

Activity report

Italian Intercultural Cities Network *Rete Città del Dialogo*

2025

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Summary

In 2025, municipalities of the Italian Intercultural Cities Network, Rete Città del Dialogo have continued to deepen their work on the elaboration and promotion of intercultural policies, following work axes defined by the Network and promoting initiatives at both local and national levels.

These initiatives are based on a co-design approach, in which ICEI - as the coordinating entity of the Network - plans, develops and amplifies the initiatives which cities design.

Cities members of the Italian Network have been more and more involved in activities and projects, co-designing strategies and activities in their territories and exchanging practices, with an increasing exposure to knowledge sharing processes at European level.

This year cities have been involved in many activities and met often, with a high level participation. The annual event in Ravenna saw the participation of 14 cities, a high number achieved thanks to intensive outreach work and regular exchanges with municipal representatives.

Particular attention was paid to the development of local anti-discrimination plans, with six cities currently working on such plans and others potentially interested. This topic was addressed both during the annual event and in online webinars and bilateral meetings with cities, as well as with national institutions (UNAR).

As already defined in previous years, the work with the Cities is accompanied by that with the civil society organisations in their territories, with particular attention to those working in the youth field.

Network coordination

During the year, ICEI kept on informing the Italian network about activities and resources, sharing information on specific activities such as study visits and online training session offered by the Programme.

Moreover, bilateral and group exchanges have been carried out to keep cities active on specific issues, such as work on Local Plans, sport, youth engagement and Roma communities.

Two cities were supported in writing the Index during 2025: the Municipality of Pontedera and the Municipality of Montesilvano. ICEI provided technical assistance to the two public administrations, which successfully completed the Index. Pontedera also received an Expert Visit from the ICC Programme.

Finally, it should be noted that in 2025, the inclusion of new cities has been put on hold pending the redefinition of the criteria for participation in the ICC Programme, which is currently underway at Secretariat level.

Annual event of the Italian Network

As planned, ICEI organised an annual event that has been held in the City of Ravenna on October 21-23, with the following agenda:

21 October 2025

8.30 Welcome dinner

22 October 2025

09:15 Greetings and introduction to the meeting

- Municipality of Ravenna, Fabio Sbaraglia - Councillor for Cultural and Multicultural Policies
- Council of Europe – Intercultural Cities Programme (ICC), Célia Charre, Intercultural Cities Programme - Intercultural Inclusion Unit
- ICEI, Simone Pettoruso – Coordinator for Italy/Europe

10.00 Local Plans to Combat Discrimination: Objectives and Experiences of the Municipalities of the Cities of Dialogue Network, organised by ICEI

11:20 Plans and strategies to combat discrimination: a comparison between national, regional and local levels

- UNAR, Mattia Peradotto, Director
- Emilia-Romagna Region, Luca Rizzo Nervo, Immigration and International Cooperation
- Municipality of Reggio Emilia, Marwa Mahmoud, Councillor for Education Policy
- Municipality of Ravenna, Paolo Fasano, Head of the Immigration and Citizenship Policy
- Questions and debate with the cities

13.00-14.15 Lunch

14.15-15.15 How to apply the intersectional approach to the development of local plans and local policies to combat discrimination - Dr Marco Mondello, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia

15:15-17:00 How to tell your story to the public? Narratives and words that unite and divide - ICEI

17:00 Summary and closing remarks

17.30 Guided tour: Basilica of San Vitale and monumental complex

23 October 2025

09:30-10:00 The CITIES project experience - organised by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia

10:30 Comparison between cities on local plans: experiences, critical issues and challenges.

12.30 Conclusions

The event brought together not only local administrations, but also academic institutions, third sector organisations, regional bodies and technical structures involved in the protection of rights and the prevention of discrimination, offering a rich and articulated picture of the different skills present in the country.

The work programme alternated between theoretical analysis and practical sessions, encouraging discussion and the exchange of experiences between different areas. The common objective of the three days was to outline areas of work for the current and future development of Local Plans against discrimination, promoting models of inclusive governance capable of responding to the social transformations underway in different urban contexts.

The meeting provided an opportunity to extend the reflection and work initiated on the development of local anti-discrimination plans to the cities of the Italian Network of Cities of Dialogue, facilitating a broad and pluralistic debate. The joint presence of municipal administrations, academia, local operators and representatives of the Council of Europe made it possible to highlight the results, discuss their practical application in different contexts and, through direct dialogue, to explore the innovative practices that are emerging in the territories.

Alongside institutional stakeholders, 14 Italian cities belonging to the Cities of Dialogue Network participated in the event: Ravenna, Parma, Montesilvano, Reggio Emilia, Zagarolo, Casalecchio di Reno, Olbia, Milan, Pontedera, Portomaggiore, Modena, Forlì, Novellara and Turin. The territorial diversity of these cities – in terms of size, geographical location and administrative history – made for a particularly rich and varied discussion, highlighting a plurality of approaches, practices and local needs.

Webinar 'Local plans to combat discrimination: a tool for building intercultural cities'

Date: 17 July 2025

45 people took part in the webinar, including representatives of local authorities, social workers, civil servants, and representatives of local associations and organisations interested in strengthening their strategies for inclusion and combating discrimination. The meeting aimed to explore the role of local plans and strategies to combat discrimination as a fundamental tool for promoting more inclusive and intercultural cities.

The meeting opened with an introduction by the webinar organisers, who framed the initiative within the context of collaboration between Italian and European cities committed to promoting inclusion, intercultural dialogue and the fight against discrimination.

The presentation by expert Marco Giusta offered a detailed theoretical and practical reflection on the meaning and use of local plans to combat discrimination as strategic tools for the social and cultural transformation of cities. The presentation focused on two fundamental aspects: on the one hand, the deconstruction of the key concepts that structure discriminatory dynamics; on the other, the enhancement of local experiences as tools for innovation in public policy.

Luca Colombo's presentation illustrated the path taken by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia, a pioneer in Italy in the adoption of intercultural policies, with an innovative and structured approach based on participation, intersectorality and collaboration with civil society.

Webinar: *The importance of data for the development of local anti-discrimination plans*

Date: 25 November 2025

The webinar was attended by 25 participants from public bodies, local authorities and services: 10 municipalities and 2 local authorities and services were represented

Prof. Rita Bertozzi's presentation illustrated how data collection and analysis have been essential for developing effective local plans to combat discrimination. The speaker explained that equality data is useful for gathering quantitative and qualitative information to describe the level of equality within society, allowing for the identification of inequalities in access to resources, interactions with institutions and recognition of identities.

In her speech, she referred to the European Equality Data Manual (2016), highlighting that data useful for anti-discrimination policies could be collected both through dedicated h I tools and through existing sources, provided that they were disaggregated by gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion and migration background. The sources presented included censuses, administrative registers, sample surveys, victimisation surveys and qualitative methods such as interviews and case studies.

The rapporteur explained that the collection of data on equality has made systemic discrimination, which is often invisible or unintentional, visible; it has also provided an evidence-based policy basis for guiding public choices. The data has also contributed to the empowerment of vulnerable

groups by making their specific needs understandable and has made it possible to monitor the evolution of discrimination over time.

Professor Bertozzi described the role of data in local anti-discrimination plans, explaining that they make it possible to monitor the progress of actions, verify consistency with objectives and guide any changes or corrections. The data also provides a solid information base for the political component of the plans, while monitoring is interpreted as part of the process evaluation.

The webinars provided a valuable training opportunity for municipal staff, operators and institutional representatives involved in intercultural policies. Through discussions with experts and other administrations, participants broadened their understanding of discriminatory phenomena, acquiring theoretical and practical tools to recognise, monitor and combat them.

In-presence event on the topic of Roma Inclusion and contrast to anti-ziganism

On April 10, 2025, at Casa dei Diritti in Milan the following activities were carried out:

- An institutional seminar held involved local authorities from the Rete delle Città del Dialogo. The seminar included expert presentations on Romani history and policies against antigypsyism, a peer exchange among municipalities to share good practices, and the launch of a permanent working group.

Over 20 representatives from 6 municipalities (Casalecchio di Reno, Reggio Emilia, Venezia, Montesilvano, Milano and Torino) participated in these activities.

- A public cultural event took place the same evening, open to Milan's citizens, featuring musical performances by the Akanà Choir, presentations by Romani cultural experts, and an intercultural aperitif. The event attracted over 100 participants and promoted the visibility of Romani culture and history.

Participation in the Placemaking Week Europe 2025

24 September 2025 – Reggio Emilia

ICEI took part in *Placemaking Week Europe 2025*, hosted in Reggio Emilia. One of the sessions, entitled “*Enhancing Cultures in Via Roma: Communities at the Heart of Public Spaces*”, focused on how public space can serve as an instrument for cultural, social and economic inclusion, and as a catalyst for developing strategies and ideas to build intercultural neighbourhoods.

During the session, ICEI delivered a short presentation introducing the Network of Cities of Dialogue and its approach to supporting Italian municipalities in this field.

Meeting with UNAR National Office Against Racial discrimination

27 November 2025 - Rome

ICEI met with the Director of UNAR, Mattia Peradotto, to follow up on UNAR's participation in the Network's national event in Ravenna.

UNAR confirmed its appreciation for the Network's work on Local Plans to combat discrimination and expressed its interest in strengthening the intermediate level—regions and metropolitan cities—as a bridge between national institutions and local territories in promoting anti-discrimination policies.

Key areas of interest for UNAR include:

- a) cooperation with regional authorities;
- b) the development of territorial networks;

c) support for helpdesk services for victims of discrimination.

Overall, the Director was highly engaged and open to future collaborations and synergies, including potential exchanges involving the ICC.

Participation in the Annual Coordinators meeting

29-30 October 2025 - Bergen (Norway)

ICEI participated in the meeting with two representatives, contributing to the thematic discussion and exchanges with the cities and coordinators present.

Participation in the international event of the city of Iztapalapa (Mexico)

27-29 November 2025

An ICEI representative participated in the event organised by the City of Iztapalapa, a member of the ICC Network.

Communication

During the reporting year, communication activities within the Rete Città del Dialogo (RCD) were developed as a core component of the intercultural work carried out with member cities. Communication was used as a strategic tool to promote positive narratives on inclusion, challenge stereotypes and counter discriminatory discourses, in line with the principles of the Intercultural Cities (ICC) Programme.

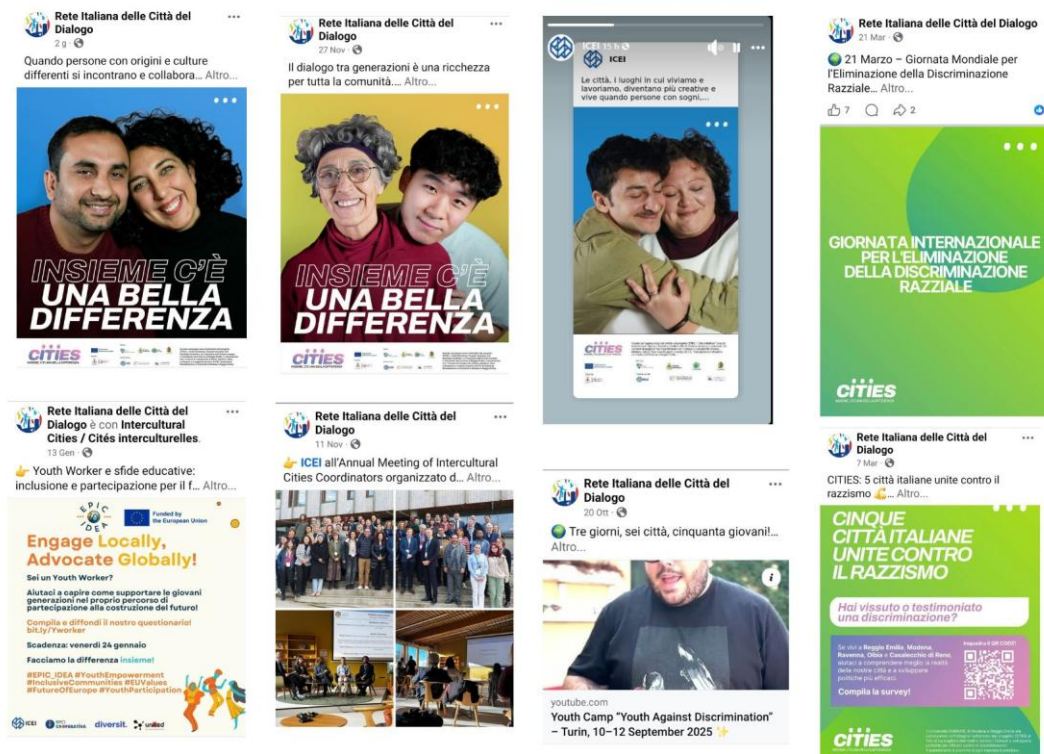
In addition to regular social media outreach of the RCD channels, key communication messages were disseminated through the implementation of several strategic projects developed in 2025 with cities belonging to the RCD network. Within these initiatives, ICEI coordinated also the **communication and narrative components**, supporting the development of inclusive and locally grounded messages.

In particular, the **CITIES project**, which by the end of 2025 is in the core phase of its communication campaign, represents a significant example of this approach. The co-designed **visual and video multi subject campaign (8 cards + 5 videos)** was disseminated through the online channels of RCD, ICEI and participating cities, and further amplified offline through **public displays in cities** such as Reggio Emilia and Ravenna, that further invested in and leveraged the campaign impact.



At network level, the **Rete Città del Dialogo communication channels** ensured continuity and visibility of intercultural actions. The RCD Facebook page (12.357 followers) remained the main public outreach tool and was regularly fed through a structured editorial plan (posts and stories),

while the RCD website was updated with information on national-level activities, particularly events implemented in collaboration with member cities.



Overall, communication activities contributed to consolidating the Rete Città del Dialogo as an active and cohesive network, supporting the dissemination of inclusive, anti-discriminatory and intercultural messages grounded in local contexts and connected to the broader European framework.

Initiatives

The following projects contributed to the implementation of the Cities of Dialogue Network strategy, providing actions and opportunities for discussion to member cities:

The project *CITIES - Cities Initiative Towards Inclusive and Equitable Societies* started on the 21 March 2024 and will last 2 years. The project, developed by ICEI and led by Reggio Emilia, is based on a partnership of Municipalities (Reggio Emilia, Modena, Ravenna, Olbia, Casalecchio di Reno), University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE) and 2 CSOs (ICEI, Mondinsieme). Its main objective is to support cities in the participative definition of local anti-discrimination plans and the strengthening of prevention and anti-discrimination services. In 2025, the following activities have been carried out:

- **Delivery of training programmes for LAs and CSOs.** The main topics covered included stereotypes, prejudice, the pyramid of hate, different forms of discrimination, and the intersectional approach to combating discrimination.
- **Set up and animation of a community of practices among the target cities:** The Community of Practice focused on exchanging experiences to support the development of local anti-discrimination strategies.
- **Mentoring with European cities:** The first online mentoring session was held on March 2025, with the representatives of the City of Leuven and the City of Strasbourg. The second online

mentoring session was held on November 2025, with the representatives of the City of Leuven and the City of Strasbourg

- **Detection of direct and indirect discrimination:** The period was dedicated to surveying direct and indirect discrimination through both quantitative and qualitative research tools. The administration of the questionnaire began in February 2025 across the 5 cities. A specific Deliverable with the results of the research was elaborated in June 2025.
- **Study Visit in Strasbourg:** The second study visit of the project took place in on 13-16 May 2025, in close cooperation with the Municipality of Strasbourg. The group had also the chance to meet the ICC Secretariat and the ADI-INT members.
- **Development of a new tool for collecting and analyzing data on discrimination:** The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (UNIMORE) is working on a data collection and monitoring tool for anti-discrimination strategies will be developed by UNIMORE to be used both in local policy-making and by direct user services (e.g., Anti-Discrimination Desks).
- **Communication and Visibility:** the Project Communication Campaign has been officially launched on 13 November 2025 on social media and will last until the end of January 2026.

The project ***"EPIC_IDEA Empowering youth Participation for Inclusive and plural Communities"*** started on 1st September 2024 and will last 2 years. The project, led by ICEI, it's based on transnational partnership of CSOs working together to create the conditions for an effective bottom-up approach in the promotion of citizens' participation – in particular young citizens - to the democratic and civic life in the 4 target countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal and Hungary. In 2025, the following activities have been carried out:

- **Bottom-up analysis of young people's perspectives on the future of the EU:** Young people and youth workers were involved in surveys, interviews, focus groups, and workshops to identify needs and develop strategies on inclusion and diversity. This activity involved over 400 participants, including young people and youth workers from diverse backgrounds, marking the starting point for the project's work.
- **National events for youth workers :** Youth workers were involved in training sessions on the methodologies adopted by the project, with the aim of developing and refining their skills, as well as fostering an exchange of experiences and best practices.
- **Community of Practices among youth workers and youth activists:** communities of practice among participating youth workers and youth activists were promoted and met regularly online.
- **Transnational Youth Camp in Hungary.** Young people from the 4 partners' countries met in Budapest from 17 to 20 November 2025 with the aim further empower youngsters' competences and supporting the creation of a network of young people committed in building a cohesive and inclusive Europe.
- **Youth Camps.** Young people were involved in in-depth training on topic such as the participatory processes, the anti-rumours and the future thinking methodologies and the inclusive communication. The training developed participant capacity and encouraged project-wide collaborative learning
- **Anti-rumours actions:** Young people - with the support of youth workers and technical staff- implemented in-presence anti-rumours actions at local level using different and creative tools.
- Starting to work on the elaboration of the **Handbook on the Anti-Rumours methodology in the youth field** based on the main results of the Community of Practices, along with the outcomes of national events for youth workers and young people.

The project ***#ARTE – Anti-Rumours, Teatro ed Educazione*** started on the 1st February 2025 and will last until 30th June 2026. It aims to combat discrimination (based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, and disability) in the Municipality of Milan.

This initiative intends to promote the empowerment of at least 250 young people and 30 Youth Workers, from the Youth Centers in Milan, by helping them become aware of their aptitudes and

discover their talents. This will be done through a multidisciplinary approach, with the goal of preventing and combating discriminatory incidents and behaviors in youth gathering places. Specifically, the project aims to:

- Strengthen the skills of Youth Workers through training sessions and a Community of Practice for sharing experiences and knowledge.
- Actively involve young people attending Youth Centers to acquire knowledge and skills on the topics of diversity and prejudice, enabling them to become protagonists in local actions to counter discrimination.

In particular, **Anti-rumour pathways for combating discrimination** through the use of artistic and creative methodologies have been carried out in 2025. Youth Centers involved in the project started to work on the design and implementation of anti-rumours actions at local level involving young people.

The project **STAND – Strengthening Towns' Activation for new Narratives on Diversity** started in January 2025 and will last 2 years. It involves 15 European cities which are part of the ICC network: five cities in Italy (Modena, Parma, Reggio Emilia, Olbia, Montesilvano), four in Spain (Bilbao, Castellò de la Plana, Santa Coloma de Gramenet, Salt), four in Portugal (Barcelos, Vila Verde, Viseu, Loures) and two in Poland (Lublin, Wroclaw).

In 2025 the following activities were carried out:

- **Bottom-up survey on competences, needs and priorities for new narratives on diversity**, in 15 cities in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland, involving over 330 people. The diagnostic phase gathered experiences, perceptions, and concerns of those involved in local diversity work or affected by existing narratives.
- **Training sessions on narratives and CANs in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Poland**, addressed to municipal staff and civil society, which involved nearly 300 participants. Based on the experience gained with the training program in the 15 implementing cities of STAND, ICEI has developed a practical guideline with suggestions, ideas, and checkpoints to make sure that the developed CANs respect the four pillars of the intercultural approach.
- **Transnational knowledge-sharing event on narratives**, organized in Santa Coloma de Gramenet (Spain) on 6th-8th October 2025. The three-day event combined reflection, peer learning, and hands-on collaboration around the development of inclusive and intercultural narratives. The event gathered 27 participants, including: experts and members of technical partners (ICEI, ACI-Diversit, RPCI), representatives of implementing cities (both partner cities Lublin and Wroclaw and associated cities from Italy, Spain and Portugal), an expert from Monash University.
- **Local co-creation of new narratives** by multistakeholder working groups applying the STAND approach learned through the training courses in 15 European cities. This activity is ongoing and will continue in the first semester of 2026.

The project **PAMI – Antidiscrimination Plan of the City of Milan**: ICEI is partner in a consortium of organizations that are supporting the Municipality of Milan in designing an anti-discrimination policy and implementing activities in its start-up phase. The project addresses all kinds of discriminations and it will last until 2026.

During 2025 the following activities were carried out:

- **Awareness raising events** at *Casa dei diritti* (House of human rights) in Milan

- **Approval of the anti-discrimination policy document** by the Municipality of Milan. The document was a result of the joint efforts of the PAMI project working group.
- Activation of a **discrimination reporting desk** where suspected cases of discrimination can be reported and receive personal, social and legal counselling and assistance.
- **Preparatory work for the creation of a network** of formal and informal organizations/entities that can cooperate with the Municipality and benefit capacity building within the framework of the anti-discrimination policy.

The project ***D.R.O.M – Diritti, Riconoscimento, Opportunità e Memoria***, financed by UNAR – Ufficio Nazionale Antidiscriminazioni Razziali, started in early 2025 and was promoted by ICEI in collaboration with the Municipality of Milan, within the framework of the Rete delle Città del Dialogo, a network of 32 Italian municipalities coordinated by ICEI. The project aimed to strengthen local policies against antigypsyism and to promote Romani culture and heritage, fostering inclusive and plural societies across Italy.

The initiative was based on a partnership between ICEI as coordinator and the Municipality of Milan, leveraging the experience and network of municipalities engaged in combating discrimination and promoting cultural dialogue. Specifically, D.R.O.M aimed to:

- Establish a permanent working group within the network of municipalities for exchanging best practices and developing policies promoting Romani inclusion;
- Strengthening awareness and appreciation of Romani culture in Milan through cultural events and active collaboration with local communities.

Next steps

In 2026 the network Rete Città del Dialogo will continue its work in promoting exchange among cities and in strengthening their competences on specific topics, such as:

- the elaboration of local anti-discrimination policies
- the strengthening of the role of young generations in building more inclusive societies
- the creation of positive narratives to fight intolerance and disinformation
- the inclusion of Roma communities

It should be noted that in early 2026, initiatives co-designed with the member cities of the Italian Network will be launched on these topics:

- ***FAIR EUROPE Fostering Awareness and Interculturalism with Roma communities in European cities***, coordinated by ICEI and involving 11 Cities of the ICC Network in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece, France, Romania and Ukraine. *Duration: 24 months*
- ***SPACE - Supporting Participatory Actions for Children's Engagement on interculturalism and democracy***, coordinated by ICEI and involving 4 Italian Cities. *Duration: 24 months*
- ***SPIRIT Sports for Participation, Inclusion, Respect, Interculturality and Tolerance***, of which ICEI is partner entity, with the participation of 3 Italian Cities. *Duration: 24 months*