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Promoting diversity through intercultural education and communication strategies

Current Affairs Committee
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Summary

The establishment of intercultural relations and the promotion of intercultural dialogue at local and regional levels frequently suffer from the reluctance and negative representations of the local population, resulting from prejudice and misconceptions most often based on rumours, stereotyping and misinformation. Diversity needs to be respected in contexts which are home to different cultural groups. Intercultural communication and education as tools for promoting harmonious coexistence correspond more to an approach based on what cultural groups have in common than to a view expressed in terms of conflict. The particular aims of this report are to identify the current problems and obstacles standing in the way of the promotion of respect for diversity at local and regional levels, to put forward some examples of good practice and strategies for working with local populations, and to recommend ways of improving intercultural communication and education.

The report recommends, *inter alia* the establishment of “local partnerships for diversity” with different stakeholders such as educational institutions, the media, civil society and the private sector, in order to produce an overall vision on this subject, develop local and regional policies promoting interculturalism, re-examine administrative functions through an “intercultural prism” and set up governance structures and mediation systems, as well as formulate communication and education strategies aimed at promoting diversity, raising public awareness of its advantages, developing competences in this field and fostering dialogue and interaction between cultural groups.

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

PROMOTING DIVERSITY THROUGH INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

RESOLUTION 375 (2014)²

1. The population of Europe is rapidly diversifying, and it is now the case that not only major cities, but also small municipalities and authorities more and more frequently have local populations of a very wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious origins. Ethnic minorities, foreign residents, migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and residents of migrant origin form a European population which is not only growing more rapidly than in the previous decades, but has also become an integral part of the fabric of our societies. They are now a major force, thanks to their economic, social and cultural contribution.

2. Their diversity represents a wide-ranging resource for innovation, growth and local economic, social and cultural development, making possible an opening up to other cultures and an inflow of new knowledge, methodologies, skills and ideas which increase a community's creativity and make it better able to face up to new situations, crises and challenges. In the cultural sphere, diversity is a source of enrichment which is perceptible in literature, films, the arts, sport, cookery and fashion, and in many other forms of expression and types of activity. That creativity is also a source of job creation, attracting industries and firms in search of innovative ideas.

3. Thus the paradigm for society-building in Europe has changed. Whereas, in the past, we sought to achieve social cohesion on the basis of homogeneity, we now find ourselves in an intercultural society. The Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe entitled "Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe"³, identifies European diversity as the main challenge facing modern democracy. That same report highlights the crucial role played by local and regional authorities in responding effectively, as well as their role in building harmonious intercultural relations between the different segments of the population.

4. When it comes to accepting cultural diversity as an enriching factor, yet there is still a degree of resistance and reluctance among the local population, fuelled by prejudice and misconceptions based on rumours, stereotyping and misinformation. That prejudice, often stemming from ignorance of other cultures, continues to affect the way in which people regard others. That resistance also derives from a more subjective and unconscious perception that the concept of cultural diversity is linked to that of the "foreign", "immigrant" or "minority" culture constituting a threat to the majority culture. Ignorance of the benefits of diversity is thus a major obstacle to intercultural action.

5. The Congress is certain that the diversity and cultural heritage of Europe's populations represent two of the main assets at the disposal of local and regional authorities, and that these authorities can contribute to changing people's perceptions, bringing about a better understanding of other cultures, raising awareness of the advantages of diversity and approaching diversity in a context of interaction between different local groups. That work must include the implementation of strategies on intercultural education for the population and the training of public officials in intercultural skills, as well as effective strategies for making local residents aware of the assets of diversity. In this context, new information and communication technologies now, more than ever, provide a huge "area of knowledge" which could be an excellent tool for learning about diversity.

6. The Congress is also sure that it is necessary, in order to promote the benefits of diversity, to develop policies encompassing all social, ethnic and cultural groups. In this context, the Congress reaffirms the relevance of its Resolutions 280 (2009) on "Intercultural cities", 323 (2011) on "Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level" and 332 (2011) on "Education for democratic citizenship – tools for cities", as well as of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council

² Debated and adopted by the Congress on 15 October 2014, 2nd sitting (see Document CG (27)6FINAL, explanatory memorandum), rapporteure: Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI, France (L, SOC).

³ "Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe", Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe, © Council of Europe, May 2011.

of Europe on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education.⁴

7. The Congress notes the work under way within the Council of Europe to draft a recommendation to member states on intercultural integration, and awaits with interest its adoption by the Committee of Ministers, in the firm belief that its implementation will also contribute to local and regional action in this sphere.

8. The Congress also notes two resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly: Resolution 1972 (2014) on “Migrants: ensuring they are a benefit for European host societies” and Resolution 2005 (2014) on “Identities and diversity within intercultural societies”, which emphasise the important role of local and regional authorities in the building of an intercultural society.

9. In this respect, the Congress welcomes the initiatives already started at local and regional level, amongst them its own European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) and the Council of Europe programme on “Intercultural cities”, the Practical guide for applying the *Urban model of intercultural integration*⁵ produced in the frame of that programme, as well as associated projects such as: Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise Diversity Advantage (SPARDA), Communication for Integration (C4I) and Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration (DELI).

10. The Congress also refers to the project Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership (AMICALL) and to the action plan drawn up by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), as well as to numerous other campaigns and initiatives by authorities, such as the Cosmopolitan Strasbourg in France, the “anti-rumour” campaign in Barcelona and in other cities in Spain, as well as other “demystification campaigns”, *Radio Diversity* projects, and so on.

11. In this context, the Congress reiterates its call to both local and regional authorities, first made in Resolution 280 (2009) on “Intercultural cities”, to develop proper policies to promote interculturalism in their areas, making possible interaction and exchanges between the different local cultural groups, especially in respect of the design of employment, housing and leisure facilities, and particularly calls on them to express explicitly their common commitment in favour of an intercultural policy approach, and to set up intercultural awareness training activities for politicians and for key policy and front-line staff in public services.

12. The Congress emphasises the role played in this process by civil society (especially by associations of migrants and minorities, including Roma), youth organisations, the media, educational institutions, trade unions and the private sector (including migrants’ businesses), as well as the growing role of the new media and social networks.

13. In the light of the above, the Congress invites the local and regional authorities of Council of Europe member states to set up “local partnerships for diversity” – platforms for co-operation and coordination with the aforementioned stakeholders, in order to promote the advantages of diversity. The objectives of these platforms should be to:

a. produce a fact-based overall intercultural vision for their areas on the basis of research and the collection of targeted data;

b. formulate intercultural communication and education strategies of a general nature, with a view to promoting a consistent approach to diversity amongst the different local and regional authorities, raising public awareness of the advantages of diversity and deriving maximum benefit from it;

c. draw up action plans for the implementation of these strategies;

d. set up a system of intercultural mediation (“local intercultural mediator”) between the different cultural groups, with a sustainable budgetary allocation and stable employment conditions – either through qualified

⁴ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (May 2010)

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2010\)7&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2010)7&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679)

⁵ *The intercultural city step by step - Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration*, © Council of Europe, March 2013, ISBN 978-92-871-7818-3.

mediators or, preferably, by offering training in intercultural competences and mediation to the local and regional administrations and staff in public services.

14. The Congress *inter alia* invites local and regional authorities to make use of the Practical Guide for applying the *Urban model of intercultural integration* produced by the Intercultural cities on the basis of participating cities' experience, with a view to re-examining administrative functions through an "intercultural prism", particularly in respect of education, public areas, housing, public services and the authorities, and to setting up intercultural governance structures.

15. In particular, where intercultural communication and education are concerned, the Congress invites local and regional authorities to:

a. draw inspiration from a communication strategy prepared by the SPARDA project so as to establish a lasting intercultural dialogue within their areas, and also from the recommendations of the AMICALL project and from the action plan drawn up by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR);

b. set up training courses in intercultural skills for local and regional administrative departments, local and regional staff and social services staff, in order to raise their awareness of intercultural and diversity issues, the importance of which was also highlighted by the Congress in Resolution 362 (2013) on "Migrants' access to regional labour markets" and Resolution 358 (2013) on "Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities";

c. co-operate with educational institutions, including schools, higher education establishments and schools of journalism, to develop their curriculum and textbooks, as well as teacher-training courses intended to improve local minority groups' intercultural skills, vision of diversity and knowledge of cultures;

d. ensure that minority groups and migrants learn the local languages, and that new arrivals, in particular, with the help of their associations, are taught about the host country's culture as well as its local laws and traditions;

e. promote cultural exchanges, *inter alia* through twinning arrangements, with the cities of minority populations' countries of origin;

f. engage in structured co-operation with civil society, and particularly with youth organisations, with a view to promoting the teaching of diversity and the communication of diversity advantages;

g. co-operate with the media, and particularly with local and regional media, to improve professionals' intercultural understanding and capacities, to appeal to the sense of responsibility of journalists in the preparation of reports on diversity issues, and ensure that leading personalities of the city are able to act as spokespersons on intercultural issues;

h. make sure that information on diversity which is based on facts is disseminated through the media and civil society, as well as on local and regional administrative departments' own sites, taking advantage of the new information and communication technologies and social networks;

i. set up neighbourhood intercultural centres and organise activities involving the whole local population so as to make possible intercultural interaction and exchanges in such forms as festivals, celebrations and campaigns, giving a greater visibility to ethnic and cultural minorities;

j. encourage the commitment of cultural and arts institutions to the promotion of diversity, and provide support to cultural projects which highlight diversity;

k. communicate more about ethnocultural subjects and the history of immigration, and hold regular "critical discussions" on current issues and diversity-related matters, so as to deal with complex and sensitive issues with the participation of experts, representatives of the different cultural groups and other appropriate persons;

l. stop using the question of immigration as an instrument in local political discussions, and emphasise instead in politics and discussions about migratory movements the processes of mutual adaptation and migrant integration.

16. Lastly, the Congress invites local and regional authorities to develop network-based work, making more use of international networks to exchange information between local and regional administrative departments, and, in particular, join the “Intercultural cities” programme and the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), and play an active part in European Local Democracy Week.

17. The Congress instructs its Current Affairs Committee to continue to address questions related to the promotion of the advantages of cultural diversity and to ensure that the relevant good practices are disseminated to local and regional authorities, *inter alia* through their national and European associations.

18. The Congress also invites its Governance Committee to include in its work programme, as aspects of good local and regional governance, intercultural issues and the advantages of diversity.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY THROUGH INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

RECOMMENDATION 365 (2014)⁶

1. The population of Europe is rapidly diversifying, and it is now the case that not just major cities, but also small municipalities and authorities more and more frequently have local populations of a very wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious origins. Ethnic minorities, foreign residents, migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and residents of migrant origin form a European population which is not only growing more strongly than in the previous decades, but has also become an integral part of the fabric of our societies. They are now a major force, thanks to their economic, social and cultural contribution.

2. Their diversity represents a wide-ranging resource for innovation, growth and local economic, social and cultural development, making possible an opening up to other cultures and an inflow of new knowledge, methodologies, skills and ideas which increase a society's creativity and make it better able to face up to new situations, crises and challenges. In the cultural sphere, diversity is a source of enrichment which is perceptible in literature, films, the arts, sport, cookery and fashion, and in many forms of expression and types of activity. That creativity is also a source of job creation, attracting industries and firms in search of innovative ideas.

3. Thus the paradigm for society-building in Europe has changed. Whereas, in the past, we sought to achieve social cohesion on the basis of homogeneity, we now find ourselves in an intercultural society. The Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe entitled *Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*,⁷ identified European diversity as the main challenge facing modern democracy. That same report highlighted the crucial role played by local and regional authorities in responding effectively, as well as their role in building harmonious intercultural relations between the different population groups.

4. When it comes to accepting cultural diversity as an enriching factor, there is still a degree of resistance and reluctance among the local population, fuelled by prejudice and misconceptions based on rumours, stereotyping and misinformation. That prejudice, often stemming from ignorance of other cultures, continues to affect the way in which people regard others. That resistance also comes from a more subjective and unconscious perception that the concept of cultural diversity is linked to the idea of the "foreign", "immigrant" or "minority" culture constituting a threat to the majority culture. Ignorance of the benefits of diversity is thus a major obstacle to intercultural action.

5. The Congress is certain that the diversity and cultural heritage of populations represent two of the main assets of European societies, and that a precondition for a change in attitudes to diversity is a better knowledge of its advantages in both populations and authorities, necessitating the development of policies encompassing all social, ethnic and cultural groups and an educational effort based on intercultural communication and teaching.

6. In this respect, the Congress reaffirms the relevance of its Recommendations 261 (2009) on "Intercultural cities", 304 (2011) on "Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level", 347 (2013) on "Migrants' access to regional labour markets" and 343 (2013) on "Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities", as well as of Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education⁸ and of Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 2005(2014) on "Identities and diversity within intercultural societies".

⁶ Debated and adopted by the Congress on 15 October 2014, 2nd sitting (see Document CG (27)6FINAL, explanatory memorandum), rapporteur: Nawel RAFIK-ELMRINI, France (L, SOC).

⁷ *Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*, Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe, © Council of Europe, May 2011.

⁸ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (May 2010)

[https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec\(2010\)7&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679](https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?Ref=CM/Rec(2010)7&Language=lanEnglish&Ver=original&Site=Congress&BackColorInternet=e0cee1&BackColorIntranet=e0cee1&BackColorLogged=FFC679)

7. The Congress notes the work under way within the Council of Europe to draft a recommendation to member states on intercultural integration, and awaits with interest its adoption by the Committee of Ministers, in the firm belief that its implementation will also contribute to local and regional action in this sphere.

8. In this context, the Congress draws the attention of the Committee of Ministers to the initiatives already started at local and regional level, amongst them its own European Local Democracy Week (ELDW) and the Council of Europe programme on “Intercultural cities”, the Practical guide for applying the *Urban model of intercultural integration*⁹ produced in the frame of that programme, as well as associated projects such as: Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise Diversity Advantage (SPARDA), Communication for Integration (C4I) and Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration (DELI).

9. The Congress also refers to the project Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership (AMICALL) and to the action plan drawn up by the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), as well as to numerous other campaigns and initiatives by authorities, such as the Cosmopolitan Strasbourg in France, the “anti-rumour” campaign in Barcelona and in other cities in Spain, as well as other “demystification campaigns”, Radio Diversity projects, and so on.

10. In the light of the foregoing, the Congress asks the Committee of Ministers to adopt as soon as possible the recommendation to member states on intercultural integration, and to invite the member states of the Council of Europe to:

a. produce an overall intercultural vision based on the experience of, and with a contribution from, the authorities;

b. formulate intercultural communication and education strategies of a general nature, with a view to promoting a consistent approach to diversity amongst the different government structures and the different levels of governance, and to raise society’s awareness of the advantages of diversity in order to derive maximum benefit from it;

c. to develop the curriculum, textbooks and teacher-training courses for schools, higher education establishments and schools of journalism, so as to improve intercultural skills and the vision of diversity;

d. set up a system of intercultural mediation at every level of governance, with a sustainable budgetary allocation;

e. stop using political discourse about immigration as an instrument, and emphasise instead in politics and discussions about migratory movements the processes of mutual adaptation and migrant integration;

f. encourage the commitment of cultural and arts institutions to the promotion of diversity, and provide support to cultural projects which highlight diversity;

g. establish partnerships for the introduction of programmes relating to diversity, inter alia with authorities, players from civil society, national media and businesses;

h. support local and regional action in this sphere and provide continuity of budgets for the introduction of relevant programmes on the ground;

i. work in general against negative stigma, taking account of different dimensions which affect social reality, both objective (work, housing, access to public services) and subjective (feelings of belonging).

⁹ *The intercultural city step by step - Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration*, © Council of Europe, March 2013, ISBN 978-92-871-7818-3.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY THROUGH INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. Introduction

1. The population of Europe is diversifying rapidly, not just in terms of national and ethnic origin, but also from the angle – where first and second generation immigrants are concerned – of length of residence, schooling and socio-economic situation. Society today is increasingly multi-ethnic, multicultural and multi-faith. Not just major cities, but also small municipalities and authorities more and more frequently have local populations comprising a very wide range of ethnic, cultural and religious origins. Minority groups, formerly located in “cosmopolitan” areas, are increasing in numbers and size and reaching the grassroots of our society.

2. Ethnic minorities, foreign residents, migrants, asylum-seekers, refugees and residents of migrant origin form a European population which is not only growing more rapidly than in the previous decades, but has also become an integral part of the fabric of our societies. They are now a major force, thanks to their economic, social and cultural contribution.

3. Their diversity represents a wide-ranging resource for innovation, growth and local economic, social and cultural development, making possible an opening up to other cultures and an inflow of new knowledge, methodologies, skills and ideas which increase a society’s creativity and make it better able to face up to new situations, crises and challenges. In the cultural sphere, diversity is a source of enrichment which is perceptible in literature, films, the arts, sport, cookery and fashion, and in many other ways. That creativity is also a source of job creation, attracting industries and firms in search of innovative ideas.

4. Thus the paradigm for society-building in Europe has changed. Whereas, in the past, we sought to achieve social cohesion and participation in decision making on the basis of homogeneity, we now find ourselves in an intercultural society. The Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe entitled *Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*,¹⁰ written at the Council of Europe’s request in 2011, identifies European diversity as the main challenge facing modern democracy. That same report highlights the crucial role played by local and regional authorities in responding effectively, as well as their role in building harmonious intercultural relations between the different population groups.

5. That building process depends on the promotion of interculturalism through the introduction of local intercultural policies and the creation of a truly intercultural environment in our cities and regions, based on tolerance and respect for diversity. In several resolutions adopted since 2009, the Congress has called on local and regional authorities to develop and implement intercultural policies with a view to building up an urban space where people can live together, one open to exchanges between different cultures. Such policies, fostering the commitment of all local residents irrespective of cultural origin, have beneficial effects for the community as a whole.

6. The main resolutions are Resolution 280 (2009) on “Intercultural cities”, Resolution 323 (2011) on “Meeting the challenge of inter-faith and intercultural tensions at local level”, Resolution 332 (2011) on “Education for democratic citizenship – tools for cities”, Resolution 362 (2013) on “Migrants’ access to regional labour markets” and Resolution 358 (2013) on “Integration through self-employment: promoting migrant entrepreneurship in European municipalities”. The important role of local and regional authorities in building an intercultural society was also highlighted in Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education¹¹ and in Resolution 1972 (2014) of the Parliamentary Assembly on “Migrants: ensuring they are a benefit for European host societies” and Resolution 375 (2014) on “Identities and diversity within intercultural societies”. Furthermore, work is currently under way at the Council of Europe

¹⁰ *Living together. Combining diversity and freedom in 21st-century Europe*, Report of the Group of Eminent Persons of the Council of Europe, © Council of Europe, May 2011.

¹¹ Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education (May 2010)

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to draw up a recommendation to member states on intercultural integration, the implementation of which, following their adoption by the Committee of Ministers will also contribute to local and regional action in this sphere.

7. Today, the establishment of intercultural relations often suffers from the local population's reluctance and negative representations. That reluctance is rooted in prejudice and inaccurate visions often based on stereotyping and misinformation. Ignorance of the benefits of diversity is thus a major obstacle to intercultural action.

8. Local and regional authorities can make a big contribution to changing people's perceptions, bringing about a better understanding of other cultures, raising awareness of the advantages of diversity and approaching diversity in a context of interaction between local groups. That work must include the implementation of strategies on intercultural education of the population and the training of public officials in intercultural skills, as well as effective strategies for making local residents aware of the assets of intercultural action. The diversity in today's Europe offers an excellent opportunity for such learning about cultures, while our cities and regions provide a practical context for interaction and dialogue between cultural groups.

9. Advocating intercultural communication may play a fundamental role in strengthening a country's democratic system and values and significantly reducing prejudice. A precondition of this work, furthermore, is the introduction of mediation.

10. The aim of this report is to examine the various ways of altering negative representations at local and regional levels. A particular objective is to identify the current problems and obstacles standing in the way of the promotion of respect for diversity at local and regional levels; another is to present examples of good practices and strategies for working with local populations, in co-operation with civil society and various other partners, with a view to publicising the advantages of diversity and altering perceptions about migrants, foreigners and minority groups; another is to recommend measures to improve communication in order to foster a better understanding of the advantages of diversity, act against negative representations and facilitate local and regional intercultural dialogue. This report is based in particular on the results of the SPARDA and AMICALL projects of the Council of Europe and European Union, and on the experience of networks such as Intercultural cities and the European Coalition of Cities against Racism.

11. Lastly, the discussions at the conferences on changing perceptions of cultural diversity among the local population and on the residence-based participation of foreign residents as a new reality of modern democracy, organised by the Congress and its partners in Ankara in June 2013 and in Strasbourg in November 2013, respectively, contributed to the preparation of this report.

2. Advantages of diversity

12. We aspire to a society in which cultural diversity is not regarded with fear as a threat, but is welcomed as a resource for innovation, creativity and growth, a society where public institutions, civil society organisations, businesses and media are open to diversity at every level of responsibility and possess the necessary skills to manage it positively, in order to realise the advantages of diversity.

13. Diversity is effectively an asset to society, and its potential social, cultural and economic benefits have been amply demonstrated by research – as in, for instance, the report on the *Evidence of the Economic and Social Advantages of Intercultural Cities Approach*.¹² Amongst those advantages are the interaction of different cultures, which greatly increases creativity by bringing new knowledge, methodologies, skills and ideas, making society more able to cope with new situations, crises and challenges. Each culture views the world through its own prism and sees situations in different ways. Consequently, if we have different ways of doing something available to us, we can compare them to find the most appropriate or choose the best from each of the methods. In the cultural sphere, diversity is a source of enrichment which is perceptible in literature, films, the arts, sport, cookery, fashion and many other areas.

¹² *Evidence of the Economic and Social Advantages of Intercultural Cities Approach*, by Kseniya Khovanova-Rubicondo and Dino Pinelli, 2012.

14. That creativity is also a source of job creation, attracting industries and firms which are in search of innovative ideas. Migrants represent 8.7% of the European population and make a major contribution to the labour market, filling the gaps where workers are in short supply, especially in the building trade, seasonal agriculture, tourism, health services and services to people in their homes. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), immigration generally has a positive effect on national budgets,¹³ and immigrants have made a major contribution to employment growth worldwide over the past 10 years.¹⁴ Migrant entrepreneurs employ 2.4% of the working population in OECD countries. In 2011, 52% of all new firms in German city Frankfurt were started up by migrants;¹⁵ the same year saw almost 35% of the total number of firms in French city Strasbourg being run by migrants.¹⁶ In 2009, migrants in France received €47.9 billion in social and other benefits, but made a contribution of €60.4 billion.¹⁷

15. In the economic sphere, immigration and cultural diversity are thus true assets. In effect, although immigration is often perceived as an economic burden, it actually plays a positive role in a country's economic dynamism.

16. In the current demographic situation in western countries, the system of financing retirement pensions has become a major issue. Indeed, the number of retired persons relative to the working population is bound to rise significantly in the years ahead because of a general decline in the birth rate in western countries. This reality jeopardises numerous pension systems. Hence the arrival of immigrants is beneficial in that it will bring down the average age of a country's working population and increase its number of workers. Immigration would thus offer a solution to countries faced with economic calamity as a result of the falling birth rate.

17. Cultural diversity is also a test of the efficiency of the democratic political system. Democracy by definition entails giving power to the people, listening to every opinion and position and enabling new members to join society, so it broadens the political vision and adds values or demands. If a system is capable of fully including migrants and minorities, it will be a successful democratic system.

18. Furthermore, cultural diversity may enable the individual to shape for him or herself a more complete, more rounded or more personally appropriate identity. Our identity is forged during the socialisation process. We have known, since Durkheim's pioneering work, that that process operates through regulation and integration, in other words, it refers to experience, learning and identification with cultural reference groups. Notwithstanding our cultural heritage and social origin, we can still opt to take new approaches and follow new practices. Multiplying experience which is a potential source of influence enables us to explore more ways of operating and to forge an identity which is closer to our aspirations. In order to play an active part, we need to expand our field of vision and knowledge. But that skill, which requires us to acquire an identity as a subject, may be worked on as we learn intercultural communication.

19. So cultural diversity enables us to build our own personalities as individuals able to act more freely. Having a single cultural system would trap individuals in a world view which might not be their own. People's perception of migrants and minorities must be changed. Combating prejudice and raising individuals' awareness of the need to rid themselves of it can only strengthen social cohesion. What is more, intercultural education and communication are necessary in order to teach people that differences exist, and to explain what these consist of. It is only when intercultural awareness is raised that populations will make the effort to understand and accept practices which had seemed to them to be incomprehensible, even reprehensible.

13 OECD, *International Migration Outlook 2013*, OECD publishing, pp. 160-161. Also see *The Economist*, Immigration and the public finances: Boon or burden?, 15 June 2013.

14 Jean-Christophe Dumont, 2013, The Impact of International Migration on Destination Countries, Presentation to the Office of the President of the General Assembly, United Nations, New York, 25 June 2013.

15 CLIP – Promoting ethnic entrepreneurship in European cities, © European Union, 2011, ISBN 978-92-897-1038-1.

16 Ibid.

17 Privot M., 2012, Time to value migrants' contribution, www.europeanvoice.com/.

3. The challenges and prospects of fostering intercultural citizenship

20. The local and regional authorities are a key and necessary part of the process of integrating migrants and minorities. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that integration takes place at local level before it occurs at a wider, national level. Migrants identify more easily with their towns and cities and that is especially true of second or third generation migrants. Local and regional authorities also have a genuine role to play because they are a part of people's everyday lives and everyday life is precisely the context in which diversity is experienced. It is at this level, where people work, meet, interact and live together, that the local authorities have the leeway to foster the inclusion of migrants and minorities.

21. Multicultural living is the norm for more and more individuals, who have to manage their own diverse cultural ties. This intensification of cultural diversity is resulting in new social and political challenges as it often gives rise to fear and rejection. Dialogue between cultures, which is the oldest and most fundamental form of democratic exchange, is an antidote to rejection and violence.

22. The Council of Europe's *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*¹⁸ states that our common future depends on our ability to safeguard and develop human rights, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, democracy and the rule of law, and to promote mutual understanding. It reasons that the intercultural approach offers a forward-looking model for managing cultural diversity. It proposes a conception based on individual human dignity (embracing our common humanity and common destiny). If there is a European identity to be realised, it will be based on shared fundamental values, respect for common heritage and cultural diversity as well as respect for the equal dignity of every individual.

23. Intercultural dialogue has a crucial role to play in preventing ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. However, to advance intercultural dialogue, the democratic governance of cultural diversity should be adapted in many respects; democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened; intercultural competences should be taught and learned; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level.

24. Clearly, promoting cultural diversity as a factor in the enrichment of our societies is still a major challenge for European democracies and much still has to be done to bring about lasting and far-reaching changes in mentalities. There is still too much prejudice, often deriving from ignorance, distorting people's views of others, while at the same time, the new information and communication technologies provide an unprecedented and vast "knowledge area", which could be the perfect tool to learn about diversity.

25. Cultural diversity in the broadest sense – respect for it and its integration into society as a factor for positive development – can be "learnt", just as citizenship can be learnt. Citizenship and interculturality form, as it were, the backbone of democracy. And in this respect as well, public life at local level must serve as a veritable school of democracy and one which everyone can attend.

26. There is still a degree of resistance and reluctance among the local population when it comes to accepting cultural diversity as an enriching factor, and there are at least two reasons for this.

27. Firstly, because when we look at things very objectively, people know very little about the contribution that this cultural diversity, stemming from migrations at various periods in European history, some recent, some further back in time, has made. There is therefore much educational work to be done about the origin of this cultural diversity, which means that we are all, to some extent or another, the products of a degree of diversity and that this has always enriched society as a whole. This ignorance about the roots of cultural diversity and its real benefits fundamentally inhibits the acceptance thereof and therefore poses a major obstacle to the establishment of full intercultural dialogue.

28. However, the resistance also comes from a more subjective and unconscious perception that the concept of cultural diversity is linked to that of the "foreign", "immigrant" or "minority" culture which "unsettles" the majority culture in the sense that it brings disorder to a well-established and settled culture, as if the expression of minority or merely different cultures were experienced as a form of threat to the individual or collective identity. It is also this fear, which although confused is persistent, that undermines attempts to live together.

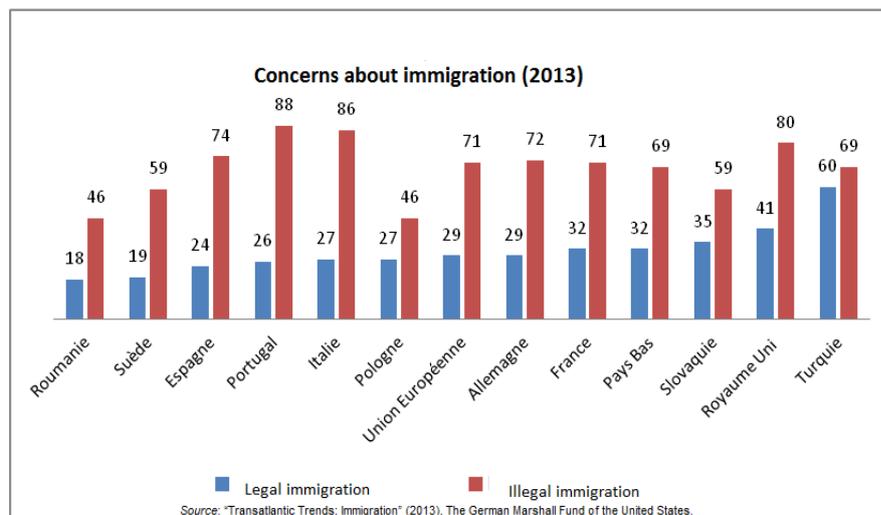
¹⁸ *White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*, Council of Europe, 2008.

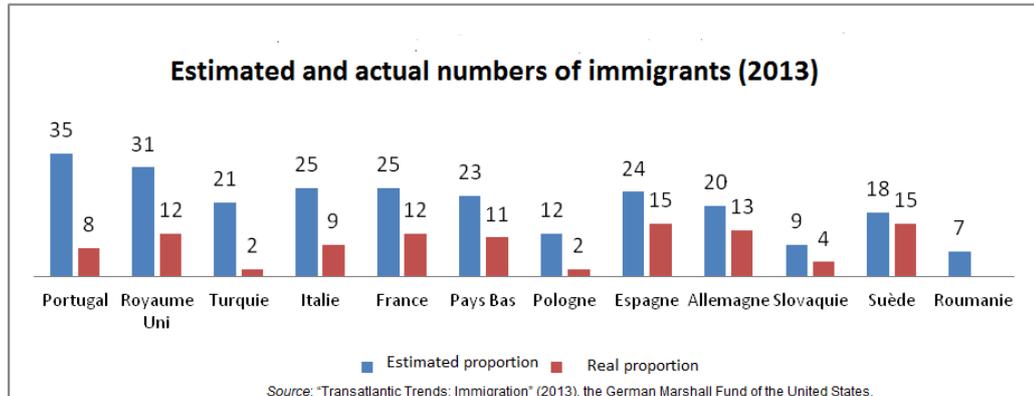
29. The subject of this report therefore is the conscious and sub-conscious perception of cultural diversity and the responses that local elected representatives can make to this, particularly through efficient and proactive education and communication measures and strategies.

A. Perceptions of diversity

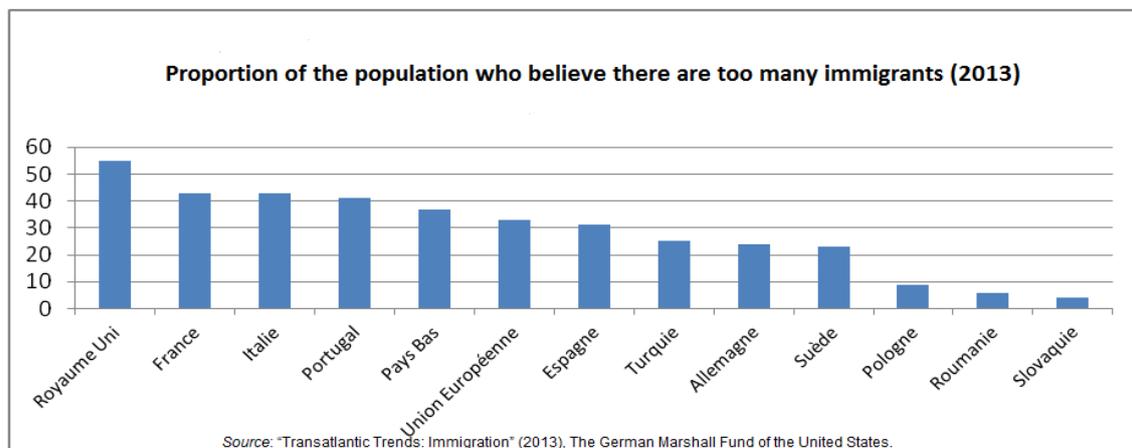
30. An IPSOS survey, conducted in 23 countries in 2011, shows that anxiety vis-à-vis migrants and minorities is closely linked to countries' economic difficulties. For example, in Russia, Belgium, Great Britain and Italy, the public response shows that foreigners are seen as something negative. In each of these countries, over two thirds of the inhabitants said that there were too many foreigners in their country (for example, in Russia, 77% of those questioned said that there were too many immigrants in the country).

31. According to the Transatlantic Trends Immigration Survey for 2013, 44% of Europeans questioned regard immigration as a problem rather than an opportunity for their country. This is the case for 64% of the population in the United Kingdom, 54% in Turkey, 52% in Slovakia and 50% in France. By contrast, 68% of the population in Sweden and 62% in Germany consider that immigration is more likely to be an opportunity than a problem. Differences arise according to whether the immigration under consideration is legal or illegal. People are more concerned about illegal immigration than legal immigration. With regard to legal migration, Europeans' concerns range from 18% in Romania to 60% in Turkey. As far as illegal migration is concerned, they range between 46% in Romania and 88% in Portugal.





32. However, it is worth analysing concerns about immigration in connection with the estimated and actual proportions of immigrants in countries' populations. It has to be said that the actual proportion is always lower than the estimated one. The largest gaps between the reality and the perception of immigrant numbers are seen in Portugal (actual proportion: 8%; estimated proportion: 35%), Turkey (actual: 2%; estimated: 21%), the United Kingdom (actual: 12%; estimated: 31%) and Italy (actual: 9%; estimated: 25%). By contrast, the gap between perception and reality is smaller in Sweden, Slovakia, Germany and Spain. These data show that attitudes with regard to diversity are not necessarily a response to its actual impact on society.



33. Another result of the survey may account for people's attitudes and outlook vis-à-vis diversity when it is looked at in terms of the impact of international migration. For instance, over 50% of the population of the United Kingdom believes that there are too many immigrants, followed by 40% of the population in France, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands.

B. Risks and opportunities for local and regional authorities

34. The local and regional schemes described in the following section, particularly the AMICALL and SPARDA research projects, highlight the obstacles and opportunities for the promotion of positive attitudes about cultural diversity.

35. For instance, local and regional authorities should take account of the following risks:

- In times of **economic recession**, negative attitudes about diversity grow and certain types of political rhetoric help to legitimise xenophobia and racism.
- When authorities believe that the integration process depends **exclusively on migrants**, no action is taken in the public communication sphere.
- Another risk is a **lack of co-ordination** between local or regional government departments or services.
- **Socio-economic segregation** between cultural groups can contribute to negative attitudes.
- The **media** can reinforce negative attitudes towards diversity if they give a higher profile to negative news than to positive stories.
- In some national contexts, a **lack of legislation** to combat discrimination and racism is another obstacle.

36. At the same time, local and regional authorities should take account of the following opportunities:

- By drawing on international experiments and their application in the field, local and regional governments can adopt a **more tolerant** political approach to diversity than that adopted by central government, which is often taken up with the business of controlling migration flows.
- At **local community** level, diversity is an integral part of everyday life. Schools, workplaces and neighbourhood associations provide meeting places.
- Activities set up through **women's networks** are opportunities to promote the benefits of diversity. Policies directed towards women can have a "domino effect" on their partners and children.
- **The media and new technologies** provide means of communication through which local and regional authorities can reach a wider audience. They can use the Internet to exchange good practices.
- Local and regional authorities have the opportunity to establish **partnerships with local community partners** to promote public participation in democracy and hence consolidate positive attitudes towards diversity.
- The existence of **international schemes**, such as the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) and the CLIP, SPARDA and AMICALL research projects, along with European Union directives or contributions from the Council of Europe such as those organised through the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008).

C. Communication and partnerships for diversity

37. In the local or regional community, partnerships can be established with companies, migrants' countries of origin, the media, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, individual members of the public, migrants' associations, churches, mosques and other places of worship, political parties, women's associations, schools and other teaching establishments. Various activities are possible in such cases and can be linked together depending on more or less objective factors, always with the goal of improving perceptions of diversity.

38. With this goal in mind, the discussions at the workshop on setting up local-government-based partnerships held in the context of the Congress's Communicating Diversity Conference of June 2013 highlighted the role of both conventional media and social networks such as Twitter and Facebook, whose use requires a certain amount of care, given that these communication tools are sometimes used to reinforce negative attitudes towards migrants and other cultural groups. In some cases, the media can act as mediators, especially if they feel responsible for the messages they pass on.

39. As to the conventional media, it seems that the national media is more inclined to disseminate alarmist messages whereas the local press conveys a more positive outlook. Another question is the influence of the media on public opinion and the potential to influence the media to change attitudes towards diversity. In this connection, the advantage of local journalists is that they are close to local communities whereas major media groups may be influenced through political parties.

40. Another strategy to influence the media is to make direct contact with journalists to give them an alternative view on diversity, so that this type of message can then be passed on to the whole population. Local and regional authorities also have the opportunity to communicate directly with the population, via Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or their own Internet site, particularly to mobilise social groups which are more likely to use this type of media, such as young people. Communication on diversity will not be achieved solely by circulating certain types of information on various cultural groups in the host society but also by disseminating alternative information, which treats diversity with respect, for instance when focusing on ideas about migrants' countries of origin. The important thing is that the public is given accurate factual information so that the image of diversity corresponds to the reality – and is linked with its impact in the contexts in question.

41. When this diversity stems from international migration, dialogue can be based on exchanges of information of all sorts between host communities and countries of origin. In addition to messages on diversity, programmes designed to improve socio-economic conditions can improve intercultural dialogue. Sport is another potential area of action, as is housing or public transport. Sometimes local and regional authorities will influence central government policy through ground-breaking practices, which may be replicated at national level.

42. Another question raised at the conference in June 2013 was that of partnership with businesses. In this context, it seems particularly interesting to work with companies founded by migrants, bearing in mind the relatively high proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises run by them. For instance, the little shops which have appeared in some areas of European cities make for new social dynamics in the areas in which they are established. In addition, migrant entrepreneurship helps to change the widespread negative view that “migrants take our jobs” to a more positive one that “migrants create job opportunities”. Similarly, to promote a more positive view of diversity, entry conditions for certain jobs, such as language requirements, should be altered so as not to pose obstacles to minority cultural groups.

43. In this way, local and regional authorities can establish several types of partnership, while adopting various means of communication, which will have the effect of conveying different types of message. In this connection, local and regional authorities must bear in mind that intercultural education and communication strategies help them to build and strengthen common feelings of affiliation centring on the benefits of diversity as an integral part of citizenship.

D. Intercultural education

44. Intercultural education is increasingly advocated by the European institutions as a means of developing individuals' intercultural competencies, which they need to avoid conflicts and be able to take full advantage of intercultural relations.

45. Intercultural competence is defined as the capacity to communicate effectively in intercultural situations and establish appropriate relationships in various cultural contexts, along four main lines:

- An open-minded attitude to others;
- Knowledge of oneself and one's culture;
- Acceptance that one's own standards and values are not superior to those of others;
- Knowledge of others' culture and ability to analyse.

46. Intercultural education at local and regional level must also focus on the development of intercultural competences within administrative departments and in educational institutions, and on raising public awareness about ethno-cultural issues, the history of immigration and religions, and the advantages of diversity.

47. The aim should be to set up courses of training in intercultural competences for local and regional authorities, local and regional government staff and the personnel of social services so as to raise their awareness of issues of interculturality and diversity. It should also be to co-operate with educational institutions including schools, higher education establishments and journalism schools to enhance courses, textbooks and teacher training programmes in order to improve intercultural competences, perceptions of diversity and knowledge of the cultures of local minority groups.

48. As this process of learning to accept difference and cultural diversity is an educational process, it should start at the earliest possible age. Building on the open-mindedness of young children, who are free from prejudice and stereotypes, school curricula, teaching practices and materials should be adapted to help to develop intercultural competences throughout primary, secondary and even higher education.

49. In addition to formal education, intercultural education should include informal learning and non-formal education and should be an asset for the whole of society, from young children to the most elderly. Teaching in the skills required for better understanding of others can also be offered in higher education courses or in further vocational training. Special training should be offered to municipal and regional employees because they are in direct contact with the population and are considered to represent society. Parental education is a crucial factor in children's personal development. In view of the paramount role that they play because children can be brought up to be aware of differences, it would be appropriate to devise programmes for parents and families to adopt this type of educational approach as early as possible.

50. Local and regional authorities should also set up free language courses for new arrivals. Promoting multilingualism in formal and non-formal education and developing policies and programmes to encourage intercultural youth activities, mobility and international experience would be another key means of strengthening intercultural competence.

51. Lastly, student exchange programmes, which enable students in higher education to study abroad, are the prime example of programmes which enhance intercultural competences through contact with and discovery of new cultural models.

52. Non-formal education could include activities organised by specialised partners such as migrants' associations or other non-governmental organisations. Such programmes would enable participants to develop intercultural competences by highlighting differences. The extra-curricular nature of such activities could make for a more relaxed form of learning, considered to be more enjoyable. Various bodies such as community centres could have a leading role in this sphere as the educational and intercultural project reflects their experience.

4. Changing perceptions of diversity: local and regional initiatives

A. Intercultural cities

53. The programme "Intercultural cities" was launched in 2008. In 2013, the Council of Europe published a book on the subject, entitled *The intercultural city step by step - Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration*,¹⁹ which presents the programme as it has been applied in the pilot cities²⁰, namely Berlin-Neukölln, Botkyrka, Copenhagen, Dublin, Geneva, Izhevsk, Limassol, Lisbon, London-Lewisham, Lublin, Lyon, Melitopol, Neuchâtel, Oslo, Patras, Pécs, Reggio Emilia, San Sebastian, Subotica and Tilburg.

54. To build intercultural cities, the guide recommends that an intercultural vision first be defined then that an intercultural strategy be prepared and applied. To achieve these objectives, the first and most important factor is political resolve. The question of political commitment should then be linked with that of a positive discourse on diversity, perceptions of which are shaped by language, symbols, themes, dates and other elements of the collective life of the community. To combat negative views of migrants, prejudices and stereotypes need to be identified so as to target activities intended to raise public awareness more effectively.

19 *The intercultural city step by step - Practical guide for applying the urban model of intercultural integration*, © Council of Europe, March 2013, ISBN 978-92-871-7631-8

20 At present, more than 70 cities participate in this project, including non-European cities as Montreal and Mexico city..http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/cities/default_EN.asp?

55. Initially, in order to mobilise citizens and resources around interculturality and set an intercultural process in motion, a change in mind-sets is needed – among both local elected representatives and civil society. The aim is to get people to take a new look at their city, through an “intercultural lens”. Each of the functions of the city (or the region) should be reviewed and new projects should be devised adopting this approach in the spheres of public policy, education, management of public spaces, social services, housing, neighbourhoods, policing, business and the economy, sport and the arts. Local and regional authorities should commit themselves to promoting mediation and conflict resolution, language learning, monitoring of intercultural developments (through polls, surveys, and results-based accountability programmes), promotion of intercultural competencies, training and awareness-raising about intercultural issues, reception of new arrivals and intercultural governance and citizenship.

56. The guide also advises authorities to pursue international policies to encourage links with countries of origin, particularly through exchange programmes with local and regional authorities in other countries.

B. SPARDA

57. In 2011-2012, the Council of Europe ran the SPARDA project on “Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realise the diversity advantage”, with the financial support of the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, of the European Union. The project related to public perceptions of diversity and its aim was to determine the extent to which local communication strategies can convince people of the benefits of diversity.

58. SPARDA showed us how cities communicate on the subject of diversity and helped us to make recommendations on communication strategies which support intercultural integration. The project also made it possible to establish a framework for the work of political leaders, municipal programme coordinators, members of the community and associations, to identify the factors that account for negative perceptions of migrants and bring in partners and set up activities which encourage dialogue and communication within the various communities concerned. The project’s recommendations are based on the results of its research (through surveys and discussion groups) and the results of communication campaigns in SPARDA’s seven partner cities. Over the eighteen months during which the project was run, a change in public perceptions about migration and diversity was observed. Opinion polls conducted before and after the communication campaigns revealed an increase in understanding and support for diversity among the local inhabitants.

59. Many different factors influence policies for the integration of migrants into their host society. The availability of work and services and knowledge of the host society’s language or languages and its culture have an impact on the capacity of migrants to integrate and function in the local community. However, the public view of diversity and migration is also one of the factors which determines integration policies and their outcome. Local integration strategies are often hampered by resistance from the community or affected by a low degree of commitment on the part of various parts of the community sectors when integration projects are implemented. An overestimation of the costs of international migration and ignorance about its benefits help to create a degree of confusion, which influences perceptions. People without their own yardsticks on issues of diversity, migration and integration or lacking in credible, balanced information are those who ask the most questions about the impact of diversity in society.

60. Working in partnership with local communities should make it possible to limit negative perceptions of migration and increase positive results in the area of integration. During the research project, the Council of Europe adopted a methodology based on the following six stages: an initial survey of perceptions to gauge attitudes vis-à-vis diversity and migration; communication and dialogue strategies in the cities; training on the media and diversity for local partners; working sessions with media professionals; a final survey on perceptions to assess changes in attitude; a final evaluation report to report on the quality of local campaigns and present recommendations. Under the SPARDA project, communication campaigns were conducted in the cities of Coimbra (Portugal), Dingli (Malta), Limassol (Cyprus), Lyon (France), Patras (Greece), Reggio Emilia (Italy) and Valencia PACTEM Nord (Spain).

C. AMICALL

61. In 2011-2012, the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, of the European Union, financed the AMICALL project on “Attitudes to Migrants, Communication and Local Leadership”. Research was conducted in the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany and Hungary. The main aim was to determine what role local and regional authorities play in communication on immigration issues. New strategies were then proposed for the communication of positive attitudes towards migrants and their integration at local and regional level.

62. According to the results of the AMICALL project, local and regional authorities understood the need for a form of strategic development which went further than ad hoc responses to controversial incidents or occasional projects. A lack of evaluation means that local and regional authorities are in constant debate where it comes to identifying clearly what the results and impact of their work are, but the research project highlighted several factors which influence their successes and failures:

- **Financial resources:** Fiscal austerity is an obstacle to the establishment and survival of programmes, which is compounded by the discretionary nature of integration policies in most countries, where they are too often regarded as a luxury which it is possible to do without.
- **Public debate:** The lack of political will at national level and the use of xenophobic rhetoric in public debate also has an impact on local and regional authorities’ room to manoeuvre, making it more difficult to set up certain activities. Local and regional authorities consider that the national media are often an obstacle to success whereas the local media most often play a positive role, and some local and regional authorities succeed in working together constructively with the local media.
- **The participation of certain leading figures and the commitment of individuals** are positive factors but the work that depends on these people becomes more vulnerable when unforeseen circumstances arise than work that depends on institutional prospects.
- **Legislative frameworks** are a key factor, and complex bureaucratic structures prevent efficient work, as do obstacles to co-operation between departments or a failure to include migrants in local and regional government staff.

63. According to a report by the ACSAR Foundation (2013), based in Spain, the immigrant population is especially targeted by the following stereotypes and false allegations: accusations of benefit fraud; the supposed negative impact of foreign workers on the labour market; the supposed negative impact of the children of immigrants in schools; alleged misuse of the health service; claims of inappropriate use of public spaces; supposed poor living standards and a negative impact on neighbourhoods, sometimes connected with perceptions of a rise in insecurity, crime and prostitution; an alleged reluctance to integrate; alleged abusive attitudes of immigrant men towards immigrant women or religious practices which are claimed to pose a threat to the host society.

64. When these prejudices and stereotypes are identified, an intercultural strategy will be prepared, which will focus on setting up steering and management bodies and taking stock of intercultural problems and challenges.

65. The local and regional authorities which took part in this project clearly expressed a desire to be able to learn about ways of communicating and influencing opinions on the subject of immigration, including platforms to pool educational resources both within and across national borders. In addition to setting up specific measures in various countries, AMICALL made it possible to analyse local and regional government practices from a comparative viewpoint. This is, in fact, a transnational project, the aim of which is to exchange good practices.

D. ECCAR

66. Another international experiment is the European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), set up as part of the International Coalition of Cities against Racism launched by UNESCO in March 2004. ECCAR itself was launched in Nuremberg (Germany) in December 2004 following the Fourth European Conference of Cities for Human Rights. Some 100 municipalities from 20 European countries have joined the coalition since its foundation. The aim was to establish a network of cities interested in exchanging experience to improve their policies to combat racism and all other forms of discrimination. ECCAR’s action plan is intended to establish undertakings to take practical action against racism in cities and is based on the following ten goals:

- **Greater vigilance against racism.** To set up a monitoring, vigilance and solidarity network against racism at city level.
- **Assessing racism and discrimination and monitoring municipal policies.** To initiate, or develop further the collection of data on racism and discrimination, establish achievable objectives and set common indicators in order to assess the impact of municipal policies.
- **Better support for the victims of racism and discrimination.** To support victims and contribute to strengthening their capacity to defend themselves against racism and discrimination.
- **More participation and better informed city-dwellers.** To ensure better information for city dwellers on their rights and obligations, on protection and legal options and on the penalties for racist acts or behaviour, by using a participatory approach, notably through consultations with service users and service providers.
- **The city as an active supporter of equal opportunity practices.** To facilitate equal opportunities employment practices and support for diversity in the labour market by exercising the existing discretionary powers of the city authority.
- **The city as an equal opportunities employer and service provider.** The city commits itself to be an equal opportunities employer and equitable service provider, and to engage in monitoring, training and development to achieve this objective.
- **Fair access to housing.** To take active steps to strengthen policies against housing discrimination within the city.
- **Challenging racism and discrimination through education.** To strengthen measures against discrimination in access to, and enjoyment of, all forms of education; and to promote the provision of education in mutual tolerance and understanding, and intercultural dialogue.
- **Promoting cultural diversity.** To ensure fair representation and promotion for the diverse range of cultural expression and heritage of city dwellers in the cultural programmes, collective memory and public space of the city authority and promote interculturality in city life.
- **Hate crimes and conflict management.** To support or establish mechanisms for dealing with hate crimes and conflict management.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

67. The diversity and cultural heritage of Europe's populations represent one of the main assets of local and regional authorities. A precondition for a change in attitudes to diversity is a better knowledge of its advantages in both populations and authorities, necessitating the development of policies encompassing all social, ethnic and cultural groups and an educational effort based on intercultural communication and teaching.

68. The rapporteur recommends that the Congress invite the local and regional authorities to set up "local partnerships for diversity" – platforms for co-operation and co-ordination to promote the advantages of diversity with local and regional stakeholders such as civil society (especially migrants' and minorities', including Roma, associations), youth organisations, the media, educational institutions, trade unions and the private sector (including migrants' businesses). The objectives of these partnerships should be to:

- a. produce an overall intercultural vision for their areas on the basis of research and the collection of targeted data, enabling an approach to be devised that is based on facts;
- b. formulate intercultural communication and education strategies of a general nature, with a view to promoting a consistent approach to diversity amongst the different local and regional authority sectors, raising public awareness of the advantages of diversity and deriving maximum benefit from it;
- c. draw up action plans for the implementation of those strategies;
- d. set up a system of intercultural mediation ("local intercultural mediator") between the different cultural groups, either through qualified mediators or, preferably, by offering training in intercultural competences and mediation to the local and regional administrations and staff in public services.

69. The rapporteur makes a number of recommendations to the local and regional authorities and national governments, which are set out in the draft resolution and recommendation.