

20 June 2007

INTERCULTURAL CITIES: GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES – A Council of Europe programme to enhance and support community efforts to make the best of cultural diversity

PROGRAMME OUTLINE AND EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Executive summary

As communities across Europe grow increasingly diverse, their governance models, their public and media discourse, the management of their institutions and their policies determine whether this diversity becomes an asset or a threat. Successful cities (and societies) of the future will be intercultural: they will be capable of managing and exploring the potential of their cultural diversity to stimulate creativity and innovation and thus generate economic prosperity, community cohesion and better quality of life.

The *Intercultural cities* project will study successful experiences in a range of cities in Europe (and possibly beyond) and harness this experience to encourage the development of structures, policies and practice in other cities through good practice exchange and city-to-city mentoring. In addition to the direct exchange, good practice will be made publicly available by means of an annual “*Intercultural cities share fair*” as well as web- and print-based publications.

Following a pilot phase (2008-2009, possibly to be extended to 2010) on the ground, a set of benchmarks, as well as generic review, support and training tools will be developed in order to facilitate the development of intercultural governance and policies on a larger scale. The programme’s longer-term objective is to help shape overall public policies for cultural diversity and dialogue by demonstrating what can be the benefits of such policies and what conditions need to be place for these benefits to materialise.

Five good reasons to participate in the programme

- Avoid many of the risks associated with segregated, divided communities
- Learn how to use diversity to enhance creativity and innovation, economic prosperity and community well-being
- Have access to a wide range of approaches, techniques and methods, expert support and guidance
- Participate in the creation of the first European pool of intercultural knowledge and practice

- **Join the network of the Council of Europe *Intercultural cities* and receive national and international visibility and recognition.**

Context

The *Intercultural cities* programme emerged from the Council of Europe's significant experience of projects that focus on issues concerned with the management of diversity, and considerable reflection that has been undertaken in relation to the principles and practices of cultural diversity. In addition, the project might offer one of the potential tools to be developed in relation to the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (to be adopted by the end of 2007). It is also conceived as a contribution to the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue but its operational phase will continue well beyond the end of the Year.

Intercultural cities is a capacity-building and policy development field programme complementary to many of the current projects and events (conferences, research, exchanges, and campaigns) implemented by the Council of Europe. The programme's long-term, comprehensive approach will contribute to the sustainability of the political impetus of one of the Council of Europe's declared priorities concerning the practice of diversity in today's world.

The programme fully supports the policy principles and approaches outlined in Agenda 21 for Culture promoted by United Cities and Local Governments. It will continuously seek links and partnerships with related projects of other international organisations and networks.

Premise

This programme is underpinned by the Council of Europe's key principle that individuals have equal rights and should be respected and treated as bearers of such rights. No cultural argument should be used or taken to undermine the equality and enjoyment of individual rights as much as no culture should be treated as superior to other cultures..

The programme will address primarily the issue of ethno-cultural diversity stemming from recent immigration and diversity related to the existence of recognised national minorities although other diversities inherent in modern societies (gender, age, sexual orientation, ability etc.) may also be addressed in a direct or indirect way. The programme will be particularly attentive to the tensions between diversity and identity, tradition and modernity, development and authenticity, and will seek to assist local communities to develop the means to understand and deal positively and constructively with these tensions.

A distinction should be drawn between the citizenship and social status of people of non-majority origin (national minorities, EU residents, legal residents, illegal residents, refugees, asylum seekers, for example) and the variations of personal views situations of individuals (such as desire for integration or lack of it, strong or weak identity of origin, employment, religion...). Public attitudes to these groups vary considerably depending on history, context and location. Ethno-cultural minorities themselves are not homogeneous or like-minded and should not be treated as such. The consideration of differences between cases, local identities, needs and situations will require the development of a specific, tailor-made approach for each participating city through the involvement of each city in such a process.

Definitions

In the context of this programme, the term "city" is being used to designate a sub-national entity having a degree of self-government. This could be a larger city, a medium or small-size town, a large neighborhood or district within a metropolitan city. In some cases, if the national division of competence requires it, the entity participating in a programme could be a region. The programme will retain a degree of flexibility in terms of how the term 'participating city' is applied.

Σχόλιο [p1]: Apparently at the GR-C, the Swiss delegate questioned the ICC proposal, on the basis of 'how can we proceed and implement a project developed from the White Paper, which has not yet been written nor received the approval of the CM. We may wish to 'soften' this reference even more.

“Interculturalism” is understood as an approach to cultural diversity going beyond equal opportunities and respect for existing cultural differences. It requires a long-term strategic approach to transform public space, institutions and civic culture....*Intercultural cities* develop policies encouraging different cultures to intersect and hybridise. They should promote cross-fertilisation across cultural boundaries, between ‘majority’ and ‘minorities’, ‘dominant’ and ‘sub’ cultures, localities, classes, faiths, disciplines and genres, as a source of cultural, social, civic and economic innovation.¹

Rationale

As communities across Europe grow increasingly diverse, their governance models and their policies determine whether this diversity becomes an asset or a threat. Successful cities of the future will be intercultural: they will be capable of exploring the potential of their cultural diversity to stimulate creativity and innovation and so generate economic prosperity and a better quality of life.

Developing intercultural models of urban governance is a challenging, complex process. The *Intercultural cities* programme seeks to trigger and/or enhance this process through developments that focus around a number of central themes: (1) governance structures and leadership, (2) the language of public debate and the media, (3) intercultural mediation, and (4) cultural policies and action). The choice of these areas has been influenced by the study of examples of successful initiatives on the ground, the availability of accumulated knowledge and expertise of the Council of Europe in relation to the fields concerned, and the need to keep the programme to manageable proportions. The possibility to include other areas such as education and social integration, including housing and employment issues will be assessed during the pilot phase of the programme.

Ultimately, this programme is about helping people who perform different public roles develop attitudes, skills and mechanisms which improve intercultural interaction and management at the level of cities and their various institutions, organisations and civil society groupings.

Methodology

Each local community has a unique blend of people, history and heritage which makes the development of adequate intercultural governance and policies unique too. But this process can be greatly facilitated through learning from the experience of others. There are local authorities in every country that achieve the highest standards in all or some of the 4 areas above. This best practice can be identified and shared with other local authorities. Learning from each other through peer review with the help of experts and facilitators, is the core of the programme’s good practice exchange methodology. The effectiveness of this methodology, which has been used for several years by the Council of Europe, is due to its flexibility and adaptability to local conditions, its interactive nature and its socio-cultural contextualisation.)

The criteria which define what counts as “good practice” in relation to intercultural governance and policies are based on Council of Europe standards and principles in the relevant fields. These principles embed the common values of its 47 member states: human rights, democracy, participation, the rule of law, the value of diversity, the protection of minorities, equity, justice, sustainable development.

Implementation process

¹ Based on Bloomfield, Jude; Bianchini, Franco: *Intercultural City: Planning for the Intercultural City*. United Kingdom: Comedia, 2004. p.12

It is proposed to start with a pilot run of the programme in order to refine the methodology and develop generic review and training tools which could be adapted to subsequent programme phases. The pilot run will involve a small number of cities. Participating cities will be chosen by a Council of Europe panel following expressions of interest. Criteria for selection will include the degree of declared commitment, scope and the availability of resources (human and/or financial) for the programme. Declared political support by the local authorities concerned, will be essential. Participating cities will be expected to offer significant logistical support on the ground in the city and help develop, visibility opportunities to communicate and promote the programme. The participating cities will join a specially conceived privileged network of Council of Europe *Intercultural cities* and each city will receive public recognition of their achievements. The cities will benefit from national and international coverage of this Council of Europe programme. The main benefit for participating cities, however, will be the enhancement of their approaches to managing diversity through the exchange of good practice and ideas, and expert support and assistance.

A group of international and national experts will work with the authorities and other actors of participating cities in order to define with them the key features and success factors of their good practice in relation to governance, public discourse and media ethics, intercultural mediation and cultural policies. Programme material (discussion papers, questionnaires, score cards, draft charters, training material etc.) will then be prepared on the basis of the assessed good practice. These will then serve as tools to facilitate the review, discussion and learning processes in other cities.

The pilot phase of the programme will run for approximately 24 months (January 2008- December 2009). The programme will be continuously reviewed and adapted to local conditions and needs and undergo a thorough external evaluation following the pilot phase. The programme might then be expanded and multiplied depending on success, interest and the availability of resources.

Intervention area I

Intercultural governance

The feeling of belonging to a community depends on the level of integration in community life, i.e. the enjoyment of citizenship. In addition to essential integration factors such as access to education, housing, employment and health care, access to the public debate, policy formulation, evaluation and decision making is a key factor for good community governance. Such access is usually more difficult for people of minority and immigrant background for a range of reasons and gaining it requires some forms of "affirmative action".

Intercultural governance is about:

- creating spaces for dialogue between people of different cultural origins living in the same community, on issues relating to the life of the community;
- including issues of specific concern to cultural minorities on the agenda of public meetings;
- creating a shared ownership of the civic urban space;
- developing Integrated policies to produce space that is 'open minded', designed for a variety of uses, unforeseen and unforeseeable uses;
- actively involving members of cultural minorities in the public debate;
- creating (consultative) structures through which cultural minorities can express their opinion in the process of public decision-making.
- encouragement of cross-communal networks and encounters through civic associations

Intercultural governance does not emerge by itself. It requires leadership - a deep and active commitment to promoting inclusion of migrants and minorities and dialogue between cultures in the public space. Intercultural leadership is important both at the level of local elected bodies, and at the level of the management bodies of community institutions and civil society organisations. Only the combined efforts of committed leaders in a range of institutions can tip the balance towards true intercultural governance. The development of leadership skills among the members of cultural minorities is also an objective.

The programme proposes to review the range of local governance structures and practices and advice on ways of improving the sensitivity and understanding of decision-makers about concerns of members of cultural communities and involving these communities in the public debate and decision-making processes. It will also aim at developing agreed targets and benchmarks as well as mechanisms of monitoring progress toward these targets.

Intervention area II

Public discourse and media ethics

Media – and in particular the broadcast media – have an enormous impact on public perceptions of migrants and cultural minorities in general. Many analysts have remarked that in their search for scoop and sensation, media tend to over-emphasise negative news and under-report positive news. This is a phenomenon related to all areas of society, but its effects in relation to public perception of cultural minorities can be very serious.

Media activity could contribute significantly to the public knowledge of the different cultures represented in the community which would lead to a better acceptance and reduction of stereotyping and greater sensitivity to their needs and concerns.

The programme will seek to work directly with editors and journalists in local broadcast and printed media in participating cities in order to raise awareness of the need for a better balance in the choice of themes and in the way/terms/style in which the themes are presented. As a result of the programme, an ethical charter on balanced “diversity” media work should be prepared by representatives of local media. Through this charter, media would engage to encourage the presence of immigrant or minority representatives in the media, to improve the visibility of immigrant or minority communities and to seek balanced positive/negative reporting of minority-related news.

In addition, the programme will involve direct work with community leaders (elected representatives, spokespersons, NGO leaders) to raise their awareness of the need to similarly seek a positive attitude and a balance when publicly speaking about diversity issues.

Intervention area III

Intercultural mediation

The enjoyment of equal rights means in reality that everyone living in a community should have access to the public services and that these services should take into account the needs of different cultural groups. One instrument that can contribute effectively to the inclusion of minority/immigrant populations is intercultural mediation.

Genuine ‘integration and empowerment’ occur when intercultural mediation offers real options. Such mediation involves more than the pure transfer of information about the individual’s rights and the functioning of services. If, for example, the parents of immigrant children are to be shown

how they can help their children succeed at school, this means that from the first school day, the parents will be informed in detail, with the help of intercultural mediators and interpreters, both at parents' evenings and during parent-teacher conferences, about how the school functions, their duties and rights as parents and their child's progress. It also means that the teacher and the parents with the help of intercultural mediators or interpreters pay careful attention to the 'school careers' of their children and that, when there are problems, they seek solutions together.

Intercultural mediation: where and how

- Intercultural mediation can be effective in almost all community institutions: school, hospitals, social and employment services, police and courts, as well as in civil society organisations. The programme will seek to identify individuals working in these institutions and organisations, who would be willing and capable of acting as intercultural mediators, and will provide assistance with the definition of their mandate and functions and appropriate training.
- Intercultural mediation pre-supposes in various forms of learning in non-formal settings (experimental, co-operative, network-learning) for both young people and adults
- Intercultural mediation can also take place in purpose-build mediation centres designed on the principle of "one-stop-shop" to provide information, assistance and advise with everyday difficulties and conflicts between citizens and the administration as well as between citizens. Intercultural mediation can this significantly improve access to social rights.

In addition to face-to-face good practice exchange and training, e-enabled networking and resource facilities will be set up in order to provide continuous support and good practice exchange among such mediators.

Intervention area IV

Cultural policy and action

Including cultural minorities in the cultural life of the community, creating tolerant and positive relations between different groups, encouraging the community's creative potential through diversity blending – these are goals which can be helped by carefully constructed cultural policies and events at cities and local communities. In addition, the experiences from European cities show that special efforts have to be made in order to involve migrants and ethnic minorities in urban planning and politics. Urban areas have proved to be excellent points of departure with respect to collective mobilisation of ethnic minority groups. Establishing alternative platforms and channels for influence also seems to be successful, in particular through new information and communication technologies.

Diversity-friendly cultural policies could contribute to the development of intercultural dialogue by encouraging, whenever possible, actions intended to bring together the different cultural groups through intercultural events and practices, aimed at all age groups and all socio-cultural groups, within programmes implemented by cultural institutions responsible for fine arts, theatre, literary expressions, etc. Intercultural work needs to be mainstreamed in such institutions rather than be only the preoccupation of small specialist units.

Intercultural cities could, for instance contribute to the recognition of the works of artists with minority or immigrant background through encouraging their participation in local cultural events, for instance through the creation of "artist residences" and exchanges through partnerships with the countries of origin of the minorities/immigrants. Cities could facilitate the participation of artists from minority/migrant background in prestigious national or international events or host conferences gathering local and artists with minority or immigrant background. Local cultural

industries, policies and strategies should be adapted to the needs and talents of diverse communities and open up opportunities for communication and employment.

The programme will encourage creative innovation and development of local diversity-friendly cultural strategies which

- put an emphasis on cultural programmes targeting all publics and enabling the interaction and cross-fertilisation of cultures;
- mainstreaming intercultural policies and practices into the work of local organisations and institutions;
- renew public space in order to facilitate the mixing of publics;
- sustain a creative economy receptive and supportive to diversity;
- Encourage cultural participation by all communities;
- Involve citizens in the formulation and evaluation of policies.

Partners

Council of Europe Bodies

- Steering Committee for Culture
- Secretariat of the Charter of Regional and Minority Languages
- Congress of Local and Regional Authorities
- Centre for Local Government Reform
- Directorate of Communication

Other organisations will also be involved, which currently include, inter alia,

[United Cities and Local Governments - Culture](#), [Les Rencontres](#), and [ENCATC](#)

Σχόλιο [p2]: Use full name – not acronym

Partnerships will also be sought with

The European Commission
National governments
National cultural institutes
Foundations
National Associations of Local Authorities
Research bodies and institutions

PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS IN 2008

Period	Action	Participants	Objectives
January-March 2008	Launching and project engineering meeting (2 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-4 representatives of each city, international experts, CoE representatives, EU, ECF, partner organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To discuss and further define programme objectives and working methods, introduce participants, discuss commitment, involvement, co-ordination, support, visibility, reporting, evaluation etc.
January – February 2008	Orientation and planning meetings in each participating city (2 days).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 sectoral experts (or three in case we combine governance and cultural policy); - Mayor or deputy in charge and other local leaders and members of the administration; - Local co-ordinator; - Representatives of media, city institutions and civil society; - Cultural operators; - researches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assess local conditions, needs and objectives of cities - meet representatives of authorities, media, institutions and civil society - develop an action plan, schedule of activities, agree on resources, tasks and working methods - sign official participation agreements
March-April 2008	Case studies 1x 3-day visit in each city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sectoral experts - participants in local initiatives - researchers - TV team” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outline the main principles and methods of pilot initiatives and the factors of their success. Start preparing with local experts documentation for the good practice transfer.
May-June 2008	Visits to finalise the training/coaching tools based on case studies 1x 3-day visit in each city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sectoral experts - local participants - researchers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Validate the programmes, peer review methodology and material - Train “coaches” and “mentors” from participating cities about their tasks and roles - Mid-term progress review
May -December 2008	2 good practice exchange visits each city 2x3 day visits in each city	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - coaching teams of visiting cities - teams of host cities - international experts - researchers - “documentalist”cumentalists” - TV teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess local conditions, needs and objectives of participating cities - Meet representatives of authorities, media, institutions and civil society - Present pilot practice, coach and mentor - Develop local strategies and action plans based on the transfer of good practice - Ensure local political support and visibility for the programme
December 2008	<i>Intercultural cities</i> share fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - representatives of all participating cities - all experts involved - representatives of partner organisations - other interested parties (CoE member states and bodies, civil society, local authorities, media...) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present the programme principles and methods to a broad audience and progress made in the initial stages of implementation, discuss first lessons and present the results of the first stage of evaluation - Ensure sustained interaction/networking of participating cities and experts - Create conditions for enlarging the programme to other cities

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO PARTICIPATE IN THE *INTERCULTURAL CITIES* PROGRAMME OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

to be filled by an official representative of the city authorities and sent, preferably by e-mail and post before 30 September 2007 to

Irena Guidikova
Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage
Council of Europe
F - 67075 Strasbourg Cedex
Tel: + 33 3 88 41 32 19, Fax: + 33 3 88 41 27 55, irena.guidikova@coe.int

Name of the city:

Province (if applicable):

Country:

1. Number of inhabitants

2. Ethno-cultural composition of the city population

3. Please describe briefly which policies/projects/initiatives represent good practice to be shared in the context of the programme

4. Please describe briefly how your city would benefit from the good practice in other cities in Europe

5. Will your city be able to cover the following local costs of the programme:

Resource	Yes	No	Comment
Appoint a programme co-ordinator			
Provide meeting facilities and interpretation from/to English or French (Approximately the equivalent of 20 days a year)			
Cover additional local meeting costs (local transport, hospitality, field visits, overnight stay of local participants)			
Ensure the translation, of working documents from/to the local language			
Ensure local visibility of the project (press conferences, leaflets, posters, web site)			

6. Will your city be able to provide additional resources (directly or through another funding body) for the programme and/or for the *Intercultural cities* Solidarity Fund to help poorer cities benefit from the programme?

Yes No

If yes, please specify the amount

Additional comments

Name of the city representative

Function

Address

Telephone

E-mail

Web site
Date

Signature

CRITERIA FOR SELECTING CITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE PILOT PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME

Cities participating in the pilot phase of the Council of Europe's *Intercultural cities* programme are expected to have

- a population composed of people with various ethno-cultural backgrounds;
- a democratically elected local government;
- confirmed commitment by the city authorities and the major political parties to support and facilitate the programme for its entire duration;
- suitable venues for cultural programmes and events;
- local institutions (schools, hospitals, courts, cultural centres), media and civil society organisations interested in participating in some of the programme modules;
- available human and financial resources for the programme²
- a successfully implemented intercultural strategy or projects in at least one of the following areas: public participation/citizenship, intercultural mediation, media diversity, intercultural education/competence, cultural policy.
- the existence of active, community-conscious local media and active civil society organisations will be a plus.

The selection process will take into account the need to establish a geographically balanced and compatible group of cities.

² At a minimum a part-time co-ordinator, secretariat and logistical assistance, resources for the expenses of all local participants (including local experts) in the programme. The availability of additional resources to cover a part of the non-local costs of the programme or to support the participation of other cities will be an advantage