

# 2016

## Intercultural Cities – Annual report



**Intercultural cities**  
Building the future on diversity

[www.coe.int/interculturalcities](http://www.coe.int/interculturalcities)



## INTRODUCTION

**INTERCULTURAL CITIES (ICC)** is a capacity-building and policy development programme implemented by the Council of Europe to support local authorities across Europe and beyond to design policies and strategies based on the application of a diversity management model called intercultural integration. Based on the notion of “diversity advantage”, these strategies cut across institutional silos and mobilise leaders, policy officials, professionals, businesses and civil society towards re-shaping city policies and services to make them more effective in a diverse context, and to engage citizens in building an understanding of their society’s diversity as a competitive advantage.

The Intercultural Cities’ programme offers a comprehensive methodology for city leaders and a range of analytical and assessment tools, including the very successful Intercultural Cities INDEX.



115 cities, in and outside Europe, have already joined the Intercultural Cities Network, a learning community that provides practical assistance to local authorities and stakeholders.

The ICC programme also counts with 6 national networks (in Italy, Morocco, Norway, Portugal, Spain, and Ukraine).

In 2016, the ICC programme welcomed the following cities: Rijeka (HR), Paris (FR), Erlangen (DE), Ioannina (GR), Agadir, Meknes, Rabat, Marrakech, Chefchauen, Tetouan, Kenitra, Martil,

Larache, and Tanger (Morocco) Drammen (NO), Albufeira, Braga, Portimao, and Viseu (PT), Getafe, Malaga and Tortosa (ES), Bursa-Osmangazi (Turkey), Lutsk, Odessa and Pavlohrad (UA).

The following cities completed for the first time or reviewed the Intercultural Cities Index: Ballarat (Australia), Beja, Braga, Bursa-Osmangazi, Erlangen, Paris, Reggio Emilia, Melitopol, Novellara, Rijeka, Santa Maria da Feira, Sumy, Vinnitsa, and Viseu.

## MAJOR ICC EVENTS IN 2016

### ➤ Intercultural competence

A systemic approach to the development of cultural competence of all professional levels within public administration agencies, companies, council administrations, and service organizations is essential for developing, attaining and maintaining social cohesion, a sense of safety and security, and an active participation of all residents.

As part of its diversity management strategy for inclusive societies, the ICC programme organised three learning clusters on Intercultural competence: one targeting the ICC international network (Bucharest, April 2016), one for officials of the Bucharest municipality (April 2016) and another one for the officials of the municipality of Reykjavik (October 2016). These learning clusters are oriented toward a practical



rather than a theoretical approach to intercultural competence development and application and provide methods and tools to help public administration personnel working within multi-ethnic societies.

### ➤ **Effective communication and intercultural messaging in times of crisis**

Migration and diversity are now central components of the public debate in Europe on issues of culture, social cohesion and identity. They stir emotion and attract political controversy with equal measure, presenting those who see strength in the inclusive and intercultural future of cities with unique challenges. Communicating a positive vision of the migratory situation requires a media skill-set that combines engaging, optimistic and timely messaging, with a strong understanding and command of data and research.



For these reasons, the Intercultural Cities programme organised a learning cluster on “Effective Communication and Intercultural Messaging”. 30 elected officials and key policy officers from cities members of the ICC Network, particularly those in charge of diversity and integration and/or media relations benefitted from this training that took place in Paris in May 2016.

A policy brief is available [online](#).

## **THEMATIC EVENTS**

### ➤ **Social innovation for refugee inclusion**



Organised in partnership with the European Council of Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), the United States Mission to the EU, the Economic and Social Committee and the Canadian Mission to the EU, the seminar on social innovation for refugee inclusion promoted exchanges between social innovators, NGOs, local authorities, businesses and service professionals in order to create local partnerships; stronger connections between public/private sectors; increased involvement of refugee communities; and better coordination between European and national authorities for

increased sustainability of refugee integration initiatives.

More than 300 people attended the event from very different backgrounds and openly shared their experiences. They interacted with the other participants during the match-making sessions which were intended to connect authors of new inclusion applications and platforms with NGOs and public authorities. The need for a powerful narrative change, capable of disrupting the currently mainstream narrative of fear, failure and impossibility, was also addressed. Different experiences and innovative initiatives were presented, including on the added value of technology as a way to

connect people. The need for an offline infrastructure and for creating places to bring people together complementing the online apps, was also stated.

A particular contribution was also made by the business world in which the interest for the diversity advantage represented by refugees is increasing. The report of the meeting is available [online](#).

### ➤ **Tackling Prejudice and Engaging with Religious Minorities: the role of cities**



Held over two days, this seminar explored local policy responses to tackling prejudice and discrimination against religious minorities, including anti-Muslim hatred, through an intercultural approach. The foundation for this approach is acknowledging the rights of all individuals and groups, whether religious or not, under the European Convention on Human Rights, and to positively engage with faith communities alongside those with other beliefs, including secular worldviews, for the purpose of building trust, cohesion and positive intercultural interactions within the city as a whole. It starts from the position of exploring how public discourse, policies, procedures and practices can have a significant impact in exacerbating and/or reducing experiences of prejudice and discrimination within local communities.

More than 60 experts, representing either local authorities (including city councillors) or faith groups, attended the event.

In the conclusions participants identified a wide range of potential ways of taking action, including: (i) the formation of a robust legal framework for supporting the rights of all; (ii) challenging hate crime and discrimination across a range of fields and promoting more thorough and widespread collection of data; (iii) raising mutual awareness of different religions and beliefs; (iv) reasonable adaptation of public service delivery; (v) promoting positive interactions which build trust and involve interconvictional dialogue and/or working together on shared social issues to break down divides; (vi) engaging critically with political and media discourses, including seeking to counteract those which exacerbate division, and be aware of how other policy agendas can interact with and undermine attempts to challenge prejudice and discrimination; (vii) supporting and training people who can enable dialogue and build bridges between individuals and groups, including on issues where there is disagreement. The meeting report is available [online](#).

### ➤ **European Network of Intercultural centres**

A meeting of representatives of intercultural centres from a number of European cities, most of which are members of the Intercultural cities network, took place on 15-16 December 2016 to set up a network of intercultural centres connected to the Intercultural cities programme.

The participating centres were called to develop a manifesto, the objectives, and the action plan of the future network, and also work on the development of a label for intercultural NGOs, as requested by the ICC coordinators at their last meeting.

## **STUDY VISITS**

Study visits and thematic events expose a range of policy-makers, practitioners and advocates from member cities to practice exchange, reflections and discussions with fellow actors from other cities. The events use an interactive, hands-on format designed to bring energy, innovation and ideas into the strategy-making process and help build a stakeholder alliance.



In 2016 cities members of the ICC programme benefitted from two study visits, one to Vienna (Austria) and another one to Bergen (Norway).

Although **Vienna** is not formally a member of the Intercultural cities network, the city has been selected because it has a strong and successful intercultural integration policy with a human rights focus. Among the highlights of the visit participants (including a Mayor and several city councillors) got insights on education and job training for young people; multilingual teaching in schools, diversity and inclusion strategies; monitoring of gender equality; migrant integration policies; and civil society participation.



As for **Bergen**, the visit focussed on Refugees' inclusion, building on the successful welcoming policy instruments put in place by the municipality in this specific field. Participants got a comprehensive view of the whole range of policies implemented by the city for the integration of refugees, including the more recent programme for unaccompanied minors and the anti-radicalisation programme. The visit confirmed that the proactive and long-term approach applied by Bergen to the intercultural integration of migrants and refugees is an example of good practices as showed by the very good rates of the main inclusion indicators (education,

employment, and housing). The report of the study visit is available [online](#).

## ANTI-RUMOURS

The [anti-rumour strategy](#) aims to raise awareness about the importance of countering diversity-related prejudices and rumours that hamper positive interaction and social cohesion and that lay the foundations of discriminatory and racist attitudes. The strategy, understood as a public policy, is composed of a number of elements: identifying major rumours existing in a city; collecting objective data and also emotional arguments to dismantle false rumours; creating an anti-rumour network of local actors from civil society; empowering and training "anti-rumour agents"; and designing and implementing anti-rumour campaigns to raise awareness, including by creating and disseminating new tools and resources, both creative and rigorous.



In 2016 the ICC programme supported the implementation of Anti-rumours campaigns in a selected number of Portuguese and Spanish cities. Moreover, it produced online [didactic videos](#) that cities can use to build up their own anti-rumours campaigns.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COORDINATORS

The annual meeting of the ICC coordinators (Reykjavik, September 2016) brought together the representatives of the 100 cities that are member of the ICC programme, including non-European cities such as Montreal (Canada), Haifa (Israel) and Amman (Jordan), and the cities that joined before August 2016.

Participants discussed front-line challenges linked to the present migratory situation, as well as ways for building bilateral and multilateral connections, undertaking common initiatives, and further develop both the intercultural cities' network and the intercultural integration policy paradigm in light of the continuous growth of the number of member cities. The ICC coordinators agreed to organise a milestone event next year to celebrate the ICC 10th anniversary and, at the same time, to present the main achievements of the recent years and test new working methods (eg. induction courses for new members, communication toolkits, wider anti-rumours projects, mentoring from pilot cities, certifications for intercultural NGOs, barometer to measure the diversity in business, etc.). Finally, the coordinators were also called to approve the ICC Strategy for the period [2016-2019](#). The meeting's conclusions are available [online](#).



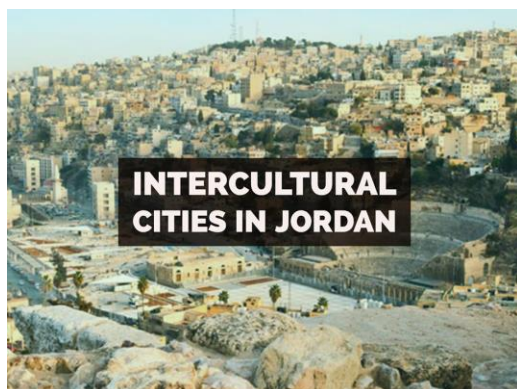
## EXPERT VISITS

Expert visits are organised to assess the level of progress of member cities in the implementation of their intercultural strategies. In 2016 expert visits were conducted to a number of IC Cities (e.g. Erlangen, Paris, Rijeka, Odessa, Lutsk, Melitopol, Sumy, Pryluky, Vinnitsya, Reggio Emilia, Novellara, Santa Maria da Feira) and contact visits took place in a few candidate cities (Birmingham, Kiev, Molenbeek). The intercultural profiles of the visited cities are published [online](#).

## SOUTH PROGRAMME II

Under the South Programme II (joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Union), thematic seminars and expert visits were carried out to Morocco (where a national ICC network is being set-up with Tanger, Agadir, Meknes, Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Chefchaouen, Tetouan,

Kenitra, Martil, and Larache) and Jordan (targeting – among others - the cities of Sahab, Wasitiyah, Zarqa and Amman). A dedicated workshop was organised for the intercultural city of Haifa (Israel).



A meeting was held in Amman (**Jordan**) on 1st February with representatives from 11 interested cities, as well as managers of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to discuss front-line problems occurring in cities that receive Syrian refugees. Some of the issues identified were: the need of public spaces, prevalent resentment attitudes & citizenship values, lack of respect for local traditions, rise of crime & drug dealing, lack of branding and media coverage for social programs.

Later in May, a team of the ICC programme conducted visits to Amman, Zarqa, Sahab and Wasitiyah to test a new methodology called the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). The ABCD approach assumes that strong communities are built by recognising, celebrating and harnessing the 'Community Assets' that are already there and that can come from very different and sometimes underestimated sources like refugees. As a starting point for the process, each visit has been the occasion for listening to the community and identifying "Community connectors". Practical training on how to map community assets was also delivered.

Regarding **Morocco**, in March 2016 a first ICC coordination meeting was held in Tanger, involving 11 Moroccan cities to move into previously unexplored areas of policy and to seek new and innovative solutions for the integration of migrants. The group voted and unanimously approved the formation of a Moroccan Intercultural Cities Network to be hosted and coordinated by the city of Tanger, and specifically by the department of international affairs. The membership procedure has been finalised beginning of December.

In Haifa, Israel, a workshop with stakeholders prepared the setting up of a citizen consultation and participation process for the development, implementation and monitoring of the city's intercultural strategy. The need to provide municipal staff with training on Intercultural Competence was also discussed. Moreover, a new programme for elementary schools was developed and implemented, pairing Jewish and Arab schools, for the kids to take care together of a public shared space. Finally, Haifa set up its next priorities: to expand the intercultural training and start an anti-rumour campaign. ICC will bring specific know-how on these themes during network events, as well as ad hoc consultancy to the city.

## POLICY LAB



**THE SQUARED CIRCLE**  
INCLUSIVE INTEGRATION POLICY LAB

The underlying principles of intercultural integration (equal respect for all as individuals entitled to freedom and responsibility, cultural reciprocity and willingness to accept cultural hybridisation as a factor for change and development

and a purveyor of diversity advantage) take inclusive integration beyond the classical approach of anti-discrimination and require active intervention by public authorities. This intervention should aim to de-marginalise communities (or prevent marginalisation), seek to ensure a cultural mix in all



areas and at all levels in public institutions, and develop a culture of diversity and openness to change, not only in order to ensure equal opportunities but as a source of dynamism, innovation, adaptability and competitive advantage. There is much that can be achieved at the local level but at the national level some enabling conditions (legal and policy frameworks) need to be in place. The present situation in Europe highlights a growing need for a constructive dialogue between national and local authorities on how to build better partnership for inclusive integration.

To address these concerns, a preparatory meeting was held in Florence in May with a restricted number of key experts and policy makers to explore strategies for building an experimental framework for multi-level and multi-stakeholder governance of migrant and refugee integration in order to enable transfer of innovation and good practice from local to regional and national levels.

The idea of setting-up an Inclusive Integration Policy Laboratory, called the “Squared Circle”, was advanced, to involve local and national officials, NGOs and academics that are mid-career, change-oriented decision-makers or influencers in promoting the intercultural approach at different levels of governance to further developing its knowledge base. The “Policy Lab” will be launched in 2017 and will encourage national, and/or, whenever appropriate, regional, authorities to adopt intercultural/approaches to migrant and refugee integration policies as a means of building more inclusive societies.

## BUILDING INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES (BIS) ACTION PLAN

Adopted in March 2016, the Council of Europe [Building Inclusive Societies Action Plan](#) aims to assist Member States in managing Europe’s diversity. This is done by developing smart policies fostering mutual understanding and respect. In this framework, the ICC programme has launched three pilot projects to address diversity in business and media.

### ➤ Diversity rating for business



[This project](#) focuses on assessing the economic potential of workforce diversity in specific companies to inspire and encourage them to diversify their workforce. The expected impact of the project is to help local businesses to grow by enhancing economic performance through

diversity. It will thus also help local labor market by creating new workplaces for an increasingly diverse workforce.

To this end, the project has already developed an assessment tool for rating and identifying the most diverse companies in a city. Training material has also been produced and the methodology has been presented at an ICC meeting organised in Santa Maria da Feira (Portugal, October 2016). The rating tool that has been presented allows two kinds of assessments: surveys and ratings of companies focusing on the level of diversity in management, and deep dives to analyse companies’ diversity policies, and document successful diversity strategies and practice to help other companies to adopt these successful approaches. The next steps will focus on preparing a compelling and detailed description of best practice examples to give arguments to other companies to increase their workforce diversity.



### ➤ Diversity connector for Start-ups

Through the [Diversity connector for Start-ups](#), the CoE will explore good practice examples on how to design diverse business incubators. Participating Inter-Cultural Cities (ICCs) will visit diverse business incubators and consult with leading European cities in this respect. The ICCs will also have the opportunity to develop their expertise through Webinars, a section on the ICC website, and a 'roadmap' of how to adapt good practice to fit their cultural environments. Work in 2016 focussed on compiling good practices, mapping existing incubators, and preparing the Webinars.



### ➤ Diversity Accelerator for Media (Div-A)



[Div-A](#) is a pilot mentoring programme aimed at testing a new approach to rendering the media landscape in Europe more inclusive with regard to population diversity and more balanced in relation to diversity issues. The programme will do this by helping young media professionals who are already committed to diversity inclusiveness to use the tools new media offers and create their own independent business models. The mentoring experience will also serve to prepare a full methodology that will serve as a model for schools of journalism willing to provide future journalists with the tools for setting-up their own independent media agencies.

Following a preparatory meeting held in May 2016, a call for applications was launched for a two-month period. 170 applications were collected and screened; the 27 pre-selected projects underwent additional screening and interviews and a list of 10 finalists has been published in September. The team leaders of the 10 selected projects underwent the first training session in Lisbon, in November this year. They now continue work through online communication platforms and receive regular feedback from their mentors. The focus for the next steps is on preparing the business plans and strategies for the launch of their media outlets in 2017.

## VISIBILITY AND AWARENESS

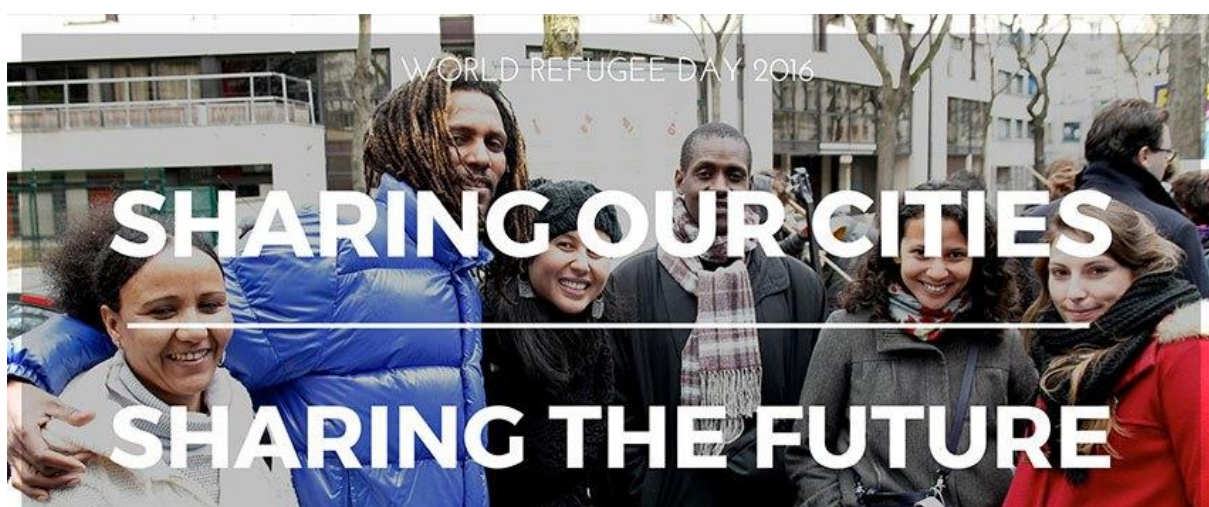
In order to capitalise on cities' achievements and increase the impact and transferability of the good practices developed in the frame of the programme, the ICC has worked on a communication strategy that uses digital communication and storytelling. The ICC has reshaped its website and sensitively increased its outreach through both [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).



The insight and statistical analysis of both Facebook and Twitter revealed a steady positive trend in number of likes and followers, as well as interesting developments in terms of reach and engagement. For Facebook, the overall conclusion is that the community is growing and getting closer to the content stream posted weekly. Regarding Twitter, the level of engagement is even higher because of the specific nature of this social media, which is used in most cases by professionals and practitioners.

Besides social media activity, the ICC programme has launched a series of initiatives for the member cities including:

- The **Story-cities**: Intercultural Cities is a global network that relies on people that take actions and produce knowledge, policies and expertise from everyday life. Through the story-cities project people (residents) will be at the centre of the communication action. The ICC will organise a series of visits to a restricted number of cities (5/6), covering different geographical areas but having in common outstanding practices in the field of managing diversity as an advantage rather than a burden, to collect multimedia material that would be used to portray the achievements of the intercultural management of migration.
- **Common branding** for ICCities: a dedicated webpage with the visual identity of the programme, translated into local languages is under preparation and will be launched in 2017.
- The **hashtag #ICCities** has been launched for communicating on joint actions.
- A call for the project “**Artist of Interculturality**” has also been launched to release, in 2017, the portrait of local artists of interculturality who have been champions of diversity.
- Since last April, a bi-monthly **newsletter** take stocks and informs about the main achievements and activities organised by the participating cities under the ICC programme.
- **Joint campaigns** have been implemented by member cities for the World Refugee Day and the International Migrants Day.



## APPENDIX I

### PUBLICATIONS RELEASED IN 2016

#### Policy briefs

- [Political communication and intercultural messaging in times of crisis](#)

#### Scientific studies and research

- [Quantitative comparability study of the ICC Index and the quality of life data](#)
- [Compilation of good practices from cities](#) (updated in September 2016)

#### Thematic papers

- [Tackling prejudice and engaging with religious communities](#)
- [Diversity in Business measurement tool - Manual](#)
- [Social innovation for refugee inclusion](#)

#### Online Introduction course (videos)

- [Anti-rumours induction course](#)

#### Awareness and visibility

- [Intercultural Cities Brochure](#)
- [Intercultural cities – promotional video](#)
- [Newsletter](#)

#### Reports from the national networks

##### ITALY (Città del dialogo)

- [Priorities of the Italian Network of Intercultural Cities \(Italian version\)](#)

##### SPAIN (RECI)

- [RECI activities in 2016](#) (Spain; English version)
- [RECI - 11th Working Session - Donostia, 26 October 2016](#) (Spain; English version)

##### PORTUGAL (RPCI)

- [7th RPCI Meeting - Summary](#) (Portimão, 21 June 2016)
- [6th RPCI Meeting - Summary](#) (Santa Maria da Feira, Europarque, March 2016)
- [2nd RPCI Workshop "Anti-rumours Strategy" - Summary](#) (Lisbon, 10 May 2016)
- [1st RPCI Workshop "The question of refugees" - Summary](#) (Bobadela, 25 January 2016)

##### UKRAINE (ICC-UA)

- [Ukrainian Intercultural Cities Network: ICC-UA Action Plan 2016-2017](#)
- [Good practice from ICC-UA cities \(September 2016\)](#)