

OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Conference

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Working session 11 - Humanitarian issues and other commitments

Contribution of the Council of Europe

Language education policy

An increasing number of countries now require adult migrants to demonstrate proficiency in the language of the host country before granting residence or work permits or citizenship.

The level of proficiency required is usually based on the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#) (CEFR) – designed for foreign languages - and a language test may be obligatory. The approach to testing varies and there is a considerable difference in the levels of proficiency required. Transparency, human rights considerations and quality in assessment and training are issues addressed by the Council of Europe.

A. Reference Points

Council of Europe texts

Since 1968 the Committee of Ministers has developed Conventions for ratification by member states and also addressed a number of recommendations and resolutions to the Council of Europe member states, related to the integration and status of migrants. The Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) also developed a number of recommendations and resolutions. A [compilation](#) of relevant extracts of official texts related to language aspects is available online.

Surveys among member states

Two surveys (2008 – 2010) were carried out in Council of Europe member states on language requirements (tests and training). Results showed considerable differences in approach to language provision and, where it exists, to testing for residence or citizenship purposes, but also an increasing number of countries developing language requirements.

B. Networking and Conferences

Two intergovernmental conferences were organised in 2008 ("[The Linguistic integration of adult migrants](#)") and 2010 ([The Linguistic Integration of Adult Migrants : Ways of](#)

evaluating policy and practice”) in co-operation with the European Committee on Migration. They provided a forum for discussion and sharing experiences on key issues relating to language policy for the linguistic integration of adult migrants, in particular language requirements for residence and citizenship, quality in language training, testing and alternative approaches to assessment. Reports are available online.

C. Materials

The Council of Europe has produced a number of reference texts to assist authorities in the development of policies based on shared values – human rights, transparency and coherence. The major ones are the following:

Concept Papers:

- [*The role of languages in policies for the integration of adult migrants*](#)
- [*Adult migrant integration policies: Principles and implementation*](#),

Thematic Studies :

- [*The ‘Common European Framework of Reference for Languages’ and the development of policies for the integration of adult migrants*](#)
- [*Quality assurance in the provision of language education and training for adult migrants – Guidelines and options*](#)
- [*Language tests for social cohesion and citizenship – an outline for policy makers*](#)
- [*Tailoring language provision and requirements to the needs and capacities of adult migrants*](#)

Case Studies

- [*Responding to the language needs of adult refugees in Ireland: an alternative approach to teaching and assessment*](#)
- [*The role of literacy in the acculturation process of migrants*](#)
- [*Language Learning in the Context of Migration and Integration – Challenges and Options for Adult Learners*](#)
- [*Education: Tailor-made or one-size-fits-all? A project commissioned by the Nederlandse Taalunie*](#)
- [*Living together in diversity - Linguistic integration in Flanders*](#)

D. Inter-institutional Co-operation

Co-operation with the European Commission is effective and cross-participation at major events has been ensured. Work has been carried out with a number of related NGOs, with some national ministries and organisations related to migration.

Further information is available at the following address: www.coe.int/lang.

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Intercultural Cities: governance and policies for diverse communities

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 and intercultural dialogue.

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 in partnership with the European Commission. 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's starting point is the belief that 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 programme studies 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.

A. Methodological tools

In order to guide cities in the process of understanding the concept of interculturalism, its impact of the policies and actions of the city, and the processes which could lead to the building of a vision for intercultural city development, shared by all main stakeholders, the following methodological tools have been prepared:

- [A Concept Paper](#) explaining the notion of intercultural city and processes which need to be put in place in order to mobilise a range of stakeholders and actors in the city in favour of intercultural vision- and city-building.
- [A Resource pack](#) presenting a variety of conceptual and practical resources related to intercultural mapping, vision building, leadership, strategy development, project planning, consultation and participation, ensuring sustainability, progress review and learning.
- [A Policy assessment grid](#) as a practical tool for intercultural policy development in cities.
- [A media diversity concept](#) has been prepared proposing a set of activities (media monitoring, diversity training, seminars) for journalists in pilot cities, to be carried out by the Media Diversity Institute, if the cities chose to do so, at their own cost.

- [Intercultural city index](#)

The Index is a commonly-adopted format for defining and measuring city performance in relation to intercultural integration of migrants and minorities. This Index is not intended to be a pure scientific tool. It would be impossible to reduce the essence of interculturality to a few measurements, or to establish clear-cut relationships of cause and effect between policies and actions and outcomes in something so subjective. The intercultural city approach is not a science but a general set of principles and a way of thinking. Thus, the Intercultural City Index aims to highlight a few common facts and phenomena - or what we might describe as crucial “acupuncture” points, - which suggest the level of interculturality of a city, and which enable the beginning of a discussion whereby one city can be compared with another. However, it is not the intention of the project to use the Index for the crude ‘ranking’ of cities. Rather it should be used as spur to greater self-reflection, learning and improvement.

B. [Activities](#)

- [Diagnostic expert visits](#)

Two expert visits take place in each member city in order to carry out an in-depth assessment, based on interviews and group discussions with various stakeholders and establish intercultural profiles as a reference and a point of departure for activities in the context of the programme.

A representative of another pilot city is also involved in the visits (peer review/mentoring principle) to learn and provide feedback and advice. In addition to experts, representatives of other pilot cities took part in the policy assessment visits in order to provide insights, advice and support for fellow cities with similar profiles and concerns, as well as learn from the experience of the host city (city-to-city mentoring). The expert reports are used by cities as a basis for the development of their intercultural vision and strategy.

- [Thematic Events](#)

Thematic events have been organised in order to further consolidate the conceptual and methodological basis of the programme and identify policy guidelines in specific areas. The events have involved relevant representatives of pilot cities – policy makers and professionals from the area concerned, experts and if appropriate representatives of third cities.

Since the start of the programme in 2008, 36 thematic events (workshops, conferences) and several visits have been organised. Some of the thematic events serve to discuss and validate key policy documents such as the guidelines on intercultural governance and citizenship, the [key principles and approaches for intercultural governance](#) the [report on cultural policy in the intercultural city](#). Some of the thematic events involve journalists in media production sessions.

- [Intercultural integration model](#)

The results of the pilot phase of Intercultural cities have been presented in a publication which introduces a new model of local-level governance and policy in the age of diversity: the model of intercultural integration.

This model has been built on the basis of experiences in real-life cities and with their active participation. City-to-city mentoring and learning have played a key role in this process.

This volume explains what intercultural integration means in practice: how it affects policies, governance and citizenship, public discourse, media relations, public services, and the urban environment. It reviews the processes which facilitate the development of intercultural strategies and presents a wide range of examples, including the intercultural profiles of 21 member cities across Europe.

Intercultural integration adds another dimension to the management of culturally diverse populations, compared to previous models, in particular multiculturalism. In addition to non-discrimination, equal opportunities and cultural rights, interculturalism focuses on building trust and cohesion by encouraging interaction and mixing between cultural groups in the public realm and encouraging a positive discourse and attitude to diversity within the community.

It also focuses on improving the efficiency of public services by making them more culturally sensitive and adapted to the needs of diverse users, and on the need for specific services such as those dealing with intercultural mediation and conflict prevention.

Following the pilot phase (2008-2010), an implementation phase began in 2011, with a larger network of cities. National city networks have been set up in Italy, Spain and Ukraine.

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Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realise the diversity advantage (SPARDA)

Shaping perceptions and attitudes to realise the diversity advantage (SPARDA), a joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Union, builds upon previous work of the Council of Europe in the field of integration and intercultural dialogue, in particular the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the Intercultural cities EU / CoE joint action and the *Speak out against discrimination* Campaign.

Successful integration of migrants depends strongly on the perceptions of the host community of migrants and ethno-cultural diversity. Such perceptions are a product of a complex web of factors and circumstances but to a certain extent they can be influenced by the way opinion leaders, in particular political leaders and media, address such issues. While many cities and organisations around Europe make significant effort to shape public perceptions of migration and diversity in a balanced way, here is a lack of systematic evidence of the impact of such actions; neither there is a comprehensive assessment of communication and awareness strategies which deliver best results.

SPARDA seeks to generate evidence to support the postulate that negative perceptions and attitudes towards migrants/ diversity are not a fatality and that cities can put in place successful strategies to manage attitudes in a positive way. It also seeks to identify the most effective strategies and key factors of success.

The partners of SPARDA are: City of Coimbra (Portugal), City of Had-Dingly (Malta), City of Limassol (Cyprus), City of Patras (Greece), City of Reggio Emilia with the Intercultural Centre Mondoinsieme as associate partner (Italy), Institut des Médias / ISCPA, as partner for covering an arrondissement of Lyon (France) and PACTEM Nord, grouping of 23 cities, as partner for covering the north area of Valencia (Spain).

The project involves the following main actions in each participating city:

- A baseline public perceptions survey to register attitudes to diversity and migration implemented by an independent polling agency before the information and communication strategies:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/sparda/SPARDA_report2011.pdf)
- Implementation of communication and dialogue strategies conceived and developed by partners. These strategies are specific to each partner. They include different combinations of actions such as official statements, diversity celebration events, awards, cultural events, TV spots, debates and campaigns.
- Media and Diversity training for public officials and media professionals; media production sessions with mixed teams (mainstream and community media); these 2-Day workshops (1 per city) give key elements to define communication and dialogue strategies by better taking into account diversity issues.
- Media Cross-production Sessions – Involving local mainstream media professionals as well as their colleagues of the diversity & minority media sector, these 3-Day sessions (1 per city) aim at delivering media production content reflecting balanced and open-minded approach on migration and diversity as well as integration and community cohesion,
- Control public perceptions survey to register possible shifts in public perceptions and attitudes. The project methodology will be fine-tuned to identify which strategies have had the greatest impact, together with key factors of success.

The project deliverables will involve a survey methodology, reports from perception surveys; communication and dialogue strategies and implementation plans, detailed evaluations of each action of the strategies; reports and visibility material from events included in the strategies; an overall reports; a web site and a publication of the results.

Such evidence would be an important argument to encourage more cities in the future to adopt the model of intercultural integration and sustain intercultural commitment and leadership among those who are already engaged.

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<http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/sparda>

Information system on cultural diversity and good practices information on intercultural dialogue and CultureWatchEurope Initiative

Since 1998, the Council of Europe has developed a web-based cultural policy information and monitoring system (Compendium available at <http://www.culturalpolicies.net> and comprising 42 cultural policy country profiles, which also provides a *database of good practices* on intercultural dialogue. Information presented relates to projects undertaken within individual countries to facilitate dialogue among the different cultural groups living there. They are initiated on the national, regional or local level and range from artistic productions to training programmes, awards, festivals, public events, media productions etc.

A new thematic space dealing with “Cultural Rights and Ethics” is being introduced as of 2009 to the system. It will discuss ethical questions and provide links to existing Compendium sections dealing with cultural rights-related issues.

Another focus of the online system is on diversity policies. Cultural diversity is understood as:

- the pluralistic ethno-cultural linguistic identity and origin of cultural creators, producers, distributors and audiences;
- a diversity of artistic and other cultural content which diverse audiences can have access to through the media or other distribution channels;
- the diversity of actors which are involved in decision-making, regulating and /or funding creators and their works.

Since the beginning of the *Compendium* project, cultural diversity as a component of cultural policy making has been treated as a transversal issue with references to relevant sub-sections of *Compendium* country profiles, such as cultural minority groups, language diversity, media pluralism and artistic creativity/content production. [Comparative overviews](#) have also been compiled. Such information assists national governments and NGOs in their efforts to begin monitoring cultural policies and measures which support cultural diversity, as promoted in the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. The Compendium system inspires similar information databases that are currently under development in other world regions and building a comprehensive world-level cultural policy information system.

This work is being extended in 2011 through the CultureWatchEurope initiative, which is to enhance cultural governance and policy making Europe-wide, in a human rights driven perspective and in collaboration with civil society partners. Specifically, CultureWatchEurope:

- generates and follows-up policy standards and instruments in the culture and heritage sectors;
- provides online information through joint access to the Council of Europe’s electronic information tools on cultural policy, heritage and the audiovisual sector;
- enables rapid consultation of key cultural data;
- offers a platform for creative exchange and synergy between governments, cultural practitioners and civil society; and

- contributes to prospective analysis and forward thinking.

Major CultureWatchEurope conferences dealt with the themes of “Culture and development 20 years after the fall of communism” (2009), “Culture and the policies of change” (2010) and “Cultural governance: from challenges to changes” (Nov. 2011).

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<http://www.culturalpolicies.net>

Permanent information system on cultural heritage and follow-up mechanism for heritage conventions

The Herein information system which includes a database and different on-line services allows member States of the Council of Europe as well as professionals and associations to develop together a new concept of heritage, highlighting the practical use and added value of cultural goods inspired by the principles of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) and contributing to democratic and sustainable development of our regions based on citizen participation and cohesion.

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<http://www.european-heritage.net>

Public awareness and participation in European culture and heritage

This programme aims to create a sense in Europeans that their diverse cultural achievements represent a rich common heritage. Through actions that focus on promoting knowledge of, and participation in, highly visible, high quality experiences, it invites Europeans to continue to contribute to the development of a shared cultural identity.

The activities organised in this framework are the European Heritage Days (a joint action with the European Union), the Cultural Routes, educational activities for mutual understanding through heritage and cross-border activities to link the contribution of heritage education to intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention.

The aim is not only to mobilise European citizens to visit a variety of sites, monuments and works of art, but in so doing to meet other Europeans, and make travel and tourism an intercultural (and in some cases inter-religious) experience.

The European Heritage Days (EHD's) are an annual event in the 50 States parties to the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention. Over the course of weekends throughout September, the programme makes freely accessible, monuments and sites not usually open to the general public. The EHD's programme includes an annual European Heritage Forum. This event brings together heritage specialists to debate and assess how heritage can contribute to the construction of a democratic European cultural community. In 2010, the 25th anniversary of the European Heritage Days, the Forum contributed, from the culture and heritage angle, to the European Year for

Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. In 2011, the Forum theme will be “Value the Heritage! European Heritage and Economic Development”. It will provide a timely opportunity to debate how to properly balance economic and cultural values in the development of a sustainable European cultural heritage sector. The theme, which engages with the place and value of civil society and voluntary actions in sustaining Heritage, will be a contribution to the 2011 European Year of Volunteering.

Another flagship project in this respect is the European Route of Roma Culture and Heritage which is being developed. Roma culture is an integral part of Europe’s cultural landscape and has made an important contribution to the continent’s diverse heritage but this fact is seldom recognised. Prejudice, indifference and hostility against Roma thrive on the lack of knowledge about Roma culture and first-hand encounters with the Roma community. These negative attitudes are a major obstacle to the success of Roma inclusion policies. The Route of Roma Culture and Heritage will help to familiarise the public with Roma culture by providing opportunities for direct encounters with Roma communities and artists, in Roma settlements or in the context of creative and educational events. The Route will originally link places where founding organisations are based, and will eventually grow as new partners join in. The Route will also seek to empower Roma themselves to be presenters (“ambassadors”) of their own culture by face-to-face encounters and through media. The Route is open for partnership with organisations throughout Europe.

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