THE CONGRESS
OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Resolution 281 (2009)[1] Equality and diversity in local authority employment and service provision

1. Early, full and effective access to jobs and basic services is essential to ensure the smooth integration of migrants into their host society and to encourage a sense of belonging and shared citizenship as well as good community relations.

2. Local authorities have the power to make a real difference in this respect since not only are they major employers, they also have responsibility for the services most significant in migrant integration, including education, housing and, in some cases, health care. Moreover, they have greater control over their own personnel policy and services than over other levers that may promote integration.

3. This key role of local stakeholders led the CLIP Network (Cities for Local Integration Policy), of which the Congress is a founding member, to choose, for its second research focus, to seek to identify existing successful approaches to the employment of migrants and provision of services to them by local authorities.

4. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe feels strongly that local authorities should give greater priority to practices which enhance the employment of migrants and address the barriers migrants may face in access to their services.

5. The Congress therefore gives its wholehearted support to the findings of the CLIP Network in this field and calls on local authorities to:

a. review their range of objectives in relation to the employment of migrants and to public service delivery and put in place both the leadership and accountability system that will ensure transversal consistency in delivery of those objectives;

b. reinforce anti-discrimination procedures with steps to promote integration by:

i. examining whether migrants and people of migrant background are able to effectively access municipal jobs and services and identifying any barriers that may be preventing them from doing so;

ii. identifying steps that could be taken to overcome those barriers, to enable migrants to compete for jobs (and promotion) on an equal basis with other residents and to be able to access services that meet their needs;

c. implement effective monitoring and accountability of their employment and service delivery goals by:

i. reviewing whether they have sufficient data to be able to monitor their progress and, where they do not, considering whether there are additional forms of cost-effective data collection which could be put in place uniformly across the administration;

ii. establishing criteria for measuring the extent of implementation and evaluating the impact of the measures they have undertaken;

iii. considering additional forms of internal accountability for departments and staff, as well as external evaluation, in order to ensure feedback on performance and the opportunity to take regular notice of lessons learnt;

d. ensure egalitarian recruitment procedures by:

i. reviewing the eligibility of migrants for jobs across their administration, and considering whether the criteria that apply to all applicants but disproportionately disadvantage migrants, such as the level of language proficiency, are necessary in all cases;

ii. raising with the appropriate national authority any difficulties experienced in relation to recognition of qualifications with a view to establishing a system that is able to confirm comparability of qualifications within a reasonable time scale;

iii. considering the relevance of a proactive approach to draw the attention of migrants to job opportunities and, where appropriate, piloting such approaches within their own recruitment strategy;

e. ensure a welcoming and conducive work environment for migrant employees by assessing the current environment and considering any adaptations which would be likely to encourage migrants to apply for jobs or remain in the city's employment;

f. achieve the maximum benefit from a culturally diverse, effectively managed workforce by:

i. ensuring that staff are trained to comply with the law and ensure equality of opportunity;

ii. providing training on intercultural awareness so that staff feel confident working with and providing services to people of differing cultures and faiths;

iii. recognising intercultural experience as a job competency in the recruitment process;

iv. ensuring that migrant staff are not restricted to specialist posts working with migrants but can contribute to improving standards across the mainstream services that are delivered to a diverse local population;

g. ensure that external providers fulfil the local authority's employment and service provision objectives by building diversity and equality standards into their contracts with all service providers and organisations to which they provide funds;

h. extend consultation with and participation of migrants when new policy approaches and service reforms are developed in order to anticipate possible negative impacts and to identify early on opportunities to promote equality;

i. ensure their equality and diversity aims are reflected in any local strategic partnership agreements entered into with private and voluntary sector service providers. Cities which have not currently set up such an arrangement should consider whether their objectives could be furthered by working more closely with pertinent organisations at the local level;

j. ensure that all new migrants can access advice, information and language tuition by reviewing, in consultation with migrants, employers, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relevant unions, whether the needs of newcomers are being met and considering ways in which, either through integration of the diverse needs of migrants into mainstreamed general services or through targeted provision for new migrants, they can broaden the services available and migrants' awareness of them;

k. sidestep potential public hostility and resistance from staff by developing an effective public communication strategy to raise awareness of the rationale behind their diversity policies and take steps to refute misinformation about migrants' access to services where these are a potential source of community tensions.

6. The Congress reaffirms its commitment to participation in the CLIP Network and the dissemination of its examples of good practice and conclusions and to this end mandates its Committee on Social Cohesion to continue to carry out this work.

---

1. Debated and approved by the Chamber of Local Authorities on 4 March 2009 and adopted by the Congress on 5 March 2009, 3rd Sitting (see Document CPL(16)2REP, explanatory memorandum, rapporteur: E. Maurer (Switzerland, L, SOC)).

Council of Europe, F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
http://www.coe.int/congress

COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Tel.: + 33 (0) 3 88 41 21 10
Fax: + 33 (0) 3 88 41 27 51/+ 33 (0) 3 88 41 37 47