitants' opinions were divided; many were afraid, others outright opposed to the project. Owners of second homes in the village were very resistant to the integration efforts.

"I was asked to hold a referendum. I refused", said the mayor. In the end, the local community was convinced by the positive effects on the local economy and growth and they embraced the newcomers, who quickly turned into happy *corréziens*.^{xviii}

Contact

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Pouilly-en-Auxois, Côte-d'Or département, eastern FRANCE

Population: 1 507

Asylum seekers are housed in the former gendarmerie barracks, a four-storey building in Pouilly-en-Auxois, as an initiative of the local mayor's office. This project managed to find a use for the empty building, bring together locals and refugees through a number of local assistance projects and support the local economy by offering the refugees a daily allowance to be used at the local market.^{xx}

To relieve the situation in Calais, the French Minister of the Interior has identified some 20 *départements* that will receive migrants, while their asylum applications are being processed. One of those *départements* is Pouilly-en-Auxois, which received about 60 asylum seekers, most of them coming from the Horn of Africa. Bernard Milloir, the mayor, and Marie-Jo Bourcier, head of the commune's social services report that many of the locals have been mobilised to help the migrants, by offering French classes, donating goods, opening sports facilities and inviting the newly arrived to dine with them.

Each of the asylum seekers receives €11.45 per day as a temporary allowance, which benefits the local markets. Initially, the local population was quite resistant, with some members of the community participating in xenophobic events. However, the mayor, committed to policies of inclusion and tolerance, responded to these difficulties by illustrating the positive socio-economic impacts of the arrival of asylum seekers for the local community and by constantly promoting local integration initiatives. Now, the majority of the locals support and welcome the new inhabitants of the commune.

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ENHANCING INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE ECONOMY

Entry into the labour market is key to successful long term integration, as it gives refugees a sense of purpose in the new host society. Through employment, refugees can contribute to the host community, build a social network and gain financial independence. The lack of language proficiency or proof of academic qualifications are only some examples of common hurdles experienced by newcomers. This chapter provides an overview of initiatives that enhanced the integration of refugees and asylum seekers in the local economy.

Two-year introduction programme and second-chance programme^{xx}, Bergen, NORWAY

Population: 278 121

An introduction centre in Bergen offers an entirely state funded two-year training programme for refugees, with the aim of supporting their integration into working life. The centre offers a “second-chance training programme” to people with little or no work experience and stay-at-home mothers.

To address the problem of refugees having little or no work experience or being insufficiently prepared for new professional contexts, the City of Bergen has implemented two action plans – “Diversity brings possibilities” in 1998 and

“Everybody’s Responsibility” in 2007 and opened the biggest introduction centre in Norway. The purpose of the centre is to assist newly arrived migrants to participate in working and social life and to increase their financial independence. The two-year introduction programme offered by the centre provides refugees with Norwegian

language skills, basic insights into Norwegian society and prepares them for participation in working life and/or education. At the same time, the City of Bergen carries out labour-market research to identify sectors where there is a shortage of low-skilled staff. The introduction centre also runs a “second-chance project” that targets refugees aged 18 to 25, stay-at-home mothers or people with little or no professional experience. This is a full-time training programme during which each refugee is assisted by a personal coach. Participants follow motivation courses, attend discussion groups, receive help for their homework and carry out traineeships in catering services or supermarkets. The cost of this training amounts to approximately 82 000 euros per refugee over a five year period (90% of the total costs). At first glance this may seem a lot. Statistics show, however, that this sum only represents a fraction of what the Norwegian welfare system would have to pay if refugees remained unemployed. What is more, the results of these programmes have been positive, as one year after entering the two-year programme 55% of the participants are in employment or have entered the education system. After completion of the programme, 40% of the participants find work in the regular job-market. After completing the second-chance programme 50% of the participants find work or go into education.

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Internships for skilled asylum seekers by Siemens^{xxi}, Erlangen, GERMANY

Population: 108 336

The city of Erlangen and Siemens co-operated to offer 10 internships at Siemens for skilled asylum seekers. This resulted in a “win-win-win” situation for asylum seekers, company employees and the company itself. The programme has expanded to 14 other German cities and currently employs approximately 100 refugees.

In September 2014, Middle Franconia’s government asked Erlangen to accommodate 300 newly arrived refugees, in addition to the refugees already present in the city. These people were housed in tents, and prejudices about refugees gained new political pertinence in Erlangen. To address this situation, the city of Erlangen and Siemens jointly developed a paid traineeship programme in January 2015. The internship programme includes an integration workshop with the participating department of

Siemens and a “buddy” (mentor), who serves as an additional contact from another department. The interns generally receive the minimum wage or the prevailing rate of compensation for interns at the specified location. Many of them proved to be particularly skilled in engineering and IT. The long-term advantages of Siemens’ internship concept for the participants include further opportunities such as fixed-term employment, student trainee jobs and integration into special training courses or vocational training programs.^{xxii}

Challenges included creating a programme that fell outside previous regulations and structures and had to be built from scratch. This included the bureaucratic structures and cross-departmental knowledge sharing, co-operation in the field of asylum seeker employment, company processes and a strong framework programme for the traineeships. Short- and long-term outcomes were a reduction in the number of prejudicial rumours about refugees perpetuated among Siemens’ employees, the fostering of intercultural exchange of expertise and knowledge, an improvement in the workplace capacity for asylum seekers and a strong contribution to long-term integration. Asylum seekers received workplace orientation and self-checked their professional capacities. Company employees could reflect on their bias against refugees and migrants and the company itself could benefit from the potential of qualified asylum seekers.

Finally, one of the most important lessons learned is the fact that companies can offer strong support to local integration efforts, they value the diversity advantage and can be great partners for intercultural integration projects.

*This project is part of the **C4i-Communication for Integration Project** put in place by the Council of Europe and the EU in 11 cities across Europe (Barcelona, Bilbao, Amadora, Loures, Sabadell, Patras, Erlangen, Nuremberg, Lublin, Botkyrka and Limerick) with the aim of combating stereotypes and xenophobia and fostering the integration of migrants into local communities. C4i-Communication for Integration, co-funded by the Council of Europe and the European Commission (European Integration Fund), targets prejudices, rumours and stereotypes by using viral information techniques to provide evidence-based answers to common misconceptions.^{xxiii}*

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AGRIV project, Neuchâtel, SWITZERLAND

Population : 33 712

To promote the employment of refugees and strengthen economic development in rural areas, the AGRIV project in Neuchâtel, supported by federal funds, offered refugees theoretical and practical agricultural training on local farms, combined with language lessons.^{xxiv}

Since September 2015, the regional Integration Office and the Chamber of Agriculture and Viticulture of the canton of Neuchâtel have been working together on the AGRIV project, a six-week training course for refugees with previous agricultural experience, which combines technical language lessons, professional training and short internships on farms spread around the canton. This way the refugees get to know local farmers, acquire the basics of farming in an entirely new context and gain the practical experience required to integrate into the labour market. At the end of the six-week traineeship participants are registered in job-exchanges managed by the Chamber of Agriculture and Viticulture, so that local farmers are made aware of the fact that they can save a lot of paperwork by hiring competent refugees locally instead of recruiting seasonal workers from abroad.

Whereas the project had a positive impact for all stakeholders involved, the challenges that such an initiative involve also became visible after a first evaluation. Farmers underlined that there is a need for longer traineeship periods and that wages need to be adapted to this specific training-working context. Despite these conclusions, such projects should be promoted, because they have recognise and respond to the need to engage refugees in rural environments.

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“Statushouders” (status holders) skills assessment programme,^{xxvi} Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS

Population: 813 562 within the city

To ease their integration into working life, refugees who have received the right of permanent residence in the Netherlands (“statushouders”) can enrol in this programme created by Amsterdam City Council. What is particular about this programme is its customised approach: each status holder is appointed a personal client manager, who designs an employment and integration strategy

based on the “client’s” individual profile.

The programme offers a series of meetings/interviews to assess the status holder’s needs and assists them in their search for employment/education/language courses. The first step in the process is to assess the client’s educational and professional background and their knowledge of languages. Status holders can then enroll in the “Language Acquisition and Orientation Programme for Refugees”^{xxvii} in which issues such as work, education, integration and settling into the city are addressed. Then, status holders are assisted in drafting a CV in English and Dutch. The main objective is to help participants get the opportunities they need to build their own future. Assigning each individual to a client manager provides tailor-made support responding to refugees’ needs and skills and helps them find professional opportunities in the Netherlands. As a result, the participants in the programme can integrate faster into Amsterdam’s working life, they are more aware of opportunities that match their personal experiences and competences, they improve their language skills and rapidly expand their social network.

Contact

City of Amsterdam hotline (from within the Netherlands): 14 020

Telephone: (via Skype or from abroad): (+31) 20 624 1111

Website: <https://www.amsterdam.nl/immigratie/vluchtelingen/information-for/>

Solidarity Cities (EUROCITIES)

The Statushouders Programme is part of another network of solidarity, the Solidarity Cities project. Solidarity Cities is an initiative for the management of the refugee crisis proposed by the Mayor of Athens and launched in the framework of the EUROCITIES network^{xxviii}. It aims to constitute the framework under which all cities’ actions and initiatives are presented, highlighting the political leadership of cities in addressing this challenge. Cities becoming active under the Solidarity Cities initiative, want to work with the European Commission and member states to manage the refugee situation. Solidarity Cities is open to all European cities wishing to work closely with each other and committed to solidarity in the field of refugee reception and integration.

<http://solidaritycities.eu/about>

Dresden handelt! (Dresden acts!) initiative^{xxix}, Dresden, GERMANY

Population: 543 825

With the Dresden handelt! initiative the city of Dresden has brought together a number of different stakeholders with the IQ Network Saxony (Integration through qualification) to support newcomers through many integration initiatives and in particular to offer a platform for the recognition of foreign diplomas and for the

assessment of professional qualifications.

The IQ Network is a regional project responsible for questions regarding the recognition of foreign qualifications and the skills assessment of refugees seeking consultation. After meetings and interviews, participants can orientate themselves among the existing services for their professional integration in Germany. Led by the “My folder” (Mein Ordner) project, an initial support structure was set up by the city. Available online and through a dedicated app, it was set up in Dresden to provide comprehensive information for all residents and newcomers. In addition to thematic dossiers with useful contact addresses and checklists available in English and German, these folders can be used to store important documents and can be used as part of all counselling situations. The Dresden handelt! initiative is part of Dresden’s response to the refugee crisis as a member of the **EUROCITIES** network.

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PROTECTING VULNERABLE GROUPS (WOMEN, UNACCOMPANIED MINORS)

Women and children, including victims of sexual violence and unaccompanied minors, constitute a substantial share of an arriving population. They are particularly vulnerable and require more targeted attention and approaches from local and regional authorities. The goal of this section is to highlight initiatives that cater to the particular needs of these groups, by offering psychological support and a sense of acceptance, as well as solutions for the integration of children into the local community, the education system and later into working life.

Free trauma treatment for 1 100 Yazidi women and children, Baden-Württemberg^{xxx}, GERMANY

Population: 10 879 618

Some 1 100 Yazidi women and children who have survived war crimes and sexual violence committed by Daesh members were brought to Germany on a special visa and were provided with housing, specialist trauma treatment and access to diverse language courses in 22 municipalities and villages.

In the context of “Sonderkontingent für besonders schutzwürdige Frauen und Kinder aus dem Nordirak” (special quota project for particularly vulnerable women and children from

northern Iraq), since March 2015 the German Land of Baden- Württemberg has offered a programme providing free treatment and visas on humanitarian grounds to over 1 100 Yazidi women and children who were held captive by ISIS.^{xxxii} This initiative was welcomed by local mayors who have helped organise its implementation and offered shelter and support to the refugees.^{xxxiii} Jan Ilhan Kizilhan, the project's leading expert, travelled to northern Iraq and spoke with many women who were forced into sexual slavery, with the task of selecting the ones who would come to Germany. It was decided that for very elderly women, for whom it would be more difficult to build a new life without their relatives, the programme would be less beneficial. On average, the selected women are under the age of 20. The budget for the programme, provided by the *Land* of Baden-Württemberg was set at 95 million euros. The women were offered safe shelter, financial and psychological support and access to language courses and diverse educational programmes. Despite difficulties in communication, many local inhabitants have volunteered to help. The women and children are housed in 22 villages and cities in Baden Württemberg (1.000 women), Niedersachsen (70 women) and Schleswig-Holstein (30 women). In the interests of their safety, the whereabouts of the shelters are kept secret. Recently, Canada has decided to integrate 400 ISIS victims following Germany's example and method.^{xxxiii}

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Preparing the entry of refugees into working life: "After18", Leicester, UK

Population: 397 100

The City of Leicester and the Initiative "After18" have been working since 2013 with unaccompanied minors in Leicester to prepare their transition into adulthood and working life. Among the various services, young people receive specific information concerning management of personal and emotional problems, access to employment and advice on future studies.

During the last few years, the UK has experienced a particularly big influx of children as young as 11, fleeing war and persecution in their home country. Following the special

treatment afforded to them as unaccompanied minors, turning 18 brings a change in legal status that leads to many difficulties for refugees. Many are expected to return to unfamiliar cities in their country while those allowed to stay must learn how to adjust to living in the UK. After18 works to support young people to make the transition into adulthood and prepare for their future.

For instance, in 2015, the City of Leicester provided services to 150 minors from 14 different countries. Young adults in the asylum system receive one-to-one support to understand what this change of status can imply, to develop their support networks and to plan for their future. After18 works with academics to support research into the post-18 lives of former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. After18 is currently working with the Becoming Adult^{xxxv} project based at University College London. After 18 also runs activities^{xxxv} for young people to socialise, have fun and learn new skills. In addition, it provides speakers for groups and facilitates events to raise awareness of the issues affecting young asylum seekers^{xxxvi}.

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Supporting existing civil society initiatives, Eurodistrict Strasbourg-Ortenau, FRANCE and GERMANY

Population: 915 000

Based on a conviction to support existing projects instead of developing new ones, the Eurodistrict has set up a fund (€ 30,000) for local associations specifically committed to the integration of refugee children and adolescents, thus promoting refugee integration at cross-border level.

The Franco-German Eurodistrict is a cross-border administrative entity (European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation) sharing common institutions, active since 2010^{xxxvii}. Among the actions supported in this context is the creation of art therapy groups in an accommodation facility for refugees. Other projects include:

- The organisation of trips together with German and French primary school children, in order to discover the area and the culture of the host country;
- contemporary dance classes for French, German and immigrant children and the teaching of choreography that addresses the concepts of "belonging", "Identity" and "personal history";
- artistic mediation workshops conducted by artists and a clinical psychologist

for refugee and schoolchildren in Strasbourg;

- scientific activities;
- photography workshops, during which refugee children are invited to present the photos taken during their migration paths and in their new environment.

So far, Eurodistrict has successfully supported 17 scientific and creative projects to integrate refugee children with French and German children, thereby promoting integration on an interstate and intercultural level. This approach not only underlines the strategic importance of local associations, which often possess the networks, know-how and experience in working on integration-related topics, but also shows the benefit of combining resources beyond borders.

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Stadtteilmütter (District Mothers) initiative - Berlin-Neukölln^{xxxxviii}, GERMANY

Population: 322 931

The Stadtteilmütter (District Mothers) scheme has trained 140 migrant women to be home visitors to over 100 immigrant families and to promote educational, employment, child care, legal and health information, thereby creating a strong local network for integration.

Women and mothers from an immigrant background are given a short training course enabling them to speak directly to families from their own community about various topics (immigration, language, work, health, law, child care and targeted development of children and young people). Outreach is thus achieved through demographic groups removed from education and welfare services, and connecting with the neighbourhoods becomes easier for immigrant families. The women themselves acquire skills that enable them to deal better with their roles as child-raisers and educators. Furthermore, their employment allowance gives them a unique opportunity to assert themselves in the labour market. The familiar home atmosphere and often the use of the native language of migrant families to explain difficult bureaucratic topics greatly accelerate the process of integration. In that sense, the project contributes both, to enhancing the integration of the beneficiaries of the outreach activities, and to the empowerment of the mediators (Stadtteilmütter).

Contact

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PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Integration into new societies begins with quality education, which is one of the most valuable, empowering assets refugees can have. It enables them to learn the languages, culture, and tradition of host communities and to acquire new knowledge and skills, with which they can sustain themselves and their families and become valuable members of the community. Initiatives which facilitate access to education, such as open schools and universities and temporary education facilities with fast-track language courses, are an essential step towards a successful integration.

Access to university education for highly qualified refugees, Erlangen, Nürnberg, GERMANY^{xxxix}

Population of Erlangen: 108 336, Nürnberg: 501 072

As part of the Intercultural Cities Network, the city of Erlangen supported the efforts of the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nurnberg (FAU), one of the first German universities to enable access to higher education for refugees by lowering the bureaucratic hurdles for university enrolment, conducting interviews and offering language courses.

In 2015, FAU began the “Study opportunities for refugees” project. In the first phase of the programme, the Central Office for International Affairs (RIA) team conducts orientation interviews with the Student Advice and Career Service to determine whether refugees have the qualifications required to study and to assess their level of German language proficiency. Asylum seekers and refugees that meet the criteria for university entry are admitted to the programme after this first interview. They then attend German language courses to achieve language proficiency. A further phase of the programme includes the opportunity to attend trial lectures.

They also attend tutorials with practical exercises for additional preparation before studying. RIA has established strong links with local education providers, so that refugees who do not qualify for studying at a German university can choose alternative education options.

Students at FAU have also volunteered to help refugees through their involvement as partners in tandem projects or as mentors helping refugees with day-to-day matters and concerns. In the Law Clinic, students of law help refugees to prepare for asylum procedures and find volunteer lawyers. The Working Group for Human Rights and Medicine, a group of medicine students, helps to provide medical care in refugee accommodation and makes referrals to local doctors if needed.

The project has been highly successful from the start. This was made possible by the

co-operation of the University Board with members of the university, with student volunteers and with the cities of Erlangen, Fürth and Nurnberg and other administrative districts. External funding was essential to financing the programme. In the beginning, the programme was funded by the Association for Promoting Internationalisation at the University of Erlangen-Nurnberg. At the end of 2015, the Deutsche Akademische Dienst (DAAD) reacted to the new situation and introduced specific funding programmes. FAU's commitment has been particularly successful: around 1 800 orientation interviews have been conducted by university staff in addition to their regular duties since 2015. Thanks to these efforts, 300 refugees have been able to attend courses.

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Temporary education centre, Sultanbeyli belediye, Istanbul, TURKEY

Population: 302 388

The belediye speeds up Syrian children's access to education by opening temporary education centres for Syrian children to learn the Turkish language, and by simplifying the criteria that families with school-aged children must fulfil in order to receive state aid.

Because of the language barrier, getting refugee children into schools is one of the biggest challenges for local authorities in Turkey. The Sultanbeyli belediye opened a temporary education centre for Syrian children, which is recognised by the Ministry of National Education and aims at ensuring that Syrians have a healthy communication with the Turkish community and that they can adapt to the life in Turkey as soon as possible by offering courses every day of the week^{xi}. By September 2016, Sultanbeyli confirmed that there were 1 200 children in this centre.

In order to receive humanitarian support aid, families with school-aged children need to register them in one of the local education centres. However challenges do of course remain. Involved stakeholders claim that there is a need for further educational facilities and a stronger enforcement of the schooling-requirement for humanitarian aid. As one of the results, the Sultanbeyli district boasted a 50 per cent enrolment rate among school-aged children, which is significantly higher than the national average of 25% among urban Syrians in Turkey, according to the officials from Sultanbeyli's Refugee Coordination Centre.^{xii}

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Open schools initiative, Athens, GREECE

Population of the municipality: 664 046

By transforming 25 public schools into centres for scientific, creative and sports activities, as well as for language courses for Athenians and refugees, the city of Athens managed to bring together refugee and Greek children, increase the involvement and interaction of neighbourhoods and local schools in the refugee integration process and offer refugee children a safe environment where they can learn and spend time outside of their accommodation centres.

In 2015, the city of Athens launched the initiative “Open schools”, a programme aiming to transform the local public schools in the municipality of Athens into centres for sports, creative learning, language courses and other activities for all Athenians and refugees. With this initiative, the school buildings remain open from the end of school hours until 9:30 p.m. on weekdays and from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends. Not only do the workshops enhance language skills and cultural understanding of refugee children, but they also contribute to a direct exchange among newcomers and resident population at all age levels. Using the school buildings to host creative workshops for all ages, revitalises the spaces and brings the local community together in an effort to increase the involvement and interaction between neighbourhoods and local schools. The programme is led by the city of Athens and financed by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

During the summer of 2016, 450 out of the 1 250 participants in activities of the open schools were refugees. Today the initiative comprises 25 public schools in the municipality of Athens and numbers 170 courses with a total of 10 184 participants.^{xiii}

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Funzi mobile app helping refugees to learn local language values and customs, Espoo, FINLAND

Population: 270 744

Bringing the refugee integration process up to date with new technologies and

facilitating the access of refugees to information, Finland-based Funzi in collaboration with the Finnish Immigration Service in Espoo, created a free mobile learning and information service, which delivers reliable information on education, language courses and employment opportunities to their mobile phone users worldwide.^{xiii}

The service is easy to use and applies to all migrants. It is initially available in an English version with multiple language versions under development. Funzi's service contains trustworthy information from official sources that will enable immigrants to handle day-to-day challenges more efficiently and find the right authorities at different stages of their proceedings. The service is free and available for use worldwide. The company plans to expand its operations; country-specific learning packages for asylum seekers will be published throughout the EU. Additionally Funzi provides mobile courses for employment and entrepreneurship, which can help immigrants to bring their professional skills to the labour market.

Funzi's courses are delivered in the form of a pack of cards broken down into smaller, easily understood and digestible sections. After reading and understanding a card, the user may have the opportunity to answer a quiz question, receiving instant confirmation of what they have learned and understood. The first services were initially launched to meet information needs in developing countries. In 2014, Funzi launched "Entrepreneurship" and "Get that job" packages that are used in Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania and South Africa.

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COUNTERING HATE SPEECH AND ACTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Even when the basic structures (such as housing, employment, education) exist, a de facto integration and amalgamation of refugees with the local population cannot be achieved, as long as hate speech and acts of violent extremism exist; such practices lead to the exclusion and subordination of the affected groups and they hinder an equal and peaceful coexistence within the community. Consequently, countering hate speech and acts of violent extremism should be part of every local and regional integration policy. Thus, this final section includes innovative practices which promote cultural sensitivity, invite people to engage in open discussions, integrate anti-rumour strategies in schools and universities, and raise awareness through new technologies and art.

Anti-rumour web app testing citizens' knowledge about immigration and decrypting rumours^{xiv}, Bilbao, SPAIN

Population: 345 141

In an effort to tackle hate speech and acts of violent extremism, this app tests the knowledge of users on immigration with a series of fact-based quizzes on immigration and reveals the truth or otherwise of common rumours about immigrants, thus raising awareness and illustrating the negative effects of rumours and stereotyping.

The main metaphor used in the Bilbao communication campaign is the umbrella as a defence against rumours that fall from the sky. The campaign has developed a short game, in two forms, a scratch card and a web app, that can allow the user to assess whether they are “protected” from or “drenched” by rumours. Multiple choice questions are used. In addition, longer statements of factually accurate information are presented alongside each answer, with a view to raising awareness of rumours and stereotypes that negatively affect coexistence among the different city populations. A final score is given, indicating the degree of “protection” from rumours. By disseminating this information more widely on social networks, the user may obtain additional “medals” and join the campaign for the values of multiculturalism, social cohesion and combating racial discrimination.

Similarly, and in order for this information to reach groups of people who are not connected to information technology, a paper version of the game was created. The app was downloaded over 1 300 times between September 2014 and February 2015 averaging over four minutes per user per session.^{xiv}

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Training university students to combat racist attitudes^{xvi}, Patras, GREECE

Population: 260 308

Acknowledging the importance of having future teachers who are culturally sensitive and have a better understanding of diversity, 250 prospective teachers (undergraduate students) were asked to design, implement and reflect on/evaluate an anti-rumour campaign to combat prejudices as part of their multicultural course at the University of Patras.

Between March and June 2015 the C4i campaign organised professional anti-rumour training for future teachers at the University of Patras. Initially students were trained to

become C4i anti-rumour agents and they were afterwards engaged in authentic intercultural circumstances in schools and NGOs in Patras, which deal with diversity and migrant issues. The students had to identify rumours, design and implement anti-rumour activities in the workplace and afterwards evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention and prepare a full report campaign to be presented at a number of events (such as the European Local Democracy Week in Delphi in October 2015).

After a semester-long engagement with anti-rumour strategy, the students showed enhanced positive attitudes towards diversity. This project served as a practical component of the university course, as it gave students the opportunity to practically apply their knowledge in real workplace situations. Further, it should be considered as a first step towards the creation of a sustainable plan to integrate an anti-rumour strategy into the university curriculum.

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Anti-rumour café, Botkyrka, SWEDEN

Population: 90 675

In order to respond to rumours about immigrants in Botkyrka, the municipality created a public platform for discussing and exploring rumours and prejudices. A total of four anti-rumour cafes were arranged between January and September 2014, attended by about 100 people in total.

Measured by income per capita, Botkyrka is one of the lower-income municipalities in greater Stockholm. It also has the third youngest population of all Sweden's municipal districts. In 2010 Botkyrka became the municipality with the largest proportion of citizens with a foreign background (53.2%) in the country^{xxx}. The anti-rumour cafe is part of Botkyrka's participation in the Communication for Integration (C4i) campaign.

Each cafe focused on a particular rumour. The initial theme-specific concept was "Criminality", followed by "incompatibility between Swedish and immigrant cultures", "Unequal distribution of public resources" and "Swedish culture is under threat". The rumour theme, "Swedish culture is under threat" was among the most visited cafes.

However, irrespective of the level of interest in a rumour theme, attendance by the majority Swedes was poor. Especially in areas with a high concentration of immigrants, attendance was lower. This challenge was addressed by organising "extra invitations" addressed to target groups from different demographic areas. In addition, invitations and information about all the events were disseminated through social media (Facebook, intranets, etc.).

The main goal of each cafe was to encourage people to talk about rumours that they

usually feel uncomfortable discussing, and the survey of the participants indicated that this goal was accomplished. The participants reflected on how “true” the rumours all over Botkyrka were and gave examples from their own lives.

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Don't feed the rumour! Amadora^{xviii}, PORTUGAL

Population: 175 136

Focusing on tackling rumours, stereotypes and hate speech in schools and education and promoting an inclusive educational system, this open and innovative campaign enabled pupils to explore their feelings and thoughts about cultural differences, rumours and stereotypes through positive dialogue and art.

In the framework of the Communication for Integration (C4i) project, the city of Amadora has been implementing a communication campaign focused on education and schools. The campaign aims to address the rumour, indicated by research carried out in the city, that schools with a higher number of migrant students have lower performance results. As part of the campaign, 60 pupils from Seomara da Costa Primo secondary school were trained as “anti-rumour agents”. They also developed the theme of rumour and anti-rumour through various artistic resources, such as photography, singing and visual arts. Further, they participated in a debate entitled “How do I see others?”. Finally, as part of the campaign the city has set up a kite contest for all primary and secondary schools. The contest was held between 2 March and 30 April 2015.

C4i has developed an innovative methodology, using different communication approaches based on concrete information (e.g. immigration statistics, the socio-economic role of immigrants in the host country) and providing training to anti-rumour agents who disseminate to the local population objective information, thereby creating an anti-rumour network^{xix}. By using this methodology, paired with local political commitment, the project was very well received; anti-rumour approaches and diversity policies entered the school curriculum and the public discourse throughout the municipality. For example, one spontaneous effect was that the strong link with schools and the interest raised by the campaign led some teachers to select diversity as the subject of plays to be performed at Amadora's Annual Theatre Show. In addition, after the experience of the “Don't feed the rumour!” project, the city is preparing a municipal plan for the integration of immigrants that addresses discrimination and prejudice.

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Avenida Movimento das

Forças Armadas No.1

2700-595 AMADORA

***“Lublin 4 All” social-awareness campaign on newcomers,
Lublin, POLAND****Population: 349 103*

Between 2012 and 2014 the Mayor’s Office in the city of Lublin implemented the “Lublin 4 All” campaign together with the Swiss canton Neuchâtel, with the objective of presenting the city’s local diversity. The campaign contributed to an increased intercultural involvement of city administration staff and the creation of sustainable structures for the promotion of integration – all in a city with a recent history of political-economic transformation.

The campaign, part of the C4i project and funded by a grant from the Swiss government, included activities such as opinion polls, regular meetings with integration support groups, cultural sensitivity workshops and a photography exhibition featuring portraits by Lublin’s residents. The positive impacts¹ of the campaign include the contribution to an increased intercultural involvement and a better co-ordination of and collaboration between the city’s administration’s staff. Lublin 4 All involved many different departments and centres within the local authority, and thus enabled exchange of best practices with Switzerland and the establishment of relevant structures in the Lublin city administration. Lublin improved co-ordination by establishing a culture of co-operation and openness among the city’s administration and civil society stakeholders working on diversity issues. The support group was created as part of the Lublin 4 All project and continues to serve its purpose following the conclusion of the Lublin 4 All project. Further, with the help of this campaign the city created sustainable structures for the promotion of integration, such as the Foreigner Help Desk and a senior specialist post located at the Division for Cooperation with NGOs and Social Participation, which will continue functioning after the end of the campaign.

Finally, one can notice a knock-on effect on other cities, as some of project’s concepts were subsequently introduced to the Ministry of Labour and 10 other Polish cities.

Contact**Municipality of Lublin**

Mayor’s Office

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Bologna cares! The communication campaign of the SPRAR project in the city of Bologna, ITALY

Population: urban: 388 257

As part of the communication sector of SPRAR networks, this campaign aspires to raise awareness among the local population and to actively involve them on the topic of asylum seekers' and refugees' reception, choosing a specific topic each year and focusing in particular on the period around World Refugee Day on 20 June.

The Bologna cares! campaign is run by SPRAR and social third-sector institutions, in particular ASP Città di Bologna, and those involved in migrant reception (ArcoIaio, MondoDonna, Lai-momo and Camelot).

The successful campaign has taken place every year since 2014. The theme of the 2014 campaign – **“I fled because...”** – was an analysis of the causes driving millions of individuals to leave their home country each year in search of safety elsewhere. The 2015 campaign – **“Being a refugee yesterday and today: the stories”** – focused on the stories of those asylum seekers who have had the chance to follow a structured path after being granted protection. The subject of the 2016 campaign **“Welcoming reception: a positive choice”** is the welcoming reception of asylum seekers as a necessary and ordinary activity on the social scene both today and in the future. And the 2017 edition of Bologna cares! was called Integr-Action (“Integr-Azione”) and it uses a technique that combines photography with research and action: **“Photovoice-immagini come voce” (Photovoice-Images as voices)**. Photovoice is a participatory photography project in collaboration with the association “Awakening” and the University of Padua. After a brief initial training by photography and social work experts, participants will have the task of taking pictures of their point of view on the migration phenomenon and integration in their everyday context. The participants will be comprised of four groups of the society in Bologna: workers in the reception facilities, asylum seekers and refugees hosted in the reception facilities, local citizens in favour of the welcoming reception of immigrants and citizens with a critical approach to refugee reception.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AT LOCAL LEVEL

- **ENGAGE** the refugees individually and collectively in all decisions that concern their situation and engage the local population in finding ways forward;
- **BUILD** on local know-how! Reach out to the expertise of all concerned sectors (education, security, migrant communities etc.) before and during the implementation of policies for refugee inclusion;
- **DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL!** Before launching a project consult local, national and international actors that may have already done something on the issues and better support already existing associations and projects;
- **COORDINATE AND COOPERATE!** Ensure a regular mechanism of consultation with the national level and cooperate with authorities at all level of governance in the planning, implementation and evaluation of your activities;
- **NETWORK INTERNATIONALLY!** Make use of international networks, exchange best practices with other cities or regions facing the same challenges and engage in already existing projects and networks of solidarity cities, which can provide crucial support in starting or improving your policies;

FACILITATING INTEGRATION IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- **COORDINATE CIVIC AND PUBLIC ACTION!** Establish coordination desks or local and regional refugee centres to best assess their needs and prevent duplication of activities;
- **FACILITATE** the language learning process for refugees, by improving the access to information on courses, organizing lessons without prior registration or providing online modules;

PROVIDING ADEQUATE HOUSING

- **PERSONALIZE** and decentralize housing solutions by cooperating with private owners and housing associations;
- **DON'T SEGREGATE** but mix communities! Integrating reception centres into already existing residential areas will improve the access to social services (e.g. educational facilities, job centres, child care, health centres), enhance social inclusion and counter fear and prejudices among the population;

ENHANCING INTEGRATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET AND ECONOMY

- **IMPLEMENT** the necessary structures to screen the professional skills, experiences and language qualifications of refugees as soon as possible;

- **GRANTING** the right to work means boosting integration and strengthening your local economy! Cooperate with companies in your area and create training and internship opportunities for refugees that respond to the needs of local business owners ;

PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS (WOMEN, UNACCOMPANIED MINORS)

- **IMPLEMENT** mechanisms that respond to the particular needs of vulnerable populations, in particular women and children, by offering psychological support, mentor programmes and dedicated assistance by health professionals;
- **ENSURE** that unaccompanied minors are offered a safe space and support by professionals in order to facilitate their entry into the ordinary educational system and transfer into working life;

PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- **COLLABORATE** with universities to find ways to encourage access of refugees to higher education, for example by simplifying the criteria for enrolment in universities;
- **INTEGRATION** shouldn't end when school ends! Make use of educational facilities and provide workshops, art classes or sport events for residents and newcomers, so as to promote integration also in the evening, weekends or during summer holidays;

COUNTERING HATE SPEECH AND ACTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

- **DEVELOP AND COMMUNICATE** a clear zero tolerance policy on hate speech and violent extremism;
- **IDENTIFY** existing rumours among the resident population, implement activities in order to educate the general public, such as anti-rumour cafes or booklets, and facilitate specific trainings for professionals (teachers, staff of city administration);
- **MEET AND INFORM!** Bringing together newcomers and resident population through open round tables, workshops or intercultural events is one of the most efficient ways to counter misunderstandings and fear, and will facilitate the implementation of your policies.

REFERENCE TEXTS AND FURTHER READING

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)

Joining up fundamental rights-Toolkit for local, regional and national public officials:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/joinedup/home>

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Regional Refugee and Migrant response plan for Europe, January to December 2017:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/joinedup/home>

Solidarity Cities initiative, EUROCITIES network

Cities actions for the Education of Refugees and Asylum Seekers, January 2017:

<http://www.eurocities.eu/eurocities/documents/Cities-actions-for-the-education-of-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-WSPO-AHNHJB>

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Cities Welcoming Refugees and Migrants; Enhancing effective urban governance in an age of migration (Inclusive and Sustainable Cities series), 2016:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002465/246558e.pdf>

ROMA AND TRAVELLERS

DEFINITIONS

Europe is home to 10–12 million Roma and Travellers. They comprise the largest set of minority groups in Europe, yet many of us are unable to answer the basic question: Who are the Roma? The term “Roma and Travellers” encompasses on the one hand the wide diversity of the groups: a) Roma, Sinti/Manush, Calé, Kaale, Romanichals, Boyash/Rudari; b) Balkan Egyptians (Egyptians and Ashkali) and c) Eastern groups (Dom, Lom and Abdal); and, on the other hand, groups such as Travellers, Yenish, and the populations designated under the administrative term “Gens du voyage”, as well as persons who identify themselves as Gypsies.

What all these people have in common, is that they may **face discrimination** simply because they are considered part of a group, also known by the exonym Gypsies, which for many is a pejorative term due to its connotations with illegality, lack of education and irregularity.

Myth: *Roma and Travellers are workshy, lack education and aspyre to live on benefits.*

Fact: *In a 2013 study, the European Commission found that intra-EU migrants, including Roma migrants, make a net contribution to their host countries, by paying more in taxes than they receive in benefits. Moreover, they are in general less likely to request assistance from unemployment services and to receive family and child-related benefits than their native born counterparts. Studies carried out in the UK (2014) and Sweden (2014) provided similar finding. Importantly, the diversity of situations among Roma immigrants is often overlooked. Many Roma are working and have integrated well in their new host countries.*

Myth: *All Roma have an itinerant lifestyle.*

Fact: *In many places, the number of Roma has remained stable over the years. In France, for example, it is estimated that the number of Roma is around 15-20.000, a stable figure since the beginning of the 2000s. For instance, 80% of all Roma in Austria are actually not nomadic but resident. There is no research-based evidence indicating that Roma are more likely to leave their country of habitual residence than the average population. On the contrary, a 2013 study on Roma in Romania found that they were not more inclined to emigrate than non-Roma. Research indicates that the motives for Roma to emigrate do not fundamentally differ from those of non-Roma: they look for employment, better living conditions and a better education for their children.*

Myth: *All Roma are foreigners.*

Fact: *As mentioned above, the term Roma does not refer to a single, homogenous group. Their arrival in Europe, following migration from the Indian subcontinent dates back to several hundred years ago. For instance, Germany has been home to Sinti and Roma for 600 years. Roma are an integral part of Europe's history!*

WHAT ARE THEIR RIGHTS?

In simple terms, Roma **do enjoy the same rights as everyone else in your town, city or region**. In practice, however, the implementation of this is not as simple as it may seem, as Roma are more vulnerable to exploitation, marginalisation and stigmatisation than other citizens. Furthermore, in many cases Roma are themselves unaware of their rights, let alone of the way to exercise them, because of a decade, if not centuries, of exclusion.

It is for this reason that Roma, together with other groups vulnerable to discrimination mentioned in this handbook, **enjoy additional protection**, in order to improve their living conditions and their access to health care, education and employment. Most importantly, Roma enjoy the **right to non-discrimination**. The aim of the principle of non-discrimination is to allow all individuals an equal and fair chance to access opportunities available in a society, irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. The right to equality and non-discrimination is recognised in Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is a cross-cutting issue of concern in different UN and other international human rights instruments and treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Social Charter.

Access by Roma to their basic social rights is very often being denied because of stereotypes linked to the group: in the view of many Roma systematically participate in illegal activities, are uneducated and lead an unhealthy lifestyle. **Based on this stigma, anti-Gypsyism** stands a particular form of racism directed towards Roma and Travellers and has many manifestations: hate speech (also at the political level), forced evictions, segregation, discriminatory policy making or racist policy implementation.

In order to find lasting solutions to the challenges that relate to the integration of Roma into your community, it is first of all your responsibility to condemn such actions and to create the conditions for access to economic and social rights for Roma and Travellers in the fields falling within your competence. Furthermore, there is a need to take action that translates the right to non-discrimination in day-to-day life by actively promoting their access to rights particularly affected by discrimination, such as the right to education, social services, housing, and employment. **Don't forget that Roma are your citizens and, above all, EU citizens!** Even if they do not possess sufficient documentation (registration documents, educational/professional certificates), this can in no way justify limited access to human rights! By investing in policies to integrate Roma, you do not just

fulfil a responsibility, but you give these people a chance to give back to your local community and improve the quality of life of your entire population. **Engaging in integration is an investment in the cultural and socio-economic development of your city.**

Roma-related judgements of the European Court of Human Rights

Promoting the human rights of Roma is not only an opportunity. It is also a responsibility of local and regional authorities. The European Court of Human Rights has condemned states in numerous cases, in which violations of Roma rights were linked to local and regional competences.

HOUSING

Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria, no. 25446/06, 24 April 2012

A district mayor's plan to evict Roma from a settlement situated on municipal land without plans for rehousing them: any such eviction would constitute a violation of Article 8. Local authorities attempted to enforce the order in 2005 and 2006 regardless of the consequences and authorities had refused to consider approaches specially tailored to the needs of the Roma community on the grounds that that would "amount to discrimination against the majority population". The underprivileged status of the applicants' group had to be a weighty factor in considering approaches to dealing with their unlawful settlement and, if their removal was necessary, in deciding on its timing, how it was done and, if possible, arrangements for alternative shelter, which had not been taken into account in this case.

Connors v. the United Kingdom, no. 66746/01, 27 May 2004

Eviction of the applicant's family from a local authority gypsy caravan site – violation of Article 8 (right to family life), as the eviction had not been accompanied by the requisite procedural safeguards.

EDUCATION

Horváth and Kiss v. Hungary, no. 11146/11, 29 January 2013

Sending Roma children to remedial schools constituted discrimination based on ethnic, social and economic background. The judgment, among other things, established that the structural disadvantages caused by past discrimination need to be addressed through positive measures.

Sampanis and Others v. Greece, no. 32526/05, 5 June 2008

Eleven Roma children had been refused enrolment during the 2004/2005 school year (and were eventually segregated into "special needs" classes housed in an annex to the main building). The Court concluded that the Roma children concerned had suffered discrimination in education constituting a violation of Article 14 of the Convention

(prohibition of discrimination) taken together with Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education).

D.H. and Others v. the Czech Republic, no. 57325/00, 13 November 2007

The Court's Grand Chamber held that, primarily on the basis of statistical evidence showing dramatic disparities in rates of placement in "special schools" for the mildly mentally disabled, such measures violated Convention provisions on non-discrimination in education.

CHALLENGES IN PRACTICE

The history of European repression against the Roma dates back to their arrival from India several hundred years ago. Ever since there has been a tendency, especially during difficult times, to make Roma scapegoats for frustration through methods such as enslavement, mass killings, marginalisation or expulsion. For this reason, and in view of the use of anti-Roma rhetoric by politicians today, Roma are still often rather hesitant to approach authorities, or they even see them as a threat. This fact, combined with their life-style, which is often incompatible with the particularities of globalised societies, including borders, bureaucracies or formalised institutions such as schools, public services, etc., renders the integration of Roma more complex and difficult.

This complex situation will not improve as long as anti-Gypsyism remains deeply rooted in our societies. What is anti-Gypsism in practice? When a mayor does not want to access funds for the improvement of roads or sanitation systems in a Roma neighbourhood because of fear of political backlash; or when authorities do not make an effort to register newborn babies, who then grow up without identification documents and can never register for education, social welfare or employment assistance.

The only solution therefore is the implementation of the principle of non-discrimination and the equal treatment of all citizens by local authorities irrespective of their backgrounds.

At the same time, it should be stressed that your job, the job of local and regional authorities, is far from simple. Because of the differences in life-style, culture, traditions and structure of the community and due to the low health and education standards in Roma communities, **it can be very challenging for a mayor to host and effectively integrate Roma populations.** For instance, when it comes to housing, discrimination is at the root of all housing-related problems, such as denial of access to public and private rental housing on an equal footing with others, preferential treatment of non-Roma in the development of infrastructure and unauthorised excluded localities and hazardous settlements with substandard living conditions. As far as Roma education is concerned, social exclusion resulting in a systematic lack of access to education that often affects several generations of Roma, still contributes to low schooling rates among Roma children. Furthermore, a lack of financial self-sufficiency to pay for insurance or treatment, a lack of identification

documents and a lack of means of transportation from remote areas to health-care facilities, coupled with reported discrimination from health-care providers, are further reasons why Roma suffer serious health issues and the average life expectancy of Roma and Travellers is shorter than that of non-Roma and non-Travellers. Access to the labour market is also particularly challenging with a large number of Roma being undereducated, under-qualified and discriminated against in the workplace. This also results in an over-representation of Roma and Travellers in informal and unqualified employment. In light of the above illustrated challenges, it is evident that the particularity of the issue of Roma lies within the fact, that **the solution is not the mere existence of rights on both sides** (e.g. the right of Roma to housing vs. the right of the city to ban settlements); what is more, **it is about finding a way to balance those rights, to mediate the concerns of both sides and to understand the diverging perceptions of Roma and embrace their rights while drafting sustainable policies**. The goal is to achieve policies and solutions that are not based on the exclusion of one group of the population but that are aimed at a lasting improvement of social cohesion in your community. At the end of the day, a city that dedicates effort to implementing sustainable policies is always most likely to guarantee political success. In that sense, your methodological approach regarding Roma integration should be threefold: First, understanding why Roma-related challenges actually exist. Second, communicating the issue and raising people's awareness of facts instead of myths, and of the complexity of integration, is key. The third step should be the implementation of long-term and sustainable solutions based on mutual understanding, the balance of rights and the defence of the principle of non-discrimination in practice. Finding sustainable solutions to the challenges related to the integration of Roma is not always easy, but it is possible. Numerous examples of such solutions are listed in the following chapter.

Again, practices show that policies aimed at the protection of Roma rights are not an end in itself, but fundamental to improving life in your community as a whole!

RESPONSES

Council of Europe support programmes for local authorities

The Council of Europe, working together with the European Union, has set up integration projects for Roma with the aim of supporting and assisting the efforts of local authorities by creating new initiatives and/or by streamlining, codifying and consolidating the existing programmes through the most effective use of existing Council of Europe resources, standards, methodology, networks and infrastructure.

ROMED-2 concept

The ROMED-2 concept, a Joint Programme of the European Union and the Council of Europe initiated in 12 member states with varying compositions and sizes of Roma population, uses processes of mediation, principles of good governance

and involves local administrations in order to promote empowerment of Roma and facilitate access to their civil, economic, political, social and cultural rights.

The programme aims at establishing sustainable synergies between Roma community members, professionals (mediators, facilitators, trainers, experts, managers) and civil society organisations. One of the leading guidelines in ROMED2 is that participation in local governance can only be effective if it is context-appropriate. As a result, all projects need to adapt to benefit from the diversity of the contexts of each selected municipality.

The methodology of the ROMED2 programme is systematised in the ROMED2 Guidelines and Resources for National and Local Facilitators, developed by an international team of experts and practitioners in the fields of Roma integration, human rights education, formal and non-formal education and local governance.

The main challenges relate to the need for more time to build trust and empower marginalised communities. Unreliable political support from local councils was also sometimes problematic. However, results of an external evaluation of the programme in 2016 indicated that the programme is considered very relevant. The Community Action Groups (CAGs) that were set up are viewed as practical schools for active citizenship that have increased the engagement, participatory skills and the self-esteem of their members so that they are now able to influence local policies and their suggestions are incorporated into municipal plans in many locations. Although very recent, the plans have led to the resolution of urgent problems in Roma communities, and to new initiatives in the areas of infrastructure, education, employment and services. The ROMED2 process is highly acknowledged by local authorities, as it has enabled them to learn directly from Roma communities about their needs, and they value the CAGs as new partners for solving urgent problems. At present, the programme is active in close to 50 municipalities, with over 50 CAGs operational.

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ROMACT Programme

ROMACT is a Joint Programme of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, implemented in six EU countries, and – up to April 2017 – more than 80 municipalities, with the core aim of addressing the social exclusion of vulnerable Roma communities and equipping them and the public authorities with the right capacities to fight poverty and exclusion, by developing and implementing all-inclusive policies, strategies and services.

The methodology applied in the programme includes four steps related to: 1) raising awareness and building the commitment of local authorities to Roma inclusion; 2) agreeing on what needs to be done to improve the living conditions of the Roma community; 3) translating the local development action plans into concrete measures and projects; 4) funding, implementing and monitoring measures and projects. It is executed for periods between 18 and 22 months in each municipality.

Up until May 2016, 545 public administration employees and 735 municipal staff were trained and coached on issues related to planning and implementation of social inclusion actions. Some 2 900 Roma participated in meetings at community level to assess and prioritize the needs of their communities. A total of 547 community members were coached on how to work with the public administration. Additionally, 138 joint meetings between the ROMACT CAGs and the local authorities' representatives, involving a total number of 1 522 people, took place, in order to prepare the plans for social inclusion and revise or elaborate the Local Development Strategies of the municipalities. In this period, ROMACT's field facilitators recorded a number of 350 meetings with public administration representatives and 23 meetings with various stakeholders at local and regional level. By the end of May 2016, 32 municipalities in ROMACT submitted a total of 57 projects which responded to the Roma social inclusion needs emphasised in the Joint Action Plans/Local Development Strategies. Besides the projects submitted for funding from external sources, 133 short- and medium-term actions were implemented at each municipal level. In these locations, the process has been sustained, relying on local workforce, volunteer involvement and contributions, as well as local municipal budget allocations. These initiatives covered topics such as employment of school and health mediators, improvement of infrastructure (buildings, roads, street lights etc.), cleaning and pest control, health-related campaigns and outreach services, youth employment, improved access to education (including preschool education), cultural activities, issuing property and identification documents.

ROMACT fosters the engagement and participation of Roma people, since they know their needs best. That participation also increases ownership of the inclusion process by Roma themselves, thus increasing the chances that it will be sustained over time. At the same time, participation of non-Roma people is also critical to gain their support, avoid stigmatization of Roma, and foster interaction and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma on the basis of mutual interests.

ROMACT facilitates the premises for a sustainable social inclusion, it promotes good governance standards and effective integrated development efforts covering education, employment, health, housing, urban development and culture. It is an illustration of the manner in which working towards the social inclusion of the most disadvantaged communities, in particular of the Roma, gives people the opportunity to access their civil, economic, political, cultural and social rights.

ROMACT's newly developed transnational component (<http://coe-romact.org/about-romact-tcc>) is set to respond to the needs of municipalities who wish to integrate the

non-nationals of Roma ethnicity originating from other countries and to facilitate their co-operation with municipalities of origin for future concrete actions on social inclusion.

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INTEGRATION INTO LOCAL COMMUNITY LIFE (INCLUDING HOUSING AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION)

Roma integration has many facets: ensuring safe and sanitary housing solutions, enabling social and political participation and representation of the Roma community in public dialogue, access to education and employment and acceptance of the Roma history and culture. Local and regional authorities today are called upon to bear in mind all those factors when drafting policies for Roma integration. The following examples demonstrate ways to implement integration in practice and remind authorities of the fact that even small, replicable actions can go a long way to achieving the inclusion of this vulnerable group of the population.

IL DADO (the dice): Residential community for Roma families coming from unauthorised settlements in Turin and the surrounding areas, Settimo Torinese, Turin, ITALY

Population: 349 103

Highlighting the effectiveness of small-scale but replicable actions, Il Dado is a project aimed at settlements of Romanian Roma families. The core objective is to help the families exit the system of unauthorised settlements, and to undertake the path to housing, social and economic emancipation.

Around 2 400 people from the Roma and Sinti ethnic groups currently live in the city of Turin and 450 in the surrounding province. Among this population, almost 50% are minors. The authorised settlements in the city can host approximately 900 people. The rest have to live in unauthorised settlements with poor standards of hygiene and environmental decay, which contributes to a state of marginalization from which it is difficult to escape. The Il Dado project, run by the association Terra del Fuoco with the support of the commune of Settimo Torinese in the metropolitan city of Turin, identifies families in the unauthorised settlements and offers them opportunities in job market, better integration of minors in the society and integration in the territory. Families are then steered towards greater autonomy and ad hoc housing solutions are provided. The Province of Turin signed an agreement with Terra del Fuoco and funds the project with

35 000 euros annually (2011-2014). The province also provided for the building housing Il Dado to be renovated. The foundation Compagnia di San Paolo funded the project with two instalments of 150 000 euros aimed at paying the expenses for restructuring of a disused building and the installation of a photovoltaic system in the premises. Residual financing was provided by Cassa di Risparmio di Torino (Savings Bank) for the installation of a hot water heater. In half the cases both parents reached a situation in which they had stable employment. Some of the families achieved housing autonomy. All minors attend school, with an attendance rate and performance in some cases higher than their Italian peers. Another positive outcome was Dado's environmental sustainability: until 2010, the consumption of electricity and natural gas in the Il Dado house, equal to 164 000 kw/h per year, represented a significant problem. The Eco-Dado project aimed at reducing environmental impact, consumption and relative costs, as well as promoting a culture of respect for the environment. Thanks to these measures the Il Dado house's total consumption decreased to 67 700 kw/h per year.

Builders provided training in the installation of the photovoltaic system. Overall, the process contributed to the integration of the Roma community into the Italian surroundings, while also improving the quality of life of Il Dado's inhabitants, making the house an example of environmental sustainability and economic and social development. The keys to this success were continuity, stable relationships with the beneficiary base in the places they came from, the cohabitation of beneficiaries and operators and a shared planning of individual actions. Terra del Fuoco suggests that projects with micro-communities are better started with a small-scale action and then replicated in another location rather than enlarging the size of the community. They also stress the importance of working with funding sources from the start and ensuring stable and productive relationships with the local administration and other civil society organisations.

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Espace 16, Strasbourg, FRANCE

Population: 271 782

In order to put an end to the establishment of informal, unsanitary and unsafe camps for the constantly increasing Roma population in Strasbourg, the city of Strasbourg together with a welfare assistance team made up of members of the Directorate of Solidarities and Health and representatives of partner associations, decided to set up a temporary living space for some 20 Roma families, in order to help them integrate into society.

Adopted with a decision in June 2011, "Espace 16" is situated on municipal land in the heart of the city (close to the railway station) with easy access to public transport,

services and other amenities necessary for integration. It comprises 26 caravans and buildings, providing toilets, showers, washing machines and a meeting room.

Two social workers from Horizon Amitié are responsible for providing welfare assistance, for the day-to-day management of Espace 16 and for helping the families with any administrative problems. When moving into the Espace 16, the families signed a contract, setting out the integration objectives and the rules for the functioning of this communal area. The project takes account of several aspects of the integration of these families. First, day-to-day life is organised by a Conseil de Vie Social (CVS) – a “community life committee” – which provides an official framework for the use of the communal parts of the site, as well as for issues such as waste management, conflict resolutions and the conditions for living together. Moreover, information is provided on all aspects of health, including screening for tuberculosis, raising awareness of contraception and sexually transmitted diseases, and also dental hygiene and health care. Information on the French health system has also been distributed.

With regard to the schooling of children, an efficient partnership has been set up with the French national education authorities. All of the children now attend one or other of the schools in the local neighbourhood. A system for monitoring the children’s schooling, involving the teachers, the parents and neighbourhood associations, has been established. The families receive food aid from charity associations, in particular “les Resto du Cœur”. Such aid ensures that the families have a varied diet. Finally, leisure activities are also proposed, for example shows, recreational outings for children and visits to various sites and to the European Parliament and other European institutions.

Despite the many difficulties encountered, such as the issue of securing financial resources given that the people concerned had no access to employment, the large and ever-changing number of people from the Roma community living in Strasbourg and the search for a suitable location on municipal land, it was the commitment of the municipality and the networking with associations and families that made the success of the project possible. For instance, as of March 2012, all residents of Espace 16 over the age of 16 were registered for French lessons. These lessons also included information on the basic rules of life in France and help in preparing to integrate into French society and find long-term work. Over 50% of the inhabitants understood the importance of these lessons and attended class regularly.

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Formation of interethnic bodies around local needs, Čantavir, Horgoš, Niš, SERBIA

Population of Čantavir: 7 178, Horgoš: 6 325, Niš: 186 222

In an effort to encourage greater Roma participation in institutions of local self-government and democratic processes and to create a social and political environment conducive to better understanding of Roma problems within Serbian society, interethnic bodies were created in cities and neighbourhoods of Serbia, which proved to be very effective in solving issues affecting the local Roma population.

In the city of Niš, the neighbourhoods in the Horgoš quarter of Kanjiža, and the Čantavir and Peščara quarters of Subotica, Roma NGO activists led (through separate initiatives) the formation of inter-ethnic bodies with the aim of improving the quality of local-level interethnic relations by increasing the participation of local Roma, among others, in decision making. These bodies have been useful for bringing the concerns of local Roma communities to the attention of local authorities and for preventing scapegoating of entire local Roma communities by the majority population for minor property crimes.

While Serbia's Law on Local Self-Government requires that a Council for Interethnic Relations be established in municipalities in which either a single national minority accounts for more than five per cent of the total number of inhabitants or all such minorities comprise more than 10 per cent of the municipality's total population, the interethnic bodies formed in Niš and Peščara differ slightly from the legally mandated councils. In Niš, the difference is largely nominal, with the body formed called a "Council for Human and Minority Rights" and incorporated into the city's statute.¹⁰⁰ In Čantavir, Horgoš and Peščara, on the other hand, "Commissions for Interethnic Relations" were formed at the neighbourhood rather than municipal level. The activities leading to the formation of Commissions for Interethnic Relations in Čantavir and Horgoš were supported by the Fund for an Open Society in Serbia.¹⁰¹

The explicit (but not exclusive) targeting of Roma and the direct focus on their participation in decision making processes and the designing of policies was key to the success of the bodies.

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Housing for 50 families; Indre, FRANCE^{lv}

Population: 4 000

The former mayor of Indre engaged in diverse efforts to receive 50 families that had arrived in his town following an eviction from Nantes in 2013: solidarity actions initiated by the administration provided housing, schooling and employment for the families. A large part of the population engaged in the inclusion efforts.

Fifty Roma families arrived in Indre after being evicted from Nantes. Mayor Jean-Luc Le Drenn, with the help of his team, implemented a number of solidarity actions: they collected clothes and installed facilities to provide newly arrived families with electricity and showers, with each family paying 50 euros per month for this service. He insisted that there had been no issues with receiving these payments from the families. A third of the population of Indre were favourable, a third unsure and a third against the Roma being present in the town, but they decided to allow the families to remain and tried to integrate them into the community. The first step was to provide schooling for children. As a result, Roma children have caught up with the other children and now speak French without an accent. He then explained that they had to concentrate on six families out of the 50, especially as a result of lack of resources. The town bought mobile homes for the six families, with the rest of the families relocated to municipalities that positively responded to Mr Le Drenn's relocation project. The mayor provided an example of the exchanges between and the engagement of the population and the newcomers: cooking workshops were held where the Roma learnt how to cook French food and the French women learned Roma dishes.

Mr Le Drenn concluded his intervention by emphasising that one cannot say that integration is impossible. Most of his "colleagues", even in the same political family, did not believe in the project and thought that Roma were impossible to deal with or integrate. This sentiment has been disproved, as the 50 Roma families have been relocated in 11 municipalities around Indre. However, Mr Le Drenn notes that it is unfortunate that this positive experience concerned "only" 50 families out of 1 000 Roma living in the Nantes area, with 800 Roma still frequently expelled or being victims of extortion by the Romanian mafia.

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Housing and Integration project of RAE (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian) communities in Gjakova^{vi}, Peja region, KOSOVO¹

Population: 94 556

Gjakova Municipality, Caritas Kosova and Caritas Switzerland have initiated a project to improve the living conditions for the RAE (Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian) community in the Ali Ibra settlement and to raise their awareness of matters concerning health, the education of children, access to the labour market and to public institutions and services.

The Ali Ibra settlement is located at the south-eastern edge of the Gjakova municipality. It has existed since the 1960s and hosts 140 families with 720 inhabitants. The housing conditions in the Ali Ibra settlement are difficult and problems abound, such as: leaking roofs, wet floors, a lack of thermal insulation, poor windows and external walls that create a humid, thermally insufficient and therefore unhealthy indoor climate. In addition, a lack of piped water and a poor sanitation system leads to an unhealthy hygienic situation. Rats and insects are attracted by the conditions and have become a severe problem. About 48 houses have insufficient water supply. From 1 September 2010 to 31 May 2014 the municipality worked to meet following goals.

- I. Permanent and improved housing conditions (this includes the provision of individual houses with adequate sanitation facilities and technical infrastructure, as well as some social infrastructure defined by a specific assessment).
- II. Social inclusion of RAE promoted through community-building activities and access to education and health services at municipality level (young people's and women's needs were addressed as a priority in particular).
- III. New employment opportunities and sustainable income possibilities assessed and promoted for the target group.

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INTEGRATION AND PROTECTION OF ROMA CHILDREN

The situation for Roma children is very alarming, as children are particularly vulnerable and exposed, to poor health, poor housing, poor nutrition, exclusion, discrimination,

1 All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo

racism and violence, among other things. The social exclusion of Roma children is often linked to the lack of birth registration and identity documents, to low participation in early childhood education and care as well as higher education, and to elevated school drop-out rates. Segregation is a serious barrier preventing access to quality education. Paying particular attention to the integration and safety of children and promoting and developing early education are critical components in addressing inequity and participation in Roma communities.

Educational supervision of “travelling” children through the creation of a personalised logbook, Dijon, FRANCE^{Mii}

Population: 151 212

In order to enable personalised access to education for children, the school “Les Voyageurs” in Dijon created a logbook for every Roma pupil, which comprises administrative and health-related information, legal data and a CV with the educational background and skills assessment of every child. This logbook can facilitate the work of Roma educators and speed up the process of Roma integration into education and school life.

The process is based on three main strategies.

- Educational and relationship building practices enabling the children to (re)build their confidence, reassuring them and helping them to take responsibility for the school results and to position themselves in relation to the school.
- The provision of a document (record book, logbook or school file) designed to provide parents and various teachers with information on the child’s level of acquisition of competences and knowledge in all school subjects.
- A mechanism for transferring and updating the document, which may be dealt with either by the administration or the families themselves, depending on the level, content and objectives.

The logbook provides the teacher with information on the child’s main areas of interest and learning methods, while the child is asked “how (s)he learns”, “what (s) he is good at and why”, “what (s)he likes” and “what (s)he finds difficult and why”, etc.

More specifically, the book comprises the following sections.

- Administrative information on the child (surname, first name, date of birth) and legal data (mandatory schooling); information on the different schools attended (with a view to networking with the teachers involved).
- A section setting out the competences expected in the various subjects; a section on schoolbooks and learning aids used by the child; a “roadmap” listing the most recent work in reading and mathematics.

- A section for the families when the child is being registered at school, which may comprise various practical items (for example, whether or not the child can take part in school excursions) and other important information (concerning health, for instance).
- A section on significant achievements selected with the child during his/her assessment and teachers' comments (personalised projects, individual work plan for the child, etc.), in order to facilitate identification of and differentiation between specifically educational contents and aspects which contribute to the child's general development.

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Every Child Matters: high quality education for all, Leicester, UK

Population: 391 100

In Leicester, UK, the Babington Community College serves as an example of a school implementing inclusive education, being actively engaged in improving education outcomes for the local Roma community by offering a modified curriculum and more flexible hours, and by promoting continuous communication with the children's families.

Babington Community Technology College has a growing Czech and Slovak Roma cohort of students. Initially the school has focused on building relationships between key members of staff and Roma pupils; developing trust, learning the children's stories and spending time listening to them. Modifying the curriculum offer and being flexible with the timetable, reflecting the Roma history and culture in school, and drawing parents into school, have all played and continue to play a major role in activating and developing an interest in learning for this group. The school now wants to focus on improving literacy across the curriculum.

Schools in Leicester have had a history of successfully receiving pupils from other countries with little experience of learning in English and helping them adapt quickly. The same success was not apparent with the new Roma community. School attendance was poor and the children made slow progress. Low levels of literacy, poor health, low self-esteem and poverty were further difficulties the college had to encounter before implementing the programme. However, by communicating successfully to the families what the expectations are in Babington and by getting Roma pupils to believe that success in education was their right, not something for other people, the college staff

managed to overcome the difficulties. The inclusive ethos of the school has played a significant part in this growth alongside the outstanding work and effort of the very

experienced EAL (English as an Additional Language) team within the school. Encouraging signs of this effort are emerging: improved attendance, increased engagement and raised aspirations are all reflecting the outstanding work of the school. Other schools and institutions in the UK and other countries have been contacting Babington for advice on working with migrant Roma communities.

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Protection and integration of street children in Tirana, ALBANIA

Population: 418 495

To reduce and prevent child abuse and exploitation, the local authority offered a location in Tirana where the organisation Save the Children opened a day centre that offers informal education, material support, referrals and recreational activities, as well as psycho-social support, to families.

The exploitation, abuse and neglect of children has long been an issue in Albania. In order to improve this situation, Save the Children has promoted the development of effective protection programmes for children and young people. The intention is to reduce their vulnerability to exploitation and trafficking. Implemented in 2009 by Save the Children and, most recently, funded by the EU Delegation in Albania (in 2011 and 2012), this project established a day centre in premises provided by the council in Tirana. In each year of its operation, the centre has served approximately 300 children at risk of living and working on the streets and being subject to exploitation and abuse, including trafficking. Insofar as Roma and Egyptian children account for the majority of children living and working on the streets, they also constitute the main target group for the centre. The centre undertakes outreach work to identify children at risk and establish contact with the children's families. Beyond this outreach work, services provided by the centre include birth and civil registration assistance, medical support and school enrolment. At the same time, the centre provides training for service providers working with children living and working on the streets and with their families.

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“Inclusion of Roma children in preschool education” project, Skopje, THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Population: 536 271

Understanding that access to education is easier to achieve when integration attempts start at a very early stage, this initiative is engaged in offering preschool education to Roma children, thus preparing them for a smoother transition into the local schooling system.

The main objectives of the project are as follows.

- I. Increasing the number of Roma attendees (459 Roma children) in public preschool in 18 municipalities in “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”.
- II. Improving the capacities of 908 Roma parents to support and encourage the development and education of Roma children.
- III. Improving social skills and proficiency in the Macedonian language of 459 Roma children.
- IV. Increasing the abilities of teachers and teaching assistants to combat prejudice and stereotypes against Roma.
- V. Raising the public consciousness about the problems affecting Roma children and involving local municipal authorities in activities to solve them.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MoLSP) is implementing this project in co-operation with the Roma Education Fund (REF) and Local Self-Government Units. Other partners in the project include non-governmental organisations /individuals, Roma teaching assistants and kindergarten staff. Enrolment of the children is based on an analysis made on the ground by NGOs. Kindergartens as partners in the implementation of the project provide a full and supportive environment for the inclusion of Roma children under the project objectives. Kindergartens are responsible for the day care of children and for implementing the educational programme. To enable full integration into and easier adaptation of children to kindergartens, MoLSP secured the services of 17 Roma teaching assistants. Funds for a full-day stay in a kindergarten are provided by MoLSP, Local Self-Government Units and REF. The main difficulty faced was the low level of awareness of Roma parents of the importance of preschool education for their children. Thus, constant communication between different stakeholders and active participation and involvement of parents proved to be the means to success of the project. About 460 Roma children are included annually in the programme.

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ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Integration starts with education! Not only does education provide Roma children, young people and adults with the knowledge and skills to be active citizens and to fulfil themselves as individuals, but in particular it is a crucial element for Roma communities to combat the social exclusion they face, and to improve their economic situation. Practices that promote and facilitate access to education are vital for Roma to access their social, economic and cultural rights, such as access to housing, health care and employment.

Securing access for Roma children to quality, integrated preschool and compulsory education, Korca and Gjirokastra, ALBANIA^{viii}

Population of Korca: 75 994, Gjirokastra: 25 301

From January 2008 to March 2013 the Albanian Regional Education Authorities, the municipalities of Korca and Gjirokastra, the organisation Save the Children and other NGOs have been working closely to provide quality inclusive education for Roma children. The project activities were based on a holistic approach, involving Roma children and parents and training for teachers, and advocating the improvement of policies at local, regional and national level by transferring the experiences and the lessons learned to the Ministry of Education.

Financed jointly by the Roma Education Fund and Medicor and implemented by Save the Children Albania, the project involved 780 Roma children (3-16 years old) in Korca and in Gjirokastra and 193 teachers working in primary schools and preschools.

In the first phase of the project (2008-2011) a model for inclusion of Roma/ Egyptian children in the mainstream education system was designed and developed. Project activities included trainings for teachers in culturally sensitive methodologies, school materials and extracurricular activities fostering tolerance and cultural understanding, afternoon support classes for mathematics and the Albanian language, and extracurricular classes on Roma history, culture and tradition. Provision of basic needs, such as meals for kindergarten children and transport, also contributed to the motivation of families to send their children to school. Roma/Egyptian community mediators were employed to facilitate the co-operation between parents and school.

In the second phase the project further supported children who have finished basic education to continue with higher education or vocational training. This proved to be crucial for the motivation of younger children to stay in school. Teacher training was further developed and training modules were drafted in collaboration with universities. Continuous assistance was provided for the monitoring and assessment of the children's academic performance. Also important was the close collaboration with NGOs on matters of lobbying and advocacy of the project, in order to gain support at government level, which can help the project's sustainability. Finally, the effectiveness of the project

was down to the monitoring, evaluation and guidance provided by the Country Facilitator of the Roma Education Fund.

Despite the obstacles of political instability and financial constraints, it was thanks to the commitment of those involved locally in this multisectoral collaboration that the project documented positive results in increasing the enrolment and retention of Roma/Egyptian children in schools, facilitating the transition from preschool to primary school, preparing teachers for a multicultural classroom environment and raising awareness and promoting systematic improvements in Roma inclusion policies.

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Container classroom and school mediators, Ghent, BELGIUM

Population: 248 358

The city of Ghent (Belgium) employs school mediators who help the school administration and Roma families to better work together. It also installed a container classroom on the traveller's camp site, where children are taught, in Dutch, French or English, how to read and write, and how to keep their concentration longer when confronted with challenging intellectual tasks.

In order to overcome some difficulties, linked to a lack of language knowledge, communication and intellectual tasks, Ghent trained school mediators who have an intra-European migration background themselves, along with "normal" school mediators. Not only do the mediators help parents to overcome communication barriers and keep track of what the children are doing at school, the parents are also invited to participate in school life: "We are a very open school, parents can participate in the school, they are all welcome in the classroom and we'd like them to participate."

But the mediators do not stop there; they also help children to participate in community life after school by getting them into sports clubs, music schools and similar activities. These mediators between families, the neighbourhood community and the school team are therefore called "bridge figures" ("brugfiguur").

For this project, Ghent won first place in the fifth Dosta!-Congress Prize competition (see further information below).

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Woodrow Wilsonplein 1, 9000 Gent

Workshops for Roma school assistants and supporting teachers; Wrocław, Lower Silesia, POLAND^{lix}

Population: 628 589

From 2005 to 2011, the municipality of Wrocław organised workshops for Roma working as school assistants at Polish schools, in order to improve the level of education, combat school dropouts among the Roma community and support teachers and help them recognize the specific needs of pupils of Roma origin.

Each year, four-day workshops took place for 15 to 20 Roma school assistants and 15 support teachers. The workshops consisted of modules in psychology, pedagogy, Roma history and culture, Roma language, the educational law system, drug prevention and analysis of current problems including education-related issues. All participants were offered additional materials, books, games, CDs with Roma music, CDs with language material from Manchester University and newly published Roma-related reports, among other things. Finally, evening cultural activities such as exhibitions, cinema, theatre and opera visits were organised, in order to integrate participants into the local culture and help them build an informal social network.

The workshops included lectures, brainstorming sessions, discussions, presentations and working papers. Particular emphasis was placed on the discussion of topics such as the practical problems Roma school assistants face during their work (including employment contracts for assistants, payment issues, conditions of work, etc.). The Roma school assistants team worked together with a Joint Commission of the Government and National Minority Authorities to initiate the guarantee of safer conditions of employment for the Roma assistants (stable contracts, raised salaries, opportunities to develop professional skills, etc.).

This project, part of the Governmental Programme for the Roma Community in Poland 2004-2013, managed to create a team atmosphere between Roma school assistants and support teachers despite existing mutual prejudices on both sides; the project was replicated in the region of Malopolska, which also has a large percentage of Roma inhabitants.

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HEALTH SERVICE

The poor health of Roma and Travellers is closely linked to social determinants of health, as the Roma populations frequently experience social exclusion and discrimination and consequently face barriers accessing health care. Socio-economic, cultural and environmental conditions are widely recognised as a cause of health inequalities among the Roma, thus making it necessary to develop programmes empowering Roma and enhancing inclusiveness of basic services.

A one-stop-shop approach to health care and well-being support for Roma, Nea Ionia Volos, GREECE^{ix}

Population: 144 449

In response to the frequent difficulties Roma have in accessing social services, the city of Volos opened the Roma Social and Medical Centre in Aliveri, which boosted schooling rates of children and led to a 100% coverage of citizenship status and an increase in medical checks.

As a sub-project of the general project Local Initiatives for Employment (TPA) of Nea Ionia Magnesias for the period March 2005 to June 2009, the project implemented a range of activities, based on the approach that promotion of social rights cannot take place in isolation. The pillars of the project were social inclusion and care, prevention and health promotion, children's creative activities, housing support, inclusion in the labour market and creating a space for networking on Roma issues. Furthermore, a "Women's Meeting Place" has been created in the context of the project in order to encourage women of the Roma community to get out of their home, to meet each other and to discuss issues that concern them, such as children's education, employment, etc.

The increased support in advocacy action has helped Roma social inclusion by promoting pilot cases to courts and thus ensuring the citizenship of many residents of Roma origin who, as a result of chronic lack of information, could not claim their rights as citizens. The Roma Social and Medical Centre in Aliveri has been the first social and medical centre to co-operate with the Greek Ombudsman, by contributing reports on unequal treatment cases involving Roma and with activities in favour of the protection of Roma. In addition, strengthened networking activities resulted in the formation of the Panhellenic Network of Social and Medical Centres (www.romoffice.net) aiming at mutual information and promotion of actions and best practices and at the wider publicity of the project nationwide. In co-operation with the national Greek Roma Support Centre, an initiative to boost schooling rates and enhance the involvement of parents in informal education was also implemented.

The impacts of the programme include a spectacular increase in the enrolment of Roma children in primary school (from 35% to 85%). All children of school age have been vaccinated, which they could not have accessed only by means of their family's capacity. As regards housing, more than 500 applications have been supported in order for the applicants to benefit from the lending for a primary residence within the specific

programme for Roma housing. More than 350 loans' beneficiaries were approved by the Ministry of Interior for the area of Volos. Last but not least, the citizenship status of the residents of the area around Volos has been covered by 100%.

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Salute senza esclusione/inclusive health, Rome, ITALY^{ixi}

Population: 2 868 million

With this campaign the municipality of Rome, Caritas Rome and eight other local NGOs, as well as the Lazio Region and five branches of the local health unit (ASL), aim to improve the health situation of the local Roma population by increasing vaccine coverage, improving access to mainstream health services, health care education and training of health care personnel.

Operators first defined the target group by the means of a census of the settlements. Specific activities were planned after gathering information on the territorial distribution of health care services (provided by each local health unit). The main activities concerned the following.

- Health care services orientation (the target group was invited to turn to the relevant health care services) devoting particular attention to pregnant women and children without vaccine coverage.
- Health care education – a leaflet, entitled Scegli la Salute (Choose health) was distributed and explained. The leaflet was translated into Romanian and Serbian and included information about the prevention of infectious and chronic diseases and the promotion healthy lifestyles for children and adults.
- The training of health care staff. A two-day seminar was organised, which started with an assessment of the staff's knowledge by means of a preliminary test. The project was financed by private social, public and EU funding, in particular church-related funding from CEI (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana), the European Integration Fund (EIF), and the Ministry of Health. Regions and municipalities provided technical assistance.

As a result of the establishment of a wide private-public sector network, the know-how of Caritas Roma (who had started the first interventions in 1987) and the multi-professional team (physicians, an anthropologist, a psychologist and a Roma mediator), the objectives of the project could be met. Also, the project has fostered greater willingness to cooperate with the target group by the local healthcare units (ASL). As a result, the monitoring of Roma health conditions and the supply of services has been furthered by concrete initiatives taken by the ASL that had not been previously planned. The project caught the attention of the Ministry of Health who extended it to five more cities: Milan,

Palermo, Messina, Florence and Trento. Finally, the project is replicable in two main aspects, the training of health care personnel and health care education.

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INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET

Recognise the economic dimension of Roma inclusion! Access to the labour market is key for the social inclusion and economic empowerment of Roma. Lack of formal education and training, poverty, discrimination in the work environment and disrespect for the cultural differences are some of the reasons why unemployment is still one major issue for the Roma population. Opening up the labour market for Roma, enhancing their traditional skills and abilities by offering training and encouraging their competitiveness should therefore be priorities for local and regional authorities.

Vocational training for young people experiencing difficulties ECCOFOR, Dole, Franche-Comté, FRANCE

lxii

Population: 25 384

To enable young people from different backgrounds, including Roma and Travellers, to become integrated members of society and offer them occupational prospects for their future, ECCOFOR has set up a "production school" that combines technical personalised vocational training (in metalwork and tyres) in genuine working conditions with a strong commitment from volunteers from the education sector.

ECCOFOR, a French association with the social objective to create links, networks, opportunities for exchanges and learning, and to offer training to improve social integration, initially placed the teenagers in the vocational school between April and June

to confirm each young person's planned enrolment at the school for the academic year beginning the following September. The duration of the training is 10 months and it is open to all pupils between 14 and 18 wishing to train in a manual trade. The funding of the project is comprised of 60% from the production of goods or services; 20 to 30% from the apprenticeship tax (plus sponsoring and voluntary contributions); and 10 to 20% from the Regional Council grant for the funding of vocational training. Important advantages in the method of this project were the active canvassing of local firms in order to gain a clear picture of their trades and their current or potential labour needs and the systematic mapping of jobs and local employers. Participants are awarded a certificate indicating their level of skills, which will serve as a passport to start working life.

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Job creation, Spišský Hrhov, SLOVAKIA^{lxiii}

Population: 1 333

In Slovakia, the Mayor of Spišský Hrhov has been setting an example for others to follow. By creating jobs through a municipal firm, the local Roma community has one of the lowest unemployment rates throughout the country and consequently sees a gradual improvement in their socio- economic conditions.

Driven by a sense of justice as well as pragmatism, the mayor has given Roma residents jobs, and in turn helped to counter age-old prejudices that the Roma minority is lazy, unwilling to work and incapable of integration. "With employment, the life of Roma people has improved, and we all have a higher quality of life," says Vladimír Ledecký, as he shows off the centrepiece of his effort – the "municipal firm," a collection of small businesses run by the mayor's office, with profits reinvested to create more jobs. Today about 50% of the Roma population of Spišský Hrhov works legally, putting the town's Roma unemployment rate far lower than the national average. And perhaps most telling for the state of coexistence in Slovakia, the town has continued to grow from about 600 residents in the late 1990s to 1 600 today. The enrolment rate at the local elementary school has also grown, among both Roma and non-Roma students alike. Some 54% of the students at the school are Roma and 46% non-Roma.

The mayor initially allocated a fifth of the town's budget towards the "municipal firm" to give Roma jobs. The firm employs 50 to 100 Roma, depending on the season, who build homes and buildings, work with wood and in a municipal fitness centre and pool. The concept has had a major impact on the entire town, which has become a national model. The US Embassy has paid a visit here, as have European officials, NGOs and many mayors. Last year it was named the best village in Slovakia. Many have moved

here from the nearby larger town of Levoča because the land is cheaper and the school is successful. Still, the initiative is a work in progress as tensions remain. The vast majority of Roma go on to vocational training after their elementary studies, while the non-Roma tend to head for university preparation. Just a few miles from this town is a Roma settlement where many have no running water and where a separate school was created for the youngest students – what some consider a form of segregation. Despite everything, “There has been progress in people’s minds,” says Principal Peter Strážik of the elementary school in Spišský Hrhov. “We’ve grown up and become more mature in terms of inter-relations and inclusiveness.”

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FIGHTING ANTI-GYPSYISM AND RAISING AWARENESS OF ROMA CULTURE/IDENTITY

Anti-Gypsyism is one of the most disruptive forces that hinder social inclusion of Roma, as it stigmatises Roma in the public imagination and can give rise to a very wide spectrum of discriminatory practices. It goes beyond those individual Roma who may be victimised or abused, as it can be seen in the way that the whole of society relates to the Roma, shaping issues from law- and policy making to everyday life in the community. Therefore, this section highlights and endorses institutions, campaigns and policies that encourage open dialogue, raise public awareness and deal with existing stereotypes towards the Roma population.

Declaration of Mayors and Elected Local and Regional Representatives of Council of Europe Member States against anti-Gypsyism

The Congress for Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe adopted this Declaration of Mayors and Elected Local and Regional Representatives of Council of Europe Member States against anti-Gypsyism during its 32nd session in March 2017. The declaration was presented by John Warmisham, Congress Spokesperson for Roma Issues, and Valeriu Nicolae, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe (SRSG) for Roma Issues.

In the adopted declaration, the mayors commit themselves to defending human rights and democratic principles and to rejecting all forms of discrimination, violence, harassment, incitement to hatred and hate speech against Roma and Travellers and any other form of anti-Gypsyism. They also commit to refraining from any forms of political alliance or co-operation at all levels with any political parties or local and regional

authorities which incite or attempt to stir up racial or ethnic prejudices and racial hatred.

Further information: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/mayors-regional-and-local-representatives-reaffirmed-their-fight-against-anti-gypsyism>

Sinti and Roma Council and Cultural Centre, Heidelberg, Baden-Württemberg, GERMANY

Population: 154 715

Catering to the needs and affairs of the regional German Sinti and Roma population and at the same time promoting and safeguarding the Roma culture, the Central Council, and the Documentary and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg^{b2V} put the fight against anti-Gypsyism into practice, by safeguarding the rights and freedoms of the Roma population while raising awareness about their history and culture.

In 1982, Sinti and Roma themselves founded the Central Council of German Sinti and Roma, an umbrella organisation of 17 regional organisations. Based in Heidelberg, it represents German Sinti and Roma and works for their equal treatment and participation in politics and for their support as minorities.

The old town of Heidelberg also hosts the Documentary and Cultural Centre of German Sinti and Roma, a place of encounter and dialogue and home to the rich Roma culture, with the support of the city of Heidelberg. The centre organises excursions, screenings, exhibitions, lectures and concerts. Furthermore, the centre is a place of remembrance for the victims of the National Socialists. In particular, the Holocaust of the Sinti and Roma is assessed in the only permanent exhibition of its kind in the world, which makes the centre an important museum of contemporary history and a place of historical memory. The main task of the centre is documenting the history of the Sinti and Roma in Germany and in Europe, which goes back more than 600 years.

Whereas in the beginning the Central Council was established against the will of German government, it has developed a permanent dialogue with the German Federal Government and regional authorities. In particular, the “Land” of Baden-Württemberg established a local council for the affairs of Sinti and Roma, which can act as a platform within Baden Württemberg for the discussion of all affairs concerning the local Roma population . Finally, a state contract (“Staatsvertrag”) was signed by the Land of Baden Württemberg and the federal state’s association of Sinti and Roma to protect their rights.

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Municipal Council for Roma, Barcelona, SPAIN

Population: 1 6 million

With the aim of acting as a stable platform for the promotion of dialogue and debate concerning Roma issues, their history and culture, the Municipal Council for the Roma (Consell Municipal del Poble Gitano a Barcelona) was established in Barcelona in 1998 and through joint efforts led to the creation in 2015 of a Local Strategy for the Roma People in Barcelona^{xxvii}.

Created in 1998, the Municipal Council of the Gypsy People of Barcelona (CMPGB) acts as a stable platform for dialogue and debate on issues related to the improvement of the welfare and quality of life of Roma people in the city. The main goals of the council are to:

- promote actions concerning the Roma culture;
- promote initiatives to combat racism and anti-Gypsyism;
- stimulate participation;
- ensure that the Municipal Action Programme includes specific measures for the Roma population.

The council articulates realistic and viable proposals and, at the same time, it acts as a stable interlocutor to make the needs, particularities and challenges of the Gypsy people facing the future visible.

At an operational level, the council is organised into two working groups: the working group for events and the working group for Roma strategy. The first objective is to work for the promotion and preparation of events such as the International Roma Day or the act in memory of the victims of the Holocaust, and the second is to follow the actions of the local strategy. Barcelona City has also engaged in efforts to promote Roma culture and identity, as a way of dealing with existing stereotypes and prejudice towards the Roma. For example, in 2016, in the framework of the International Roma Day, Barcelona hosted a week of events promoting Roma culture, many of which took place in public and tourist areas.

Contact

Consell Municipal del Poble Gitano de Barcelona

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Website: <http://bit.ly/2p0bohP>

Passeig de Sant Joan, 75 08009 Barcelona, SPAIN

”Dosta!” (Enough!) campaign – example of Rome, Milan, Naples and others, ITALY

Population of Rome: 2.8 million, Milan: 1.3 million, Naples: 983 755

Dosta!, a Romani word meaning “enough”, is an awareness-raising campaign by the Council of Europe which aims at bringing non-Roma closer to Roma citizens.

In Italy, the campaign cooperated with the Italian UNAR (Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali) to organise projects such as discussion panels, exhibitions, concerts and public debates in 40 cities with the aim of raising the awareness of the media and wider civil society. The Dosta! campaign has already been implemented in 18 countries.

UNAR set up a technical panel for a permanent co-ordination with the Roma and Sinti associations and federations. This panel has met several times, drawing up the essential profiles of the campaign, gathering ideas, projects and initiatives to be organised throughout the country, including the training of journalists, awareness-raising initiatives in 40 cities, awareness-raising initiatives in school and video advertisements. More pointedly, in 2011, with the event ROMNEWS, training courses for professional journalists have been held in Rome, Milan and Naples, with a substantial presence from Italian national television and leading newspapers. A total of 40 Italian cities were involved in public exhibitions, concerts, cultural and sporting events, theatre pieces and public debates among Roma associations and local authorities. At the school level, the dissemination of a tool-kit with videos and movies offering a greater knowledge of Roma was carried out. A television advertisement and promotional videos were produced and broadcast on national television and on video screens in underground train stations and on buses in some cities. Aside from the Council of Europe and UNAR were, participants included civil society organisations, including Roma ones, and an Interministerial Panel (*Cabina di regia*) jointly established by the Minister for International Co-operation and Integration with the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, the Minister of Interior, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Education, University and Research, and the Minister of Justice.

Contact

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Dosta! Enough! Go beyond prejudice, meet the Roma!

The awareness raising campaign Dosta! has been implemented in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, the Republic of Serbia, and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", during 2006 and 2007. As it raised the interest of other states, between 2008 and 2010, it was launched in Ukraine, Moldova, Italy, Romania, Croatia, Slovenia, Latvia, Bulgaria and France.

Further, municipalities can participate in the competition for the Dosta!- Congress Prize for municipalities. It is organised by the Dosta! campaign and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe as part of their ongoing work to

strengthen the role of local authorities in the field of Roma and minority rights' protection. The competition is open to municipalities and local authorities from Council of Europe member states that have run projects targeting the Roma population. The Dosta!-Congress Prize is awarded to three municipalities whose creative and innovative initiatives most effectively ensure diversity in community life and the active democratic participation of the Roma.

In 2017, three cities were honoured during an award ceremony for the 6th edition of the Dosta!-Congress Prize which coincided with the celebration of the 10th anniversary, on the occasion of the Congress 33rd Session. In first place came Şişli (Turkey), second place was awarded to Volos (Greece) and third place went to Gliwice (Poland).

Further information: <http://www.dosta.org> ; <http://www.roma-alliance.org/en/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

FACILITATING INTEGRATION IN LOCAL COMMUNITY LIFE

- **ENGAGE** Roma citizens individually and collectively in all decisions concerning their situation and engage the local population in finding ways forward.
- **LET ROMA VOICES BE HEARD!** Establish inter-ethnic bodies and Roma municipal councils in your community, in order to enhance political participation of your Roma citizens.
- **PUT AN END** to unauthorised, unsafe and unsanitary settlements! Provide inclusive housing solutions with adequate sanitation facilities, technical and social infrastructure.

PROTECTING AND INTEGRATING ROMA CHILDREN

- **OFFER** Romani children a safe space and prevent child abuse and exploitation by organising day centres, informal courses and easier access to pre-school education in close collaboration with the children's families.
- **TACKLE** social exclusion by ensuring that every child has a birth registration certificate, identity documents and health records, and keep track of their skills through the use of assessments and relevant documents proving their educational background.

PROVIDING BETTER ACCESS TO EDUCATION

- **THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX** when it comes to education! Involve various sectors when drafting education-related policies, train education mediators and teachers, provide basic services such as lunches and transportation, consider a more relaxed timetable and adjust the curriculum to meet the needs of Roma children.

- **ENGAGE** the children and their parents in finding ways forward.
- **MONITOR** and assess the progress of pupils, in order to improve the level of education and prevent drop-outs, and support graduates to pursue higher education or vocational training thus allowing them to act as motivation and role-models for younger schoolchildren.
- **IMPLEMENT** necessary actions to enable access to preschool education, as the access to education at the earliest possible stage will render the transition to schooling smoother.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO BASIC HEALTH SERVICES

- **ENSURE** that your local health care systems provide equity by taking into account the particular needs of the Roma populations and offer specialized training to your healthcare staff.
- **MAINSTREAM** your health care services, provide Roma with medical checks and vaccine coverage, as good health is a first step to preventing poverty and social exclusion.

ENHANCING INTEGRATION INTO THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE ECONOMY

- **OFFER** Roma a “passport” to working life, by providing vocational training to prepare them for future jobs and enable future employers to assess their skills.
- **EMPLOYMENT** is key to the financial stability of Roma and at the same time to the enhancement of the quality of life of your entire community! Consider creating job opportunities for Roma that take into account their skills and interests, including traditions.

FIGHTING ANTI-GYPSYISM AND RAISING AWARENESS

- **DEVELOP** and implement a zero-tolerance strategy to anti-Gypsyism;
- **BREAK DOWN THE BARRIERS** caused by stereotypes and prejudices through the implementation of projects, such as campaigns, discussion panels and exhibitions to raise the awareness of the public regarding the situation of your Roma citizens.
- **PROMOTE** the Roma history and culture and integrate it into your permanent local cultural curriculum, for example through including Roma culture in a permanent exhibition in your museums or through opening a cultural centre dedicated to Romani culture, to combat segregation, stigmatisation and marginalisation by demonstrating our mutual history.

REFERENCE TEXTS AND FURTHER READING

Study on Mobility, Migration and Destitution in the European Union

Final Report (March 2014): <http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)

Combating Institutional Anti-Gypsyism: Responses and promising practices in the EU and selected Member States (May 2017):

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Publications of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on Roma:

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

LGBTI

DEFINITION

Knowing what exactly “LGBTI” means is the first step to not only appropriately using this term in your public discourse but also to developing effective LGBTI- inclusive policies. LGBTI is an umbrella term, an initialism for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex persons. Below is a specific definition of each category:^{lxvii}

Lesbian = women who are romantically/sexually attracted to or involved with other women

Gay = men who form sexual and affectionate relationships with men.

Bisexual = men and women attracted to and having sexual relations with both sexes.

Transgender = also known as Third Gender, these are people who identify themselves with a gender identity other than the one that was assigned to their biological sex at birth; or people who view their gender as more fluid than the strictly male or female gender categories allow.

Intersex = people born with chromosomal, hormonal levels or genital characteristics which do not correspond to the given standard of “male” or “female” categories for sexual or reproductive anatomy. This may be apparent at birth or become so later in life. An intersex person may identify as male or female or as neither. Intersex status is not about sexual orientation or gender identity: intersex people experience the same range of sexual orientations and gender identities as non-intersex people.^{lxviii} Intersexuality may take different forms and cover a wide range of conditions.

All these groups of people have one thing in common – they are often denied equal treatment in respect of their dignity and rights compared to other citizens. LGBTI people are often victims of **discrimination, social exclusion and violence**, on grounds of their **sexual orientation** or **gender identity**. These are manifestations of **homophobia** and/or **transphobia**.

It is therefore crucial to understand the exact meaning of the terms “sexual orientation”, “gender identity”, “homophobia and/or transphobia” to be able to clearly establish related discrimination and effectively counteract it.

Sexual orientation refers to the capacity of each individual for profound emotional, affectional and sexual attraction to, and intimate and sexual relations with, individuals of a different gender (heterosexual) or the same gender (homosexual, lesbian, gay) or more than one gender (bisexual). **Gender identity** refers to a person’s deeply felt individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth, and includes the personal sense of the body and other expressions of gender (that is, “gender expression”) such as dress, speech and mannerisms.^{lxix} Finally, according to the definitions provided by the UN^{lxxi}, **homophobia** is an irrational fear of, hatred or aversion towards lesbian, gay or bisexual people and **transphobia is the same** – hate, fear or aversion towards transgender people. The term homophobia

is often used in an all-encompassing way to refer to fear, hatred and aversion towards LGBTI people in general.

Always bear in mind that a person's sexual orientation and/or gender identity cannot be changed! Attempts to change someone's sexual orientation can be traumatic and lead to human rights violations. What can and must change, however, are negative social attitudes that cause stigmatisation, exclusion and human rights violations of members of your LGBTI community!

- "Gay bashing" and physical violence, including sexual violence
- Linking homosexuality with paedophilia
- Making derogatory comments, insults, jokes or threats about sexual orientation or sexual practice

These are just some examples of homophobic behaviour that LGBTI people are often exposed to! (see more at www2.viu.ca/positivespace/manual/homophobia_def.asp)

Myth: *It's unnatural to be LGBTI.*

Fact: *For LGBTI people, it is natural to have sexual attractions and relations with members of one's own gender. Bisexuals can also be attracted to members of the opposite gender. Some transgendered people consider themselves homosexual or bisexual and others consider themselves heterosexual. To act on these feelings is natural. Not to act on these feelings would be unnatural, forcing people to hide who they are and causing them great pain. It is the quality of the relationship that is significant, not the gender of one's partner. This myth also comes from the belief that sexual relationships are formed for the procreation of children only. In all relationships the decision to have children is complex and needs great consideration. Although many heterosexuals decide to have children, many do not make the same decision or are unable to have children. On the other hand, many LGBTI people choose to have children or raise children with their partner. Many children raised in these families emphasise that the most important thing in a family is being loved and cared for.*

Myth: *Sexual orientation is a personal choice.*

Fact: *Most LGBTI people feel that they did not choose to be LGBTI. Rather, they were aware of having same-sex feelings at an early age or else these feelings evolved and solidified in their adolescent or adult years.*

*Modern science cannot state conclusively what causes sexual orientation, but a great many studies suggest that it is the result of both biological and environmental forces, not a personal "choice". A 2008 Swedish study of twins (the world's largest study of twins) published in *The Archives of Sexual Behavior* concluded that "homosexual behaviour is largely shaped by genetics and random environmental factors". The choice of LGBTI people seems to be whether to live a full and well-balanced life with a same-sex partner, or to suppress their feelings. It is not the cause that is important, but that people are treated with dignity and respect regardless of their sexual orientation.*

Myth: *LGBTI people do not make good parents.*

Fact: *Research has shown that, except for the fact that the children of a homosexual couple are often concerned about being stigmatised by*

their peers, they show no higher incidence of emotional disturbance than children of heterosexual couples. Furthermore, they are not confused about their own sexual identity. LGBTI people come from all kinds of families, as do heterosexuals, and there is no correlation between the sexual orientation of parents and that of their children. The chances of a child being LGBTI are the same whether they are raised by LGBTI parents or by heterosexual parents, namely 7 to 10%.

WHAT ARE THEIR RIGHTS?

People belonging to an LGBTI community often face difficulties in enjoying their basic human rights, such as the right to equality, dignity and non-discrimination. You, as a representative of local and regional authorities, should take action against discrimination and violations of LGBTI-rights and make sure that LGBTI individuals in your community are treated in the same way as everyone else!

The principles of equality and non-discrimination are fundamental elements of international human rights law. They are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights^{xxiii}, as well as more specialist UN conventions, such as the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or the Convention on the Rights of the Child.^{xxiv} At the European level, the principle of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation/gender identity is referred to in the European Convention on Human Rights, the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers, the Commissioner for Human Rights and other organs of the Council of Europe^{xxv}.

International human rights law applies to LGBTI people as to everyone else, without distinction of any kind. In short, LGBTI people **have the same rights and freedoms as any other resident of your community**, including the rights to safety, housing, social security, health care, education, privacy and public accommodation. It is a common misconception that LGBTI rights are limited to the issue of same-sex marriages. As residents of your city or municipality, LGBTI people depend on you to guarantee and protect their rights. Do not allow traditional, cultural or religious beliefs, social attitude or stereotypes to justify the denial of human rights to any group, including LGBTI people. Remember that human rights are universal and indivisible. LGBTI people are an integral and indispensable part of society; they live in your cities and are the target of all your policies addressed to the general public. Treat differences in sexual orientation and sexual identity as positive forms of diversity and dare to take a firm political stance by implementing inclusive LGBTI policies. **This will give you an opportunity to make your community a safer, more open, inclusive and diverse place to live for everyone!**

“ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS.”

Article 1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

CHALLENGES IN PRACTICE

The first recorded instances of same-sex love date back to ancient times. Almost all cultures across human history are familiar with transgender and third gender people. LGBTI people have faced many centuries of intolerance, discrimination and violence on grounds of their gender identity and sexual orientation. In some European countries homosexuality was still a criminal offence until the beginning of the 21st century.

The only way for many LGBTI people to feel safe and avoid being judged and ill-treated based on gender stereotypes was to live in secrecy and be as invisible as possible. Despite the dynamic development of civil society organisations and unions defending LGBTI rights, still today many LGBTI people are less likely to seek justice and speak out. Despite many positive developments, for instance the recognition of same sex marriage by 14 Council of Europe member states, LGBTI people continue to face discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity. They suffer from negative attitudes and rejection in public. The behaviour regarded as normal for heterosexual couples in public spaces is often not accepted in relation to LGBTI people. They continue to fall victim to discrimination in access to health, employment and housing, to domestic violence, abuses against children (bullying in school, for example) and denial of family rights and legal recognition.

As a local elected representative, you are well placed to reach out to the general public and to advocate attitudes and policies that will protect human dignity with respect to the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity. It is first of all up to you to set a good example by saying a firm “no” to homophobic and transphobic expressions, harassment and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Depending on your country’s historical, political or legislative context, and varying religious and moral beliefs, it may be more or less difficult to challenge traditional conceptions about gender roles and behaviours and to change people’s problematic attitude so long nurtured by stereotypical portrayals of LGBTI individuals.

You will find below a collection of best practices from those local and regional authorities, that have taken an active stance towards inclusion of their LGBTI communities. Just some of the examples of successful local and regional initiatives include: establishing an enforceable code of conduct for employees that prohibits discriminatory or aggressive attitudes towards LGBTI individuals; enacting and promoting anti-discriminative legislative changes; training police forces to prepare them to deal with hate crimes and acts of discrimination based on gender identity and sexual orientation; and consulting with the LGBTI community when drafting local policies.

Remember: you not only help a specific group of people when you support and facilitate the inclusion of LGBTI individuals in the life of your city and/or municipality. You also improve the situation of your entire community, since you contribute to preventing incidents of violence, changing old mentalities of hate and repression and building a society on the values of justice, equality, inclusion and respect for diversity.

RESPONSES

ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS AND SERVICES (INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT, HEALTHCARE AND HOUSING)

Despite progress in many areas over the last few decades, people in Europe are still discriminated against on the grounds of their sexual orientation in the areas of employment, housing, health care and education. In this context, the following practices demonstrate examples of local authorities that have introduced initiatives, such as training, strategy development, guidance and counselling schemes to make social rights and services more LGBTI- friendly and to facilitate the access of the LGBTI community to employment and housing.

Making elderly people's homes more LGBTI-friendly – The “Pink Passkey” initiative, Nijmegen, THE NETHERLANDS

Population: 154 715

Acceptance, equal treatment and human rights have no age limit! In 2008, Nijmegen City Council in the Netherlands committed itself to a project aimed at making care homes and institutions for elderly LGBTI people more inclusive. Ever since, many other municipalities, in the UK, Spain, Scandinavia and many other countries^{boxVI}, have followed the example and created LGBTI-friendly institutions for elderly people.

Nijmegen City Council followed this methodology: an official pink trademark (the “Pink Passkey”) marks the inclusiveness of the care institutions with respect to sexual orientation and gender identity, which is symbolised by a plaque on the wall. In order to receive the plaque, an audit is performed to check the inclusiveness of the institution for LGBTI residents and their families, as well as for LGBTI relatives of residents. Since 2008 when it was initiated, this project has proven to be very successful, with the scope being widened over the years from elderly care to (home) care facilities for LGBTI persons with disabilities, chronic illnesses and mental health issues. In January 2016, the number of care facilities that have been awarded the Pink Passkey amounted to 110 throughout the Netherlands, all supported by and some even initiated by local authorities.

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Pink competency project, Oslo and others, NORWAY

lxxvii

Population: 634 293

The Norwegian Pink Competency project, a national collaboration between the Norwegian Directorate for Health and the Norwegian LGBTI organisation LLH (now known as FRI), provides health-care professionals with the competencies and tools necessary to adapt to a more LGBTI-inclusive way of working. The project managed to increase health care providers' competency to treat the LGBTI population in an empathic way.

Training courses are offered at the local level to doctors, nurses, psychologists and midwives, for example, with support of local governments and the Norwegian Directorate of Health. In the city of Oslo, within the youth health-care centre, specialist staff are trained to deal with issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity.^{*lxxviii*} The project has been a great success as a result of various factors. For instance, the initiative explored myths and prejudices about the LGBTI population in a humorous way, replacing them with facts and knowledge. Also, the project tried to adopt a very practical approach, as concrete matters such as language, disclosure, awareness and the effect of heteronormativity on provision of health services.

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Oslo Visiting address: Universitetsgata 2

0164 Oslo

FRI - foreningen for kjønns- og seksualitetsmangfold

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E-mail: post@foreningenfri.no

Housing strategy, Brighton and Hove, UK^{*lxxix*}

Population: 273 400

In 2015, the city of Brighton and Hove (UK) developed a new citywide housing strategy through extensive consultation with commissioners, service providers, community groups and residents. The strategy explicitly includes LGBTI people by ensuring that the city implements a number of policies to facilitate access to housing for the local LGBTI community.

The goals of this strategy include housing solutions that promote the health and well-

being of the LGBTI community, contribute to its safety and prevent harassment and discrimination. Most importantly, the services are planned and reviewed always in consultation with the LGBTI community. Further, the housing strategy calls upon the local authorities to apply concrete policy solutions, such as:

- investigating the potential impacts of “out-of-area” placements for LGBTI people in relation to local services and support networks;
- working with sheltered housing providers to ensure that services are accessible for the LGBT communities;
- supporting local LGBTI agencies working with LGBTI agencies in other areas where LGBTI people are looking to move to Brighton to ensure this is done in a planned way;
- using the skills in LGBTI community groups to deliver improvements to frontline housing services;
- examining the provision of LGBTI-specific housing support services in the city;
- continuing to implement Trans Scrutiny Panel Recommendations for Housing and considering the recommendations of the forthcoming Trans Needs Assessment.

Contact

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Bartholomew Square, Brighton

Postcode: BN1 1JE

Agreement to promote integration into the labour market, Madrid, SPAIN^{lxxx}

Population: 3.1 million

From October 2009 until 2012, the Community of Madrid, through the Department of Family and Social Affairs and with the help of the European Social Fund, granted AET-Transsexualia financial assistance to implement a programme to promote the inclusion of transgender people in the labour market. This programme continues today, also benefiting immigrant transsexual people through the help of the General Directorate of Immigration of the Ministry of Social Affairs.

This programme includes the provision of information on workers' rights and other legal aspects, with specific emphasis on their rights as transgender people in the labour market, as well as psychological guidance, counselling and training. At the same time the programme aims to raise the awareness of the general public, and employers in particular, about the situation of transgender people in Madrid. Furthermore, within the

Madrid administration, a civil servant is in charge of following every application to the programme. In addition, the national transgender organisation, together with the Madrid Department of Employment, has published a book about the rights and experiences of transgender people in the labour market.

Contact AET – Transexualia

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28015. Madrid

Action plans for labour integration, Turin, ITALY

Population: 899 455

In Italy in 2013, co-operation between the Piedmont Regional Authority, the Province of Turin and the city of Turin enabled the inclusion of 44 transgender persons in projects set up for training/retraining of disadvantaged social groups and their reintegration to work.

The Piedmont Regional Authority approved a provincial operational programme for employment-related actions and asked the city of Turin LGBTI office to co-operate by including transgender beneficiaries in two action plans. Both action plans were designed to fund a grant to transgender persons for their retraining and reintegration into local companies. The first action plan was designed to immediately reintegrate all those transgender individuals whose skills matched the companies' expectations. The second action plan aimed at enabling transgender grantees to finish their reintegration into work by means of an apprenticeship at a local company. The city of Turin LGBTI office supported the Province of Turin in recruiting potential transgender candidates for the two action plans.

Contact Province of Turin

E-mail: urp@provincia.torino.it
Ufficio relazioni con il pubblico
Freephone within Italy 800 300 360

DEVELOPMENTS IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEGISLATION

Ensuring equal rights for your LGBT citizens starts with corresponding laws that set and establish those rights. This section highlights examples of local changes in legislation that are very successful first steps to advocate in favour of the legal recognition of LGBT-rights on a national level.

Malta: first European country to ban “conversion therapy”

In 2016, Malta became the first country in Europe to outlaw what is known as “conversion therapy” (therapeutic methods that purport to change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity), introducing fines and prison sentences for those who offer

these harmful practices. For this reason, Malta received first place in the “Rainbow Map, Index and Annual Review” of ILGA-Europe (European Region of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association), a yearly project which charts the advances that have been made across 49 countries in terms of law and policy.

Further information:

- www.nytimes.com/2016/12/07/world/europe/malta-outlaws-conversion-therapy-transgender-rights.html ;
- www.ilga-europe.org/resources/rainbow-europe/rainbow-europe-2017 ;
- www.ilga-europe.org/sites/default/files/Attachments/annual_review_2017_online.pdf

Civil partnerships officially acknowledged, Turin, ITALY

Population: 899 455

In the Italian city of Turin, civil partnerships between citizens of the same sex are officially acknowledged by the city administration, in spite of the absence of national provisions in this regard.^{lxxxii}

When deciding to amend the municipal regulations, Turin City Council referred to Article 4 of Decree of the President of the Republic n. 223/1989, which defines a family, for registration purposes, as “a set of people living in the same house of the same city and tied by marriage, kinship, adoption, legal protection or affective bonds”. A new municipal regulation was drafted on the basis of this article so as to include acknowledgement of civil partnerships, and this was approved by the Turin City Council in 2010. As a result, cohabitating heterosexual or same-sex couples can ask for and obtain a certificate of civil partnership from the city’s General Register Office. The certificate enables civil partners to enjoy the same rights as married couples with respect to accessing municipal services and health care provided by the city of Turin. However, because these partnership certificates are local official documents only, they cannot be used to obtain access to nationally provided services. Nor do they entitle heterosexual or same-sex civil partners to rights and benefits that national legislation grants only to married couples (parental responsibility or fiscal benefits, for example).

Contact City of Turin

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Servizi.Civici@cert.comune.torino.it

Local Government Politics School, Istanbul, TURKEY

lxxxii

Population: 14.8 million

In 2013, local LGBTI organisations in Istanbul coordinated by the organisation SPOD, established an LGBTI-friendly municipality protocol, which was signed by the mayor and advocated more LGBTI-inclusive policies in Turkey. As an outcome of the initiative, LGBTI-friendly institutions, such as councils and health-care services, have been established in districts of Istanbul.

Local elections provide a chance to change things within a city, and in the districts that make up the city. SPOD (an Istanbul-based LGBTI organisation) organised the Local Government Politics School in 2013, with the participation of LGBTI activists from 10 different cities in Turkey. One of the outcomes was the drafting of the document “Demands of LGBTIs from local governments”, which was published with the endorsement of 14 Turkish LGBTI organisations. The document was turned into an “LGBTI-friendly municipality protocol”, which was proposed to many mayoral candidates for signature. Forty of the candidates signed it, thereby promising, if elected as mayor, to pursue LGBTI-friendly policies. Ultimately, this led to the establishment of an LGBTI-inclusive health-services centre and an equality department in the Şişli district, and an LGBTI council within the Kadıköy district’s city council.

Contact

Association of Social Policies, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation Studies (SPOD)

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E-mail: info@spod.org.tr

Twitter.com/spodlgbt

Germany legalises same-sex marriage

In Germany on 30 June 2017, the majority of German lawmakers voted to legalise same-sex marriages. The passed bill gives homosexual couples in Germany the same rights as heterosexual couples, and will allow same-sex couples to marry and jointly adopt children. It passed by 393 votes to 226, with four abstentions. Germany has thus become the 23rd country worldwide and the 14th country of the Council of Europe members^{lxxxiii} to recognise same-sex marriages.

Further information:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/30/world/europe/germany-gay-marriage.html>

<http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2016/kwo7-de-gleichgeschlechtliche-ehe/405868>

AWARENESS-RAISING, EDUCATION, VISIBILITY AND MAINSTREAMING IN POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES

Education and knowledge are crucial, in order to change the public’s perception of LGBTI people and issues. Moreover, it is the only way to ensure that LGBTI citizens know their rights and to facilitate a broad debate on the benefits and challenges of diversity within society. Authorities have to mainstream LGBT rights in policy-making processes, in order to put an end to LGBT communities being defined by their sexual preference, to

achieve equality and tackle all forms of discrimination against LGBTI individuals.

Guides by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, UNITED KINGDOM

In the United Kingdom, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) publishes guides for public authorities in England (and bodies with non-devolved functions in Scotland and Wales), explicitly including sexual orientation and gender identity. The guides provide an overview of the equality duty and include steps that are legally required, as well as recommended actions. In 2015 the EHRC published an extensive report on LGBTI people's experiences and expectations of hate crime reporting in the Leicester and Leicestershire area. The report was based on interviews with 50 people who identified as LGBTI and it provides guidance on best practice for local practitioners.

Further information:

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance ;

www.equalityhumanrights.com/publication/lgbt-hate-crime-reporting-identifying-barriers-and-solutions

Pink agenda 2015-2018, Amsterdam, THE NETHERLANDS

lxxxiv

Population: 821 752

In the city of Amsterdam, a specific policy on the emancipation of LGBTI people has been implemented since 1980. Currently the “pink agenda” 2015- 2018 is being implemented. Amsterdam takes action in nine areas: safety, education, youth, diversity, care and welfare, health and assistance, sport, work and the economy; and culture and Information. In all these areas, objectives have been formulated to increase the safety, visibility and acceptance of LGBTI people.

With the “pink agenda” Amsterdam offers a safe social environment for the LGBTI community, where the interests of LGBTI people are represented and their needs are accommodated by corresponding policies. Professionals in schools, care institutions and sports clubs receive training so that LGBTIs feel safe and accepted. Further, the municipality supports activities that increase the knowledge, social acceptance and assertiveness of LGBTIs. What makes this agenda outstanding is the fact that it provides extra support to groups that are not yet (well) organised, likebicultural LGBTIs, LGBTI refugees, elderly LGBTI people and people with an intersex condition. The municipality conducts research into the needs of homeless LGBTI adolescents and people with an intersex condition and makes new policy based on this. Finally, the city sets a good example as it exercises an inclusive human resources policy with a view to diversity and supports its own LGBTI employees.

**Contact City of
Amsterdam/Diversiteit**

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Website: www.amsterdam.nl/diversiteit

PO Box 1840

1000 BV Amsterdam

International Family Equality Day

The International Family Equality Day has been celebrated annually on the first Sunday in May since 2011. In 2015, celebrations such as picnics, sports and outdoor events took place in 67 cities in 32 countries. In 2014, the third (biannual) International Conference for Rainbow Families took place from 1 to 4 May in Cologne, with support from local, regional and federal authorities.

Further information:

www.internationalfamilyequalityday.org/

<http://internationalfamilyequalityday.org/wordpress/annual-report-2015/> [http://nelfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/140430_NELFA_PRESS_](http://nelfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/140430_NELFA_PRESS_RELEASE_COLOGNE.pdf)

[RELEASE_COLOGNE.pdf](http://nelfa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/140430_NELFA_PRESS_RELEASE_COLOGNE.pdf)

LGBTI Municipal Plan – Barcelona City Council, SPAIN

Population: 1.6 million

The City Council of Barcelona has been continuously showing its commitment to LGBTI inclusion since 1995. The latest project is the 2016-2021 Municipal Plan, which aims at streamlining all actions of the authorities regarding the LGBTI community, raise awareness and ensure that an LGBT perspective is included in all aspects of municipal policy making and administration.

Barcelona City Council has long been known for its pioneering commitment to the defence of civil rights in the city. The Councillor's Office for Civil Rights was set up in 1995 and the Office for Non-Discrimination followed in 1998. The LGBTI Municipal Council was set up in 2004 to co-ordinate policies in defence of the LGBTI community. Later the city council launched the 2010-2015 Municipal Plan for the LGBTI Community which applies to the whole municipal structure. A new plan is now being drawn up for 2016-2021. The goals of this plan are to:

- organise and co-ordinate the local authority's actions in relation to the LGBTI community;
- permeate the whole municipal structure with an LGBTI perspective;
- encourage LGBTI organisations to get involved in designing and implementing LGBTI public policies.

The plan is a cross-cutting initiative and applies the LGBTI perspective to all services, whether welfare or social assistance, through specific training. It is managed by the Councillor's Office for Cycle of Life, Feminism and LGBTI, where a team of two

professionals co-ordinate the LGBTI Municipal Plan and the LGBTI Municipal Council.

Contact
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 Departament de Feminismes i LGTBI-Àrea Drets de Ciutadania
 Participació i Transparència
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Municipal department for lesbian, gay and transgender citizens, Cologne, GERMANY

Population: 1 million

The German city of Cologne has a municipal department for lesbian, gay and transgender citizens (LST office), which deals with policy development, provides information on LGBTI and LGBTI-friendly organisations and offers individual support.

In order to render Cologne a diverse and tolerant German metropolis, the LST office to combat discrimination was established in 2010. The tasks of the office are diverse and different actors of the community co-operate closely. The centre is represented in the StadtAG LST, a city working group for lesbians, and supports its work. The decisions of the LST are taken in the specialist office in the municipal administration. The LST office is in good contact with other municipal services from all over Germany who deal with lesbian, gay and transgender issues. A round table in the Ministry of Health, Emancipation, Care and Age of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) with other LST services from NRW is regularly organised. The office is also responsible for the co-ordination of LGBTI (inclusive) policies across all other municipal departments. The cities of Zurich, Madrid and Berlin, for example, offer similar services. Cologne is member of the European Rainbow Cities Network (more information below).

Contact
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17 May-International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT)

Several public events are organised on 17 May, as part of the annual IDAHOT

celebrations, including flash mobs, plays, bike (p)rides, and the official raising of the rainbow flag at city halls. In 2014 and 2015 such events were held in, for example, Berlin, Belgrade (Serbia), Budva (Montenegro), numerous cities in the UK, various Italian cities, Madrid and Malaga (Spain), Geneva (Switzerland) and in over 50 cities in the Netherlands. In Manchester, public officials were present at a theatrical event along with famous drag queens and activists, and in Iceland several local government officials raised the rainbow flag as a symbol of solidarity.

Further information: <http://dayagainsthomophobia.org/>

See also: *Annual Report International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (2014), IDAHO Committee*

Plan and report on mainstreaming equalities, Lanarkshire, SCOTLAND, UK^{lxxxv}

Population: 316 230

South Lanarkshire Council in Scotland issued a municipal plan and report on mainstreaming equalities so as to adopt a clear position on diversity. The plan, which ran from 2013 to 2017, covered all grounds for discrimination.

With the plan, the council aimed to develop best practice as a major employer, to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation in all its forms, to advance equality of opportunity for all and to foster good relations across the community. The plan set out the council's legal duties in respect of equality, and how it plans to work with partners to ensure that the needs of all citizens are met when using municipal services. Sexual orientation and gender identity are explicitly mentioned throughout the report. Specifically, the council aims to eliminate inequalities based on sexual orientation.

Contact

South Lanarkshire Council-Headquarters

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E-mail: customer.services@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Almada Street, Hamilton, ML3 0AA

Contribution to the visibility of the LGBTI community in public spaces, Amsterdam and Zurich

Population of Amsterdam: 821 752, Zurich: 391 359

Taking advantage of the power of cities to contribute in practice to the visibility of the LGBTI community, Amsterdam and Zurich have set forth initiatives such as monuments and naming of streets and public places after pioneers of LGBTI rights, in order to educate the population and enhance the public's opinion of the LGBTI community.

In Amsterdam the bridge next to the "HomoMonument" is named after Niek
98

Engelschman, who was a Dutch member of the Resistance during the Second World War, and a fighter for gay rights.^{xxxxvi} In 2015, the Mayor of Zurich unveiled three information panels about Zurich's LGBTI history in the city's Old Town. The three panels remember a time that was often characterised by repression but in which the foundations for the LGBTI movement in Zurich were laid.^{xxxxvii}

Nominations from the local LGBTI community to the designated commissions, as well as petitions, can recommend suitable names of LGBTI rights' defenders, so that your cities can implement such visibility initiatives!

**Contact Stichting
Homomonument**

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Website: <http://www.homomonument.nl/>

Postbus 16458

1001 RN AMSTERDAM

Stadt Zürich Fachstelle für Gleichstellung

Ms Shelley Berlowitz

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Stadthausquai 17

Stadthaus, 8001 Zürich

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20 November – Transgender Day of Remembrance

Public authorities also take part in events on Transgender Day of Remembrance, which is held on 20 November. In Berlin, with the support of the local government, transgender activists and artists from 13 European countries developed a creative campaign to mark some of the spaces in Berlin which have symbolic significance for trans people. A campaign and a "trans map" of Berlin were developed, a living library and stands were set up for the general public and a commemorative event took place at the Brandenburg Gate, with the participation of members of the city council. In Copenhagen, Helsinki and in various UK, German and Italian cities, local government officials were also involved in or represented at TDOR activities.

Further information:

<http://tgeu.org/tag/transgender-day-of-remembrance/>

<http://tdor.info/2015/10/06/tdor-events-and-locations-2015/>

Another way that local and regional governments can show commitment to the protection of LGBTI community rights can be by hosting an international LGBTI event. EuroPride, Eurogames and the biannual Outgames have proven to be examples of local commitment to the international cause for promoting LGBTI equality in cities like Riga and Antwerp. Local governments can set a positive example by supporting the organising committee, contributing to the proposals for hosting an international event, hosting a welcome reception or delivering a keynote speech at the event.

Further information:

CO-OPERATION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES

Co-operation between national, regional and local authorities can be very fruitful for streamlining and promoting LGBTI-inclusive policies. It can guarantee the rights of the LGBTI community through policy exchange, the sharing of experiences and approaches, or the sharing of budget and financial support of bigger cities to smaller ones. The following examples of co-operation have managed to improve the situation for many citizens and can serve as a source of inspiration for your area.

RE.A.DY network, ITALY^{lxviii}

In 2006, Rome and Turin city councils launched RE.A.DY, the first National Network of Public Anti-Discrimination Administrations. The network deals with anti-discrimination issues regarding sexual orientation and gender identity in co-operation with many local authorities.

The goals of the network can be summarised as follows:

- identifying, comparing and distributing social inclusion policies for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgender people developed by local authorities;
- spreading good practices throughout the country by informing public administrations engaged in the promotion of the rights of LGBTI people;
- supporting public administrations in the realisation of activities that aim to promote and recognise the protection of LGBTI rights through administrative acts and regulations.

The means of achieving those goals are nationwide social-awareness campaigns, thematic days, events and sharing of national and European approaches, good practices and experiences. The network has since expanded, numbering up to 102 partners across Italy in 2016: nine regional authorities, 11 provinces, 72 city councils, six municipal districts, three provincial equality bodies and one local government association.^{lxvix}

Contact

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National strategy on improving the quality of life of LGBTI persons, MONTENEGRO^{xc}

In view of the problematic situation of the LGBTI community in Eastern Europe,

the national government of Montenegro drew up a national strategy to improve the quality of life of LGBTI persons. The strategy runs from 2013 until 2018 and specifically names local and regional authorities as partners, in order to increase social acceptance, implement non-discrimination measures and support and involve LGBTI NGOs.

This strategy was created as a systemic response of the Government of Montenegro to resolutely combat all forms of discrimination. In practice, its adoption means the mobilisation of all social actors for greater unity. A strong message of togetherness is sent to the LGBTI community and all LGBTI people, in an effort to improve their status and safety, protect their rights and achieve greater visibility. It is intended to design and execute training programmes for, among other things, representatives of local authorities. The purpose and objectives of this strategy are to eliminate any direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, reduce homophobia and transphobia in society, continuously promote social acceptance of LGBTI people and improve conditions and quality of life for LGBTI people in Montenegro. The action plan proposed in the strategy includes co-operation between authorities in all areas of community life: health care, education, legislation, sports, media, economy and law enforcement. The initiative is a first very important step for LGBTI inclusion in Montenegro.^{xci}

Contact Government of Montenegro

Ministry for Human and Minority Rights

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Rainbow Cities Network

Internationally, 21 cities work together to develop and implement policies and strategies for LGBTI people. They are represented in the Rainbow Cities Network. Joined together in this informal network, the Rainbow Cities exchange good practices, seek collaboration in projects and share campaign materials. Until the accession of Mexico City in 2015, Rainbow Cities was a European network. Since then, other non-European cities have expressed interest in becoming a member. Policy makers dealing with LGBTI issues in the Rainbow Cities meet annually and remain in contact via a closed mailing list. Furthermore, they summarise their policies and approaches each year in "One Pagers", which are published online. Any city or region with an active LGBTI policy, or the intention to develop one, can become a member of this informal network.

More information on the current members, their policies and the membership procedure:
www.rainbowcities.com ; www.movisie.com/sites/www.movisie.com/files/One-pagers-Rainbow-Cities-Network.pdf

SAFETY AND SECURITY

One of the main issues of the LGBTI community is the recurring incidents of hate crime, as an expression of homophobia and transphobia. The solution to this on a local level is having individuals – public workers, psychologists, police officers etc. – specifically

trained to deal with LGBTI related hate crimes and acts of homophobia or transphobia. The following examples demonstrate such solutions and prove that they can lead to a safer community as a whole, the restoration of trust of the LGBTI community towards the authorities and the competences of law-enforcement bodies.

Programme “STOP Homo-Transfobia”, Madrid, SPAIN

Population: 3.1 million

Madrid Town Hall supports a programme called STOP Homo-Transfobia, in conjunction with the local NGO CONGAM^{xcii}. The programme promotes the inclusion of the transgender community and specialises in dealing with hate crimes and discriminatory incidents.

The helpline “SOS Homophobia” is directed at LGBTI people who suffer from harassment, stalking, physical and verbal violence or any kind of discrimination based on their sexual orientation and gender identity. In both Madrid and Barcelona there is a specific district attorney’s office which specialises in dealing with hate crimes and all kinds of crimes based on the victim’s gender identity or sexual orientation.

Recently, the authorities of the City Council of Madrid forced a bus emblazoned with an anti-transgender message off the streets of Madrid. Commissioned by Catholic group Hazte Oir (Make Yourself Heard), the bus was scheduled to go on a nationwide tour of the country’s major cities and it is believed that the tour was launched as a response to posters in Northern Spain which promoted inclusion and acceptance of trans youth. Activists, trade unions, and Madrid City Council united against the bus and the councillor for security referred to it as “the bus of shame”.^{xciii}

Contact

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Training course by the Dutch “Pink in Blue” LGBTI police network for Bulgarian policemen, BULGARIA

Among many other projects, the GLAS Foundation in Sofia organised a meeting and training for Bulgarian police officers by experienced “Pink in Blue” policemen from the Netherlands. Sharing the approaches and experiences of the Dutch specialist police forces, Bulgarian policemen learned how to deal with incidents of homophobia and transphobia and hate crimes.

On 17 September 2015, in Sofia, Bulgaria, the GLAS Foundation together with the Embassy of Kingdom of the Netherlands in Bulgaria, organised a round-table panel discussion on the topic of homophobic hate crimes and how the Dutch police network Roze in Blauw is dealing with the issue. Two police officers from the network came to

Sofia to meet their Bulgarian colleagues and exchange insights on how to work on similar cases. For many years the local police force of Amsterdam has been operating the Roze in Blauw network for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

Their force consists of well-trained policemen and policewomen. During the round table the police officers shared their experience of similar cases, what the working methods of dealing with homophobic hate crimes are, effective mechanisms for support of victims, schemes of data collection and building trust between the police and the LGBTI community. Pieter van Vliet, Deputy Head of Mission, officially opened the discussion. The event was part of GLAS's campaign against homophobic hate crimes. Regional police forces who work on hate crimes thus gained expertise on homophobic and transphobic incidents.

Contact

To contact the GLAS Foundation, use the form on their website:

www.glasfoundation.bg **Pink in**

Blue police network Telephone:

(+31) 20 559 5385

E-mail: rozeinblauw@amsterdam.politie.nl

Training modules for the municipal police force, Turin, ITALY^{xciV}

Population: 899 455

In order to train the local police officers in matters of homophobia and transphobia, stereotypes and hate crimes against the LGBTI community, the municipality of Turin offered specific modules designed for the city's municipal police force.

Participants came from the neighbourhood police and investigation sectors, and training focused on homophobia and transphobia, as well as their negative effects on the overall safety in the city. Participants received training in the areas of sexual orientation, gender identity, stereotypes, tackling hate crimes and hate speech and on prejudice and discrimination mechanisms. Training programmes were also designed to encourage acceptance and inclusion of LGBTI police officers in the workplace and show the value of diversity management in the municipal police force. The training modules were also an opportunity to enable local LGBTI associations to become acquainted with the police in order to enable collaboration in specific cases of homophobic/transphobic violence and crime. The municipal police and LGBTI office of the city of Turin jointly take part in the regular meetings of the Regional Observatory against Bullying, joined by the national police, school deans and the regional office of the Italian Ministry for Education.

Contact

Comune di Torino

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Similar examples of local LGBTI police networks are present in many other cities and countries. One prominent example is the so-called “Pink in Blue” network in the Netherlands. It emphasises the commitment of the police to the protection of the rights of the LGBTI community. Following its success in Amsterdam, many other Dutch local police forces have followed, and Pink in Blue is now a nationwide network.

Further information: <https://www.politie.nl/themas/roze-in-blauw.html>

RECOMMENDATIONS

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL RIGHTS AND SERVICES

— Communicate and engage with your LGBTI community when promoting social inclusion! Listen to their needs and act accordingly by establishing LGBTI-friendly social services and by ensuring equal access to social rights such as housing, health care and employment.

— Bear in mind the existence of LGBTI groups are not yet well established or organised, such as those for elderly people, LGBTI refugees, people with an intersex condition and people with disabilities, and draft specific policies to address their particular needs.

RECOGNISING LGBTI RIGHTS IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEGISLATION

— Legislation is proof of official recognition! Take the first steps towards the acknowledgement of equal rights for the LGBTI population, such as civil partnerships or same-sex marriages.

— Use every chance to lobby for legislative changes! Write proposals, protocols and action plans, advocate LGBTI-friendly policies and set a strong example with your city of LGBTI inclusion.

RAISING AWARENESS, ENHANCING VISIBILITY OF THE LGBTI COMMUNITY AND MAINSTREAMING THEIR RIGHTS IN POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES

— Education and knowledge are the most crucial weapons against discrimination. Take all necessary steps to raise the awareness of the general public with campaigns and events that promote the visibility of the LGBTI population and its history in our societies.

— Respect the right to freedom of assembly of LGBTI people by ensuring that public events organised by LGBTI people are held securely and in accordance with your country's legislation.

— Publicly condemn hate crimes and all acts of harassment and discrimination, promote respect and mainstream the LGBTI rights in all policy-making processes.

— Establish LGBTI councils and departments in your area to guide and offer help to all

stakeholders, to inform the general public and provide them with a frame of reference, thus contributing in practice to diversity and fostering good relations across the local community.

PROMOTING CO-OPERATION BETWEEN AUTHORITIES

- Work in close cooperation with other local, regional and national authorities, offer each other support, exchange experiences and best practices, assist in matters of funding and share your policies and approaches.
- Become informed about existing international networks, strategies, events and celebratory days and make sure to participate with your city.

PROTECTING LGBTI COMMUNITIES AND IMPROVING THEIR SAFETY AND SECURITY

- Give your LGBTI citizens a feeling of safety and security by educating professionals on issues of homophobia and transphobia, so that they are better prepared to deal with harassment or other discrimination incidents.
- Restore the trust of your LGBTI community in your law-enforcement bodies by establishing a police network that specialises in hate crimes and is trained to deal with situations of harassment, stalking, physical and verbal violence or any kind of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity of the victim.

REFERENCE TEXTS AND FURTHER READING

Human Rights and Gender Identity: Best Practice Catalogue

Second Revised Version, December 2016, Ulrika Westerlund, Richard Köhler and TGEU member organisations.

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Compendium of good practices on local and regional level policies to combat discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

Council of Europe, June 2016 : <http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Council of Europe, Commissioner for Human Rights-Thematic Work LGBTI:

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

and Report by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe: State of democracy, human rights and the rule of law (2017) Populism - How strong are Europe's checks and balances? :

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, Current Affairs Committee, Report CG/2015(28)9 from 26 March 2015

Guaranteeing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people's rights: a responsibility for Europe's towns and regions:

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

FREE & EQUAL Factsheets, United Nations for LGBTI Equality:

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

and Factsheet: LGBT rights, Frequently Asked Questions: <http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

The Yogyakarta Principles

The Application of International Human Rights Law in relation to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity:

<http://bit.ly/URLADDRESS>

Publications of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on LGBTI:

<http://fra.europa.eu/en/theme/lgbti>

References to cited initiatives

- I. 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees/Universal Declaration of Human Rights (art. 14) European Convention on Human Rights (arts. 2, 3, and 5); Council Regulation EC No 343/2003 of 18 February 2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the Member States by a third country national; Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted
- II. COE Commissioner for Human Rights-Positions on the Rights of Migrants in an Irregular Situation: <https://rm.coe.int/16806db7f5>; see also: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/thematic-work/migration>.
- III. The numbers in brackets are an approximate estimate of the area's population.
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