



## Intercultural cities

Joint action of the Council of Europe and of the European Commission



## Reggio-Emilia: :Results of the Intercultural Cities Index

Date: 8 December 2010

A comparison between 12 cities

### Introduction

The Intercultural Cities programme is a joint initiative between the Council of Europe and the European Commission. It seeks to explore the potential of an intercultural approach to integration in communities with culturally diverse populations. The cities participating in the programme are reviewing their governance, policies, discourse and practices from an intercultural point of view. In the past, this review has taken the form of narrative reports and city profiles – a form which is rich in content and detail. However, it is relatively weak as a tool to monitor and communicate progress. The new intercultural city index has been designed as a new benchmarking tool for the cities taking part in the pilot phase of the programme as well as future participants.

As of today 12 cities have undergone their intercultural policies analysis using the Intercultural City Index: Oslo (*Norway*), Neukölln (*Berlin, Germany*), Izhevsk (*Udmurt Republic, Russia*), Melitopol (*Ukraine*), Neuchâtel (*Switzerland*), Patras (*Greece*), Reggio Emilia (*Italy*), Sechenivsky (*Discrit of Kyiv, Ukraine*), Duisburg (*Germany*), Mexico City (*Mexico*), and Lublin (*Poland*).

This document presents the results of the International City Index analysis for the city of Reggio-Emilia and provides related intercultural policy conclusions and recommendations.

### Intercultural city definition

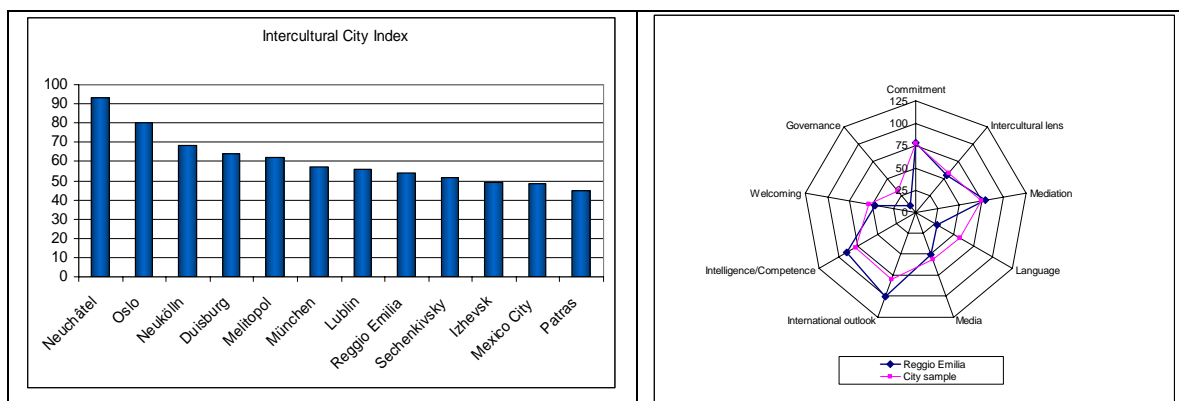
The intercultural city has people with different nationality, origin, language or religion/ belief. Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource. The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population. The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict. It encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in the public spaces.

### Methodology

A questionnaire was prepared and sent to the 12 cities. It provided 14 points for evaluating their intercultural strategy. These comprise: commitment; education system; neighbourhoods; public services; business and labour market; cultural and civil life policies; public spaces; mediation and conflict resolution; language; media; international outlook; intelligence/ competence; welcoming and governance.

The comparison between cities is strictly indicative, given the large difference between cities in terms of historical development; type and scale of diversity, governance models and level

of economic development. The comparison is based on a set of formal criteria related to the intercultural approach in urban policies and intended only as a tool for benchmarking, to motivate cities to learn from good practice.



According to the results, Reggio Emilia is positioned 8<sup>th</sup> of 12 cities in the sample in relation to the overall index as it stands at present.

## Reggio Emilia- Background information

Reggio Emilia is inhabited by 166,567 people. Non nationals and foreign born both make up 16% of the total population. The most significant ethnic groups are Albanians (2.06% of total population), Moroccans (1.81%) and Chinese (1.58%). According to the Fonto Institute the latest GDP/capita figures are of €33518.

### 1. Commitment

The optimal intercultural city strategy would involve a formal statement by local authorities sending an unambiguous message of the city's commitment to intercultural principles as well as actively engaging and persuading other key local stakeholders to do likewise.

The rate of achievement of Reggio Emilia's commitment policy goal is slightly higher than the city sample's<sup>1</sup>: 78% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample's rate for commitment policy is 77%.

Reggio Emilia's City Council has adopted a number of initiatives which demonstrate its commitment to the intercultural approach. The city has formally adopted a public statement. The local authorities have implemented an intercultural strategy and action plan. The city has allocated a budget for the implementation of its intercultural strategy and action plan. Reggio Emilia makes clear reference to its commitment in public speeches as well as in communications. The local government have launched an official webpage. Local citizens who have done an exceptional thing to encourage intercultural in the local community are acknowledged.

The local authorities may wish to further explore possible commitment policies by: setting up a dedicated body responsible for its intercultural strategy and integration; as well as setting up an evaluation process for its intercultural strategy.

<sup>1</sup> The term " city sample " refers to the weighted average of the twelve intercultural cities in each of the fourteen areas of intercultural governance.

## **2. Education<sup>2</sup> policies through an intercultural lens**

School has a powerful influence in society and has the potential to either reinforce or challenge prejudices in a number of ways through the social environment it creates, the guidance it provides and the values it nurtures.

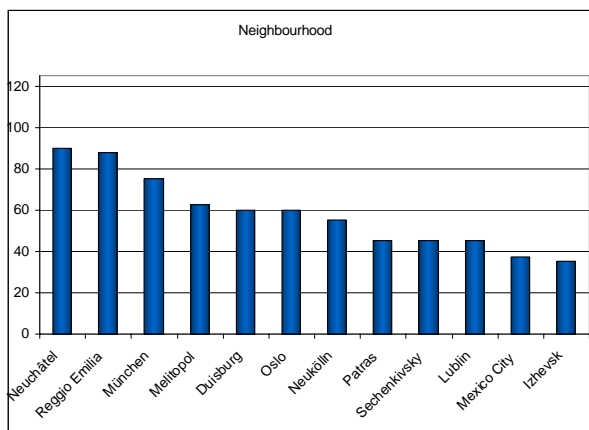
The analysis shows that Reggio Emilia's education policy achievement rate is considerably higher (67%) than the city sample's rate (59%).

However, ambiguity lays over Reggio Emilia's exact education initiatives. It is not clear whether almost all pupils in primary school come from the same ethnic background; and if the local government promotes local schools which carry out intercultural projects, as these questions remained unanswered. Reggio Emilia's education policy achievement rate may be slightly skewed as a result.

The City Council has introduced various education policies which have fulfilled their desired outcomes. Local schools make considerable efforts to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life. For instance, during the school year official meetings are organized to provide information concerning programs as well as evaluation documents. Participation by migrant mothers is both very popular and very successful. Intercultural training is provided for teachers. Since 2007, local schools have provided migrant mothers with Italian language training. The local authorities have implemented an initiative to increase the level of ethnic cultural mixing in schools. The city also promotes local schools which carry out intercultural projects.

Reggio Emilia's City Council might consider ameliorating its education system by ensuring that the ethnic background of teachers mirrors the diverse population in a larger proportion of local schools.

## **3. Neighbourhood policies through an intercultural lens<sup>3</sup>**



<sup>2</sup> The term "Education" refers to a formal process of learning in which some people consciously teach while others adopt the social role of learner - (ref. [http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student\\_view0/glossary.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html))

<sup>3</sup> By neighbourhood we understand a unit within a city which has a certain level of administrative autonomy (or sometimes also certain political governance structures) and is considered as a unit with regard to city planning. In larger cities districts (boroughs) have several neighbourhoods. The statistical definition of "neighbourhood" varies from one country to another. Generally, it includes groups of population between 5,000 and 20,000 people.

An optimal intercultural city does not require a "perfect statistical mix" of people and recognizes the value of ethnic enclaves. It is important that residential areas do not act as barriers to an inward and outward free flow of people, ideas and opportunities.

Reggio Emilia's neighbourhood policy indicators are considerably higher (88%) than the city sample's rate (58%).

In 66.7% of Reggio's neighbourhoods a vast majority<sup>4</sup> of residents come from the same ethnic background. In a couple of the city's neighbourhoods a vast majority of inhabitants come from minority ethnic groups<sup>5</sup>.

The local City Council have put into practice various education initiatives. Reggio Emilia does encourage residents from one neighbourhood to meet and interact with residents from another from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds. Put simply, the local government does promote interaction between neighbourhoods. The municipality has implemented a policy which avoids ethnic concentration.

#### **4. Public service policies through an intercultural lens**

An optimal intercultural approach remains open to new ideas and innovation brought by minority groups, rather than imposing a "one size fits all" approach to public services and actions.

The analysis shows that Reggio Emilia's public services policy achievement rate is considerably lower (35%) than the city sample's rate (46%).

The local authorities have put into practice several public service initiatives. The city does encourage intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market. The municipality offers funeral/burial services, school meals, as well as specific sections and times for women in sports facilities.

The local government may wish to ameliorate its public service initiatives in the future. For instance by: ensuring the ethnic background of Reggio 's public employees mirrors that of the city's inhabitants; considering a specific recruitment strategy to achieve the above policy; as well as enlarging the public sector recruitment pool to include non-Italian citizens.

#### **5. Business and labour market policies through an intercultural lens**

Reggio Emilia's business and labour market policy indicators are considerably lower than the sample city's: only 20% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample's rate for business and labour market policy is 39%.

The municipality has adopted the following best practice recommendation in its business and labour market initiatives. Reggio Emilia encourages ethnic/ cultural minorities businesses to move beyond localized economies to enter into the main stream and higher value added sectors.

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<sup>4</sup> For the purpose of this report, a "vast majority" refers to a situation where more than 80% of residents come from the same ethnic background.

<sup>5</sup> By "minority group" we understand a subordinate group whose members have significantly less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group have over theirs. (ref. [http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student\\_view0/glossary.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html))

The City Council's business and labour market policies may benefit from: setting up an umbrella organization to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace; adopting a charter which outlaws discrimination in local businesses/other organizations; encouraging business district/incubators to facilitate mixing between different cultures; as well as by prioritizing companies which implement a diversity strategy when procuring its goods and services

## **6. Cultural and civil life policies through an intercultural lens**

Reggio Emilia's cultural and civil life policy goal achievement rate is much lower (60%) than the city sample's accomplishment rate (78%).

Reggio Emilia's City Council has implemented the following policies in cultural and civil life. The local city municipality does organize events and activities in the fields of arts, culture and sport to encourage inhabitants from different ethnic groups to mix. Cultural organizations which deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions are also promoted. Reggio Emilia's local government also organizes public debates and campaigns around the topics of diversity and living together.

We invite Reggio Emilia to consider building upon the city's existing cultural and civil life policies by: adopting interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations.

## **7. Public space policies through an intercultural lens**

Well managed and animated public spaces can become beacons of the city's intercultural intentions. However, badly managed spaces can become places of suspicion and fear of the stranger.

The rate of achievement of Reggio Emilia's public space policy goals is considerably lower than the city sample's: only 52% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample rate for public space policy is 72%.

However, uncertainty lays over Reggio Emilia's exact public space initiatives. It is not clear whether almost all pupils in primary school come from the same ethnic background; and if the local government promotes local schools which carry out intercultural projects as these questions remained unanswered. Reggio Emilia's education policy achievement rate may be slightly skewed as a result.

The city has implemented various public spaces policy instruments. The local government promotes intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums and squares. When reconstructing an area, Reggio Emilia's City Council proposes different forms and places of consultation to reach out to its ethnically and culturally diverse inhabitants. According to the answer given in the survey, there are no areas in the city which have a reputation of being "dangerous".

The municipality may wish to ameliorate its public spaces initiatives for instance by: taking into consideration the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of the city's citizens, when designing and managing new public spaces and libraries; as well as encouraging intercultural mixing in playgrounds and other public spaces.

## **8. Mediation and conflict resolution policies**

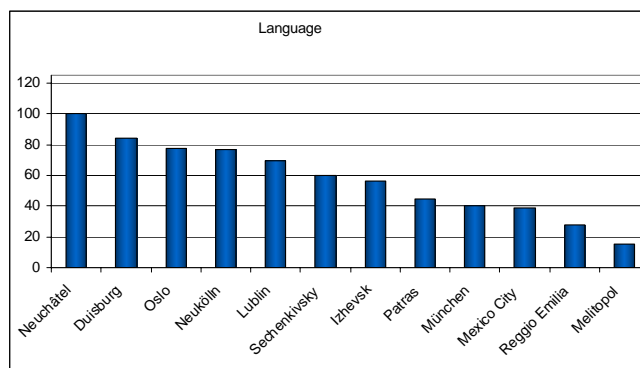
The optimal intercultural city sees the opportunity for innovation and greater cohesion emerging from the very process of conflict mediation and resolution.

The analysis shows that Reggio Emilia's mediation and conflict resolution policy achievement rate is considerably higher (100%) than the city sample's rate (71%).

The local authorities have introduced several best practice recommendations pertaining to mediation and conflict resolution. Reggio Emilia's local government also provides mediation services in places such as hospitals, in the city's administration, as well as in neighbourhoods, on the streets. The local City Council has initiated a mediation service with intercultural competences which is run by an autonomous humanitarian

The local City Council may wish to explore various mediation and conflict resolution initiatives for instance by setting up organizations that deal exclusively with inter-religious relations.

## 9. Language<sup>6</sup>



Reggio Emilia's language policy achievement rate is considerably lower (28%) than the city sample's rate (57%).

However, ambiguity lays over Reggio Emilia's exact mediation and conflict resolution initiatives. It is not clear whether: the municipality provides specific language training in the official languages for hard-to-reach groups<sup>7</sup>; the teaching of migrant/minority languages is part of the national school curriculum; all of the city's citizens are currently eligible to receive training in immigrant/minority languages; as well as if the municipality supports private/civil sector institutions that offer training in migrant/minority languages, as these questions remained unanswered. Reggio Emilia's language policy achievement rate may be slightly skewed as a result.

Reggio Emilia has introduced several initiatives to obtain its language policy objectives. Migrant/minority languages are taught as a mother tongue for foreign children only. The city also encourages projects which give a positive image to minority/migrant languages. These initiatives may comprise a day devoted to migrant languages, readings, poetry evening as well multi-lingual cultural events.

<sup>6</sup> By language we understand an abstract system of word meanings and symbols for all aspects of culture. It also includes gestures and other nonverbal communication. (ref- [http://highereducation.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student\\_view0/glossary.html](http://highereducation.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072435569/student_view0/glossary.html))

<sup>7</sup> The term makes specific reference to non-working mothers, the unemployed, as well as retired people

The local City Council might consider ameliorating its language initiatives for instance by: offering financial support to minority newspapers/journals and minority radio programmes; as well as broadcasting TV programmes in minority migrant languages.

## **10. Media policies**

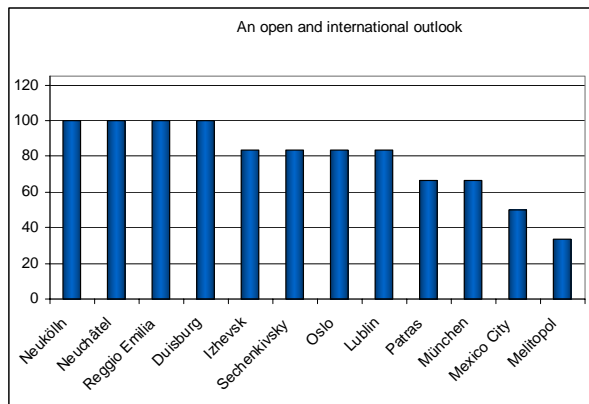
The media has a powerful influence on the attitudes to cultural relations and upon the reputations of particular minority and majority groups. Local municipalities can influence and partner with local media agencies to achieve a climate of public opinion more conducive to intercultural relations.

50% of Reggio Emilia’s media policy goals were achieved while the city sample’s attainment rate for these goals is 55%.

The municipality has implemented various media policy instruments. For instance, the city’s information services are instructed to promote harmonious intercultural relations. Reggio Emilia seeks to promote a positive image of migrants and minorities in the media through targeted press meetings and dedicated newspaper columns.

The city may wish to further explore possible media policies for instance by: providing advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds; as well as monitoring the way in which local media portrays minority groups.

## **11. International outlook policies**



An optimal intercultural city would be a place which actively sought to make new connections with other places for trade, exchange of knowledge, as well as tourism.

Reggio Emilia’s international outlook policy indicators are considerably higher (100%) than the city sample’s (79%).

The local municipality's international outlook policy goals achievement rate can be attributed to the implementation of several international outlook initiatives. The city has put into practice a policy to encourage international co-operation. A specific financial provision has been introduced to achieve this. An agency has been set up to monitor and develop the city’s openness to international connections. Reggio City Council provides support to local universities in order to attract foreign students. In addition, the city ensures that foreign student populations take an active part in the city life. The local government has initiated

projects and policies to encourage co-development with Reggio Emilia's migrant groups countries of origin.

## **12. Intelligence competence policies**

A competent public official in an optimal intercultural city should be able to detect and respond to the presence of cultural difference, and modulate his/her approach accordingly rather than seeking to impose one mode of behaviour on all situations.

The attainment rate of Reggio Emilia's intelligence competence policy goals is considerably higher than the sample city's: 89% of these goals were achieved, while the city sample rate for intelligence competence policy achievement is 78%.

The municipality has adopted the following best practice recommendations in Reggio Emilia's intelligence competence initiatives. Information regarding diversity and intercultural relations is mainstreamed to inform the local government when formulating new initiatives. The municipality conducts surveys to find out how inhabitants perceive migrants/ minority groups. The city also promotes the intercultural competences of its officials and staff through interdisciplinary seminars, information networks and training courses.

We invite Reggio Emilia to consider building upon the city's existing intelligence competence policies by: promoting intercultural competence amongst staff and officials through other tools.

## **13. Welcoming policies**

People arriving in a city for an extended stay (whatever their circumstances) are likely to find themselves disorientated and in need of multiple forms of support. The degree to which these measures can be co-coordinated and delivered effectively will have a significant impact on how the person settles and integrates.

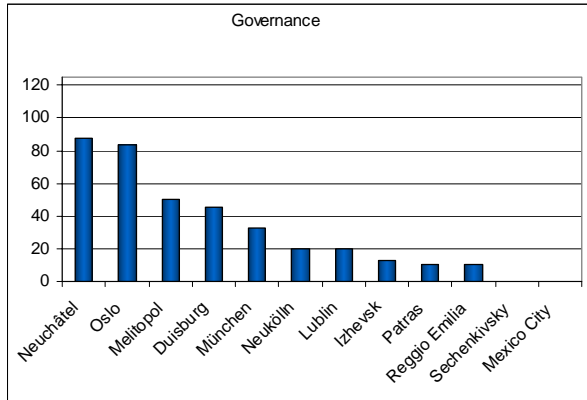
Reggio Emilia's welcoming policy goal achievement rate is slightly lower (47%) than the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is (53%)

We are still unsure whether newcomers are greeted in the presence of the local government officials. Reggio Emilia's welcoming policy achievement rate may be slightly skewed as a result

Reggio Emilia's municipality has implemented several welcoming initiatives. For instance, the city has set up a designated agency to welcome newcomers. The local government has launched city services and agencies which provide support tailored specifically for refugees and migrant workers.

The city may wish to further explore possible welcoming policies for instance by: publishing a comprehensive package of information and support for newly arrived residents; as well as setting up different city services and agencies which provide welcome support for family members and students.

## 14. Governance policies



Perhaps the most powerful and far-reaching actions which a city can take in making it more intercultural are the processes of democratic representation and decision making.

10% of Reggio-Emilia's governance policy goals were achieved while the city sample's attainment rate for these goals is 31%.

However, ambiguity lays over Reggio Emilia's exact governance initiatives. It is not clear whether the ethnic background of elected politicians mirrors the city's diverse population, as no answer was given to this question.

The local government may wish to further explore possible governance policies by: setting up an independent political body to represent all ethnic minorities living in the city; as well as establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies which supervise schools and public bodies.

## 15. Conclusions

The local administration has initiated various **commitment** initiatives including: adopting a public statement; adopting an intercultural city strategy and action plan; making clear reference to Reggio Emilia's commitment in the city's speeches and communication; allocating a budget for the implementation of its intercultural strategy and action plan; launching an official webpage; promoting the intercultural approach in the community by honouring and recognizing individual acts that encourage interculturalism.

Reggio Emilia 's City Council has introduced several best practice recommendations in the city's **education** system for example by: making considerable efforts to involve parents from migrant/minority backgrounds in daily school life; implementing initiatives that increase the level of ethnic/cultural mixing in local schools as well as promoting local schools which carry out intercultural projects.

The city has introduced **neighbourhoods** initiatives, including: promoting interaction between neighbourhoods; as well as implementing a policy which avoids ethnic concentration.

The local administration has initiated various **public service** initiatives including: providing services appropriate for all citizens from different ethnic cultural backgrounds including

funeral/burial, women-only sections or times in sport facilities as well as encouraging intercultural mixing in the private sector labour market.

The city has introduced numerous initiatives in the **business and labour market**, including encouraging ethnic/ cultural minorities businesses to move beyond localized economies to enter into the main stream and higher value added sectors.

The municipality has implemented various policies in **cultural and civic life** comprising: organizing events and activities in the field of arts, culture and sport to encourage cultural mixing between inhabitants; promoting cultural organizations to deal with diversity and intercultural relations in their productions; as well as organizing public debates and campaigns on diversity and living together.

Reggio Emilia's **public spaces** policy includes: encouraging intercultural mixing in public libraries, museums and squares; when reconstructing an area proposing different forms and places of consultation to reach out to its diverse inhabitants; and having no areas in the city which are reputed as "dangerous".

Reggio Emilia City Council has also adopted the following best practice recommendation in **mediation and conflict resolution**, including: providing intercultural mediation services in hospitals, in the city administration, in neighbourhoods; as well as initiating a mediation service with intercultural competence run by an autonomous humanitarian organisation.

The local City Council has also embraced several best practice recommendations in the area of **language**, including: providing migrant minority language courses as a mother tongue for migrant children; as well as supporting projects that give a positive image to migrant/minority languages.

The local government has introduced **media** policies including: instructing the city's information services to promote harmonious intercultural relations; as well as promoting a positive image of migrants/minorities on a regular basis.

The benchmarking results pertaining to Reggio Emilia 's **international outlook** policy goal achievement rate confirm that Reggio Emilia City Council has introduced more initiatives than the city sample. They include: adopting a specific policy that encourages international co-operation; allocating a specific financial provision for this policy; setting up an agency which monitors and develops the city's openness to international connections; encouraging universities that attract foreign students; as well as ensuring that foreign student populations participate in the city's daily life.

Reggio Emilia City Council has adopted several initiatives which promote **intelligence competence**. They comprise: mainstreaming information about diversity and intercultural relations to feed back into the city government's policy formulation; conducting surveys concerning local inhabitants' perceptions of migrants; as well as promoting intercultural competence amongst staff and officials through interdisciplinary seminars, information networks and raining courses.

Reggio Emilia has initiated several **welcoming** initiatives including: setting up different city services and agencies which provide welcome support for refugees and migrant workers; as well as creating a designated agency to welcome newcomers.

The local authority has implemented the following good practice recommendations pertaining to **governance** including: ensuring newcomers are eligible to vote in local election after three years of regular residence.

## **16. Recommendations**

The local authorities may wish to further explore possible **commitment** policies by: setting up a dedicated body responsible for its intercultural strategy and integration; as well as setting up an evaluation process for its intercultural strategy.

Reggio Emilia's City Council might consider ameliorating its **education** system by: ensuring that the ethnic background of teachers mirrors the diverse population in a larger proportion of local schools.

The local government may wish to ameliorate its **public service** initiatives in the future, for instance by: ensuring the ethnic background of Reggio 's public employees mirrors that of the city's inhabitants; considering a specific recruitment strategy to achieve the above policy; as well as enlarging the public sector recruitment pool to include non-Italian citizens.

The City Council's **business and labour market** policies may benefit from: setting up an umbrella organization to promote diversity and non-discrimination in the workplace; adopting a charter which outlaws discrimination in local businesses/other organizations; encouraging business district/incubators to facilitate mixing between different cultures; as well as by prioritizing companies which implement a diversity strategy when procuring its goods and services

We invite Reggio Emilia to consider building upon the city's existing **cultural and civil life** policies by adopting interculturalism as a criterion when allocating grants to associations.

The municipality may wish to ameliorate its **public spaces** initiatives for instance by: taking into consideration the ethnic/cultural backgrounds of the city's citizens when designing and managing new public spaces and libraries; as well as encouraging intercultural mixing in playgrounds and other public spaces.

The local City Council may wish to explore various **mediation and conflict resolution** initiatives for instance by setting up organizations that deal exclusively with inter-religious relations.

The local government might consider ameliorating its **language** initiatives for instance by: offering financial support to minority newspapers/journals and minority radio programmes; as well as broadcasting TV programmes in minority migrant languages.

The city may wish to further explore possible **media** policies for instance by: providing advocacy/media training/mentorships for journalists from minority backgrounds; as well as monitoring the way in which local media portrays minority groups.

We invite Reggio Emilia to consider building upon the city's existing **intelligence competence** policies by promoting intercultural competence amongst staff and officials through other tools.

The city may wish to further explore possible **welcoming** policies for instance by: publishing a comprehensive package of information and support for newly arrived residents; as well as

setting up different city services and agencies which provide welcome support for family members and students.

The local government may wish to further explore possible **governance** policies by: setting up an independent political body to represent all ethnic minorities living in the city; as well as establishing standards in the representation of migrant minorities in mandatory bodies which supervise schools and public bodies.