

**WE NEED
A CHANGE**

**EFTID
Policy
Recommendations**

January
2022



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union



European Towns Fostering Intercultural Dialogue and
Combating Discrimination of Migrants and Minorities



The EFTID Policy Recommendations are a set of policy advices have been drafted by the 14 members of the European Network of Towns for Intercultural Dialogue and Inclusion in order to support local and European policy-makers in drafting adequate and up to date policies for facilitation of intercultural dialogue and tackling discrimination against migrants and minority groups in European societies.

All suggested policy measures are drawing from the local context of each partner town, also taking into account international best practices, searching to influence local, national and European policy debates.

The EFTID Policy Recommendations are based on 12 local citizen debates in each partner country (Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Italy, Poland, Albania, Macedonia, Greece, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Netherlands), involving municipalities, city councils, civil society organizations, academia, businesses and citizens.

The Network members believe that European towns can contribute to the local and European policy making process on intercultural dialogue and inclusion by steadily building up the body of knowledge on particular issues, helping to change opinions among the public and influential policy decision makers. Therefore is sought to offer a set of policy recommendations that could on one hand fit in some existing strategies, programs or legislation and influence the development of new policies, in framing new sets of recommendations.

The EFTID Policy Recommendations are focused on 10 main ares, as listed below.



1. Innovative intercultural dialogue strategy development and implementation.

- Identify intercultural innovators and bridge-builders and engage them in an innovative fostering of intercultural relations, trust and cooperation with an emphasis on structures, action and resources which bring all citizens together across their cultural boundaries.
- Develop local strategies to assess the progress and impact of intercultural integration policies and programs; monitoring and evaluating attitudes and perceptions of diversity and wellbeing.
- Develop and implement local and national policies aiming to close the gap between newcomers and older residents in European towns - in terms of level of education, employment, health, housing etc, symbolic, emotional, psychological aspects associated with living in society such as sense of belonging, of being valued across cultural difference, community cohesion, attitudes to diversity, levels of perceived discrimination as important elements of integration.

2. Establish processes for encouraging inter-cultural decision making, following the good practices of the European Capitals of Culture.

- Develop and implement local cultural policies that ensure that all members of the local communities feel the ownership of the local cultural heritage, represented by hard/tangible assets such as ancient ruins or modern cultural and architectural monuments, and by soft/intangible assets such as oral traditions or dialects and take active part in the preservation and the modern living integrating this fundamental territorial dimension in their every day lives.
- Supported by all relevant stakeholders in each European community, to draft timely and adequate cultural action plans, to be used to boost sustainable inter-cultural dialogue development and promote dialogue activities over a medium-to-long term period.
- Learning from the good practices of the European Capitals of Culture , to promote and draft adequate and specific policy measure that ensure good governance of of European towns for protection and safeguarding of cultural heritage, looking at it as an opportunity to positively impact the local/regional economy and society and contribute to the inclusion of socially vulnerable groups and communities such as migrants and minorities.



5. Empowering local authorities for human rights protection of vulnerable to discrimination local communities and individuals.

- Educating in intercultural sensitivity and cultural appropriateness, this way - impacting on different culture-related variables such as prevention of discrimination such as racism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia and promoting intercultural communication and intercultural dialogue.
- Developing conscious of the pre-eminent and leading role that local governments play in the promotion and protection of fundamental human rights.
- Encouraging local and regional authorities to exchange good practices in the area of human rights at local and regional level.
- Taking active part in European cooperation projects that work on awareness raising on the role the local authorities can play in promoting human rights at local and regional level, in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.
- Organizing human rights forums with citizens and towns and the active participation of elected local and regional representatives, experts and other stakeholders at regular intervals to exchange information and good European and international practices.

6. Empowering local civil society organizations and groups

- Facilitating active cooperation between the civil society organizations and the local authorities based on a win-win concept where both groups of actors have something to gain from the cooperation.
- Promoting the co-development of new training materials on intercultural dialogue and inclusion, such guidelines, training and checklists for civil servants.
- Establishing inter-cultural and inter-religious councils in the European towns - promoting freedom of religion and free religious practice; contributing to an enhanced dialogue between persons and groups with different cultural and religious backgrounds and to support civil society initiatives in the field.
- Cooperate with local communities and civil society organizations for common human rights goals; evaluating policies and actions affecting citizens` participation.
- Develop communication and intercultural education strategies at local and national levels that foster a better understanding of the situation of migrants and minorities as well as of the heterogeneity that exists within these groups, be it religious communities, LGBTQI+ persons, children, persons with disabilities, elderly women, or men and then act in accordance to this understanding. Promote an understanding of the impact of the inter-sectional discrimination based on different vulnerability such as age, gender, ethnic and religious background, ect.



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7. Creating new public-private partnerships for intercultural dialogue and inclusion

- Providing new and innovative local and broader (regional and national) platforms for public-private partnerships and collaboration; fostering the cooperation between citizens and towns at local, regional and national level in all European countries.
- Reinforcing intercultural dialogue and its role in terms of strengthening participatory democracy; promoting activities and initiatives that contribute to the development of new and more targeted European policies of greater and deeper inclusiveness and sense of belonging to the local communities and societies across Europe.
- Promoting partnerships between citizens, experts, academic institutions, state organizations, civil society organizations, social economy organizations and local authorities and its crucial role in strengthening the intercultural dialogue and inclusion of migrants and minorities.

8. Local funding mechanisms for programs, institutions and content on ICD and inclusion

Local authority funding

- Ensure that each government provide sufficient funds for the local authorities to implement programs and activities on intercultural dialogue and inclusion of migrant and minorities in the European towns.
- Promoting local authorities` fundraising for human rights education events and campaigning at the local level, seeking the support of local academia, experts, business and civil society.

9. Research into the benefits of diversity and inclusion in European communities

- Impacting human rights and diversity learning and teaching, research and institutional cultures at the local level, seeking to empower citizens from traditionally less-represented backgrounds.
- Developing local strategies, seeking to ensure that local universities and smaller research institutions and NGOs have a platform to share their intercultural approaches and strategies.
- Facilitating an ongoing local, national and European-wide discussion on the problems of diversity and inclusion in the European communities, fostering research programs on the benefits of diversity.
- Supporting local academics and researchers in understanding how diversity, equity and inclusiveness can be embedded into higher education, research and university management, as well as in the every day life of all European communities.
- Promoting and disseminating research findings on diversity advantage in relevant policy debates.
- Linking the research on the benefits of diversity with the policies of the Bologna Process and those related to the Sustainable Development Goals.



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10 Intercultural dialogue and inclusion during the CoVid19 pandemic: impact and response.

- Tackling the challenges that COVID-19 brought to the local communities - such as rise in discrimination, inequality, and vulnerability, putting pressure on the capacities of societies for intercultural understanding at a time where solidarity and cooperation are needed more than ever.
- Exploring and examining both the impact of COVID-19 on intercultural relations and the creative responses undertaken to strengthen cross-cultural cooperation within this unprecedented context.
- Promoting intercultural learning anti-racist activism, highlighting the dynamic and creative local and national good practices that have emerged through necessity during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Developing adequate local policy measures that address the changes in labour migration and due to the COVID-19 pandemic and addressing the concerns about employment conditions and health protections of migrant workers as well as remittances trends.
- Ensuring that migrant workers are included in accessible and affordable COVID-related health and recovery packages and services and loosen up COVID-related restrictions.
- Highlighting several core areas of impact which threaten intercultural understanding during the pandemic – from the rise of xenophobia, ethnocentrism, religious discrimination and racism to increases in gender-based violence - and tackling those challenges at local and regional level with the active support of all relevant stakeholders in the European towns.
- Maintaining intercultural exchange and respond to the lessons of the pandemic, including strengthening intercultural dialogue, human rights education and human rights protection, bolstering local and national structures to support civil society organizations and citizens for exchange and solidarity initiatives.
- Addressing the new COVID-19 - induced social inequalities that can fuel discrimination and marginalization via social solidarity practices such as mobilization of social capital, voluntarism, charitable activities, cultural events and public-private partnerships for fundraising and development of local social support systems.



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Why should our Network of towns consider writing policy recommendations?

The highest quality of an international project is that - when well executed and disseminated - it can have a beneficial impact on the lives of society and the citizens, both locally and at European level

It can improve social integration, increase the effectiveness of public services and public policy, and enhance quality of life and outcomes in areas such as intercultural dialogue, education and human rights protection. Communicating project findings and results is a crucial part of maximizing this impact and writing policy recommendations based on these findings offers to the people in positions of influence the opportunity to use the findings to enact real change to policy and society.

DISCLAIMER

This publication has been produced with the support of the Europe for Citizens Program of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the EFTID project partnership and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Commission.