

Creating opportunities from challenges

Integrating Cities
Report #5



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About Eurocities:

Eurocities is the network of more than 200 cities in 38 countries, representing 130 million people, working together to ensure a good quality of life for all.



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Executive Summary

This fifth Integrating Cities Report provides insights into the measures cities put in place to integrate migrants and refugees in Europe and North America, covering the period from mid-2020 to mid-2022. Based on cities' self-evaluation, it charts their progress over the last two and a half years in implementing the Integrating Cities Charter.

The report is structured along three main chapters: 1) the methodology of the Integrating Cities Charter; 2) the current (political) context that shapes cities' integration policies, with a particular focus on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic; and 3) integration actions implemented by cities in their capacities as:

- Policy makers
- Service providers
- Employers
- Buyers of goods and services

Within each of these main fields of responsibility, key trends are identified and analysed across the participating cities. Among others, these include how cities ensure equal access and non-discrimination in policies and access to services, and how they strive to make their own administrations more diverse and inclusive. The progress made by cities in this respect clearly highlights their role as political frontrunners that shape integration and inclusion policies and practices in Europe.



Methodology: The Integrating Cities Charter

Integration happens in cities and local authorities play a key role in designing and implementing integration policies that promote social cohesion while taking into account the diversity of their populations. Perceiving integration as a dynamic two-way process driven by both migrants and the local society, cities aim to create an environment in which successful integration is built on the principles of openness, equality and inclusion. These common guiding principles are codified in the Integrating Cities Charter, which serves as a common framework to embrace the progress made by cities.¹

The Charter outlines the duties and responsibilities of cities to integrate migrants along several key commitments. Eurocities launched the Integrating Cities Process in 2010, with the Charter originally signed by 17 European mayors during the first Integrating Cities Conference in the same year. In the decade since, the Charter continues to be supported by an increasing number of cities from Europe and North America. As of 2022, more than 43 cities have signed the Charter, establishing it as a key instrument for highlighting cities' engagement in integrating migrants.²

¹ Eurocities (2010), Eurocities Charter on Integrating Cities, available at <https://bit.ly/3pBvsFU>.

² A complete list of signatory cities can be found at <https://bit.ly/3f8tc41>.



The Integrating Cities Charter lists cities' commitments in their capacities as policy-makers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services and thereby to providing equal opportunities for all residents. More specifically, cities agree to the following:

As policy makers:

- Actively communicate their commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city
- Ensure equal access and non-discrimination across all their policies
- Facilitate engagement from migrant communities in their policy-making processes and remove barriers to participation

As service providers:

- Support equal access for migrants to services (particularly language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education)
- Ensure that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers

As employers:

- Take steps to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of workforces across all staffing levels
- Ensure that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by managers and colleagues
- Ensure that staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues

As buyers of goods and services:

- Apply principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering
- Promote principles of equality and diversity amongst contractors
- Promote the development of a diverse supplier base.

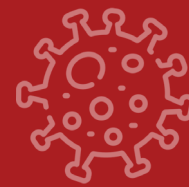
Every two years, Eurocities takes stock of cities' progress under the Charter by means of a survey of signatory cities. This allows cities to assess their progress and draw comparisons to other local authorities across Europe. Moreover, it creates an overview of the main trends, emerging challenges and developments in the context of local integration policies.

The aim of this report is twofold: first, to summarise, analyse and contextualise the developments in integration measures and policies at the local level; second, to draw from this a clear picture on how cities are taking on the responsibility of acting as key political stakeholders even beyond their territorial demarcations. As such, these insights into local level integration actions, aims and challenges can be useful for evidence-based policy-making across different governance levels, including at the EU level.

Background and context

In the two years since the last Integrating Cities Report (2020) was published, Europe has faced multiple crises, the effects of which have often played out at the local level. Cities have had to respond quickly to the impacts of the health crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impact across the continent; the renewed flights of Afghan refugees in the wake of the new Taliban-led government; and, most recently, the Russian invasion and ensuing war in Ukraine, leading to record numbers of refugees seeking protection in neighbouring countries and further afield.

This happens in a context where municipal budgets are stretched to the limit and cities are, more than ever, in need of additional support. This is especially the case when there is a need to respond to a sharp increase in the numbers of refugees coming to a city. Practically, this means organising short-term or emergency accommodation in the face of an already dire housing crisis or ensuring that refugee children can continue with their education (including access to language courses or, as has been the case with Ukrainian refugees, to online education in their native language). Moreover, cities have needed to organise healthcare, including vaccinations and psychological support, for particularly vulnerable and potentially traumatised people. Beyond short-term responses, there is also a need to provide opportunities to integrate, both in terms of finding employment and connecting newcomers to their new environment. Cities tackle these challenges in cooperation with civil society organisations and their citizens, requiring a significant degree of coordination. Naturally, these responses come in addition to the reception and integration measures that cities are already putting into action – which is what the main part of this report focuses on.



Due to the timing of this publication, the questionnaire for this fifth Integrating Cities Report did not include direct questions about the impact of the war in Ukraine on cities' reception and integration services. The cities therefore did not explicitly report on the measures put in place for Ukrainian refugees. It is well known, however, that the considerable numbers of Ukrainians arriving in European cities has put a strain on public services and local integration policies. As of October 2022, more than 7.6 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe.³

As written in the Eurocities statement 'Caring Cities: Acting in solidarity with all refugees', many cities have been quick to mobilise solidarity actions and create support structures to welcome people fleeing the war.⁴ Local services have been reinforced and adapted to provide housing, emergency social aid, healthcare, psychological assistance and legal advice. Beyond emergency support, cities have been helping refugees settle in smoothly and get access to education, training, employment and other services, ensuring their social integration and inclusion in local communities and neighbourhoods. In the context of the Eurocities statement, cities have been calling for additional support, including extra funds from the EU and national levels to continue to meet the urgent needs of all refugees.

Before diving into the progress reports of cities' integration challenges, measures and outcomes, this next section will take a closer look at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on migrant communities and on cities' integration policies and practices.

Covid-19

In the almost three years since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, in early 2020, its effect on cities and local communities across Europe has become strikingly clear. The last Integrating Cities Report, for which cities were surveyed in the spring of 2020, could not yet capture the enormous effects of the pandemic. The survey for this fifth Integrating Cities Report explicitly asked the participating cities about how the Covid-19 pandemic affected their migrant populations and how it influenced the city's integration policies and outcomes. All of the surveyed cities reported a considerable impact of the pandemic at the local level, both in terms of public health and socio-economic implications.

³ UNHCR Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation, accessed 14 October 2022, available here: <https://bit.ly/3g5laxp>

⁴ Eurocities statement 'Caring Cities: Acting in solidarity with all refugees' (2022), available here: <https://bit.ly/3SR4d8y>.

Impact of the pandemic on migrant communities

The extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic have laid bare existing inequalities in our societies and, frequently, created new inequalities among citizens. While the pandemic has had an impact on the whole of society, cities often reported that it was the most vulnerable groups, among them migrant communities, who have been hit hardest. Among the most pronounced issues reported were:

■ **Loss of employment and increase in exploitative work situations:** Cities reported that those working in the informal economy, and who thus did not have any legal security, were among the first to lose their jobs. In the formal economy, migrants working in sectors affected by the health crisis (such as transport, hospitality or tourism) were at greater risk of unemployment. This loss of jobs also gave rise to migrants having to accept more precarious working conditions or being pushed into exploitative employment situations, which was especially the case of people with an irregular status or recently arrived migrants. These general trends of the pandemic on employment opportunities disproportionately affected women migrants.

■ **Increase in poverty and destitution:** Due to a worsening economic situation, many cities reported that migrants were unable to pay their rent and thus lost their housing or had to move to more informal or unsafe accommodation. Some were confronted with a lack of goods to meet their most basic needs, particularly persons already at risk of exclusion or with multiple vulnerabilities. In this way, many have faced acute challenges related to hunger, loss of sanitation facilities, lack of (internet) connectivity and barriers to essential social and health services. Some cities also saw an increase in the number of mobile EU citizens relying on charity organisations for food and other support. Several cities had to close their drop-in centres and accommodation facilities during the pandemic or reconfigure them in line with social distancing. This reduced the number of people that could be catered to and, as was reported in some cases, led to an increase in homelessness.

■ **Inequalities in access to education and schooling:** Almost all cities reported growing disparities in learning access and outcomes in the context of school classes moving online or parents having to take on home schooling responsibilities. Frequently, this made it more difficult for children from migrant communities to follow the curriculum, due to dense living situations or a lack of working spaces for home schooling, a lack of and/or limited financial resources to buy the necessary technology or internet connection, or limited digital skills among pupils and parents. This was sometimes exacerbated when parents did not have a lot of experience

with the education system or faced linguistic barriers when communicating with the school. In terms of adult education, several cities reported similar issues and the risk of individuals losing already acquired (language) skills due to limited access to online courses.

■ **Greater health risks:** Some cities reported migrant communities' increased risk of contracting the virus or suffering a severe course of illness due to more difficult access to healthcare (owing to language barriers or irregular immigration status) or a lack of trust in the healthcare system, including vaccine hesitancy. These factors were often exacerbated by unsafe working conditions or employment in at-risk jobs (such as in the care sector), as well as dense housing situations. On the other hand, several cities reported that migrant communities in general had a good uptake in vaccination rates, which was often the case due to targeted communication and low-barrier and community-based access to information about vaccines.

■ **Discrimination, racism and social stigma:** Some cities reported an increase in racism and discrimination of certain groups, such as migrants, the Roma community or the elderly, due to stereotyping and stigmatisation of their perceived role in spreading the pandemic. In some cases, the intersectionality of immigration status and being racialised has made it more difficult for people with a migration background to access financial support or healthcare.

Some cities explicitly reported on the situation of asylum seekers, who found it much more difficult to access asylum procedures. Sometimes asylum interviews were moved online, in other cases asylum procedures were suspended for a number of weeks. Several cities reported that this led to a dramatic situation of termination of individuals' right to stay, job losses or the suspension of access to social services. Other cities mentioned the particularly vulnerable situation of migrants with an irregular status or without a residence permit. They often face more difficult access to healthcare services and, in some cases, are legally excluded from accessing them at all.

Impact of the pandemic on integration policies and outcomes

Taken together, the cities included in this report have been witnessing how the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated already existing inequalities and unequal access to services across the full spectrum of citizenship in a city. This has had a considerable impact beyond immediate needs and, in some cases, impacted local integration measures and integration outcomes. All cities had to adapt their services and programmes targeting not only their migrant communities, but also society at large. Throughout these changes city administrations and local civil society organisations made enormous efforts to put solidarity into action.



Across the responding cities, ensuring access to services has been a key challenge during the pandemic. A common response, borne out of the need to reduce physical contacts, was the **digitalisation** of these services to the greatest extent possible. In **Riga**, free of charge Latvian language courses for Riga inhabitants, including persons with a migration background, have been moved online. In **Ghent**, the city's local integration agency developed a greater number of digital offers to learn Dutch, as well as to take online civil orientation courses. **Oulu** also moved integration classes for newcomers online. The city has noted that, in general, this may have made access to such services more difficult, especially for individuals without the necessary digital skills or literacy. This is a challenge that many cities have faced. **Leipzig** provided information on their digitalised citizen services in several languages to ensure that citizens with a migration background have equal access.



The **provision of information** about services in general and the need to adapt communication in the context of the pandemic was highlighted by several cities. **Nuremberg** created a new 'Covid & Integration' working group to research and solve Covid-related problems in the field of integration. The city used this working group to develop and publish vaccination campaigns and disseminate information about infection risks in different languages spoken by the local migrant communities, as well as in easy-to-understand German. Similarly, **Cesena** translated pandemic and social distancing measures into different languages during the lockdown periods. In addition, the city sent voice messages about containment measures to international protection seekers in their native languages, facilitating their access to information. **Oslo** reported that the municipality actually learned a lot during the pandemic about providing equal access to services through communication with and involvement of migrant groups, civic organisations and religious communities. In terms of the digitalisation of services, **Stockholm** has evaluated new working methods and plans to implement them on a more permanent basis. At the same time, the city recognises the importance of reaching out to individuals through more traditional means, such as knocking on doors, especially for those who are more difficult to reach.



Many cities put in place **emergency accommodation** and reception facilities for the most vulnerable and to ensure that adapted services could be provided continuously. For example, **Bilbao** used five municipal sports centres that covered migrants' basic health, hygiene, clothing and food needs 24 hours a day. The city also established close cooperation with the local Muslim community and incorporated its advice to provide adequately adapted services during the month of Ramadan.

Moreover, many cities reported adapting their **communication approaches** to improve outreach to their migrant communities during the pandemic. This included communicating in different languages, especially when it comes to public health measures or vaccination options. Cities also shifted a lot of their communications online, in some cases using social media channels to reach a bigger audience. Many of these efforts counted on strong cooperation between city administrations and civil society stakeholders. Migrant organisations were especially active in building and maintaining ties between the city and their respective communities.

These are the main measures implemented to handle the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, cities never stopped implementing policies for the broader integration of migrant communities: cities have in fact forged ahead in continuing to provide and improve their services to inhabitants with a migration background, often in difficult situations. The next chapters dive deeper into this main theme of the Integrating Cities Report, detailing the main developments in local policies for promoting integration, inclusion and diversity across a range of different city authority tasks and roles.

Cities as policy-makers

The Integrating Cities Charter includes three commitments that focus on the city's policy-making role in creating open societies and managing social cohesion by taking into account the diverse views of its local communities. They highlight the city's responsibility as follows: actively communicating the city's commitment to creating equal opportunities for everyone (Commitment 1), ensuring equal access and non-discrimination across all city policies (Commitment 2) and facilitating engagement from migrant communities in policy-making processes and removing barriers to participation (Commitment 3). The following chapter details the cities' progress on these commitments.

1. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city actively communicates its commitment to equal opportunities for everyone living in the city

All surveyed cities took an active approach in communicating with their citizens about equal opportunities, openness and diversity. Often, this went hand in hand with the cities' political identity and image as welcoming cities and safe spaces for residents of different backgrounds. At the same time, these communication approaches cover several areas of life in a city (such as housing, the labour market or public spaces) and therefore show how ensuring equal opportunities is a common denominator across policies and departments in the city administration.

Many cities have codified their commitment to equal opportunities, in the form of (communication) strategies or action plans. **Bilbao**'s work on anti-rumour strategic communications at the local level has caught attention across Europe (see Box 1). The city is now developing an anti-rumour social awareness strategy that aims to prevent discrimination, improve coexistence and harness the potential of diversity by changing perceptions and behaviours of the local population. Similarly, **Cesena** has developed a new strategic vision of intercultural public communication that recognises the role of partial and non-inclusive communication in preserving stereotypes and enabling hate speech. In 2020, the Emilia Romagna Region launched the 'Regional Manifesto of Intercultural Institutional Communication' in 2020, co-financed as part of the AMIF 'CaspER 2' project, with the aim of combatting stereotypes and hate speech. The municipality first adopted this manifesto and thereafter followed up with its own local equivalent. Cesena's 'Manifesto of Institutional and Intercultural Communication' is a tool for open intercultural exchange between the city's institutions and citizens with the aim of increasing social cohesion and facilitating migrants'

access to Cesena's public services. To reach this goal, the city has launched training courses for public employees, social workers and journalists to promote inclusive language and respect cultural differences. In **Malmo**, the city's 'Strategic Development Plan for Anti-Discrimination Work' has been translated into eight different languages so as to make it more accessible to the diverse communities living in the city. The city implements a common policy for human rights, with a particular focus on equity, equality and the rights of children, and considers this policy the backbone of all work done in the city administration.

Box1: Bilbao's third Intercultural City Plan

The plan includes one key area of intervention that will promote the city's commitment to equal opportunities. As a direct consequence of the plan, Bilbao created an interdepartmental political and technical commission to promote and monitor this commitment. This intercultural approach is extended to other municipal plans, for instance on equality between women and men. It encompasses many different projects and plans, two of which are mentioned here.

The city especially values migrant women and their contributions to social and public life in Bilbao, as professionals, leaders, thinkers, politicians and entrepreneurs and as a driving force behind the well-being of their families. To highlight their key roles, Bilbao produced a documentary and a publication including women's testimonies.

Linked to the Intercultural City Plan is Bilbao's anti-rumour social awareness strategy, which aims to prevent discrimination, improve coexistence and take advantage of the potential of diversity by promoting a change in the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of the population. The project now carries out training actions for citizens, awareness-raising and informal actions and meetings for the network of anti-rumour agents.



Several cities see their commitment to equality as part of their local identity, and communicate it as such. **Bristol's** City of Sanctuary status allows the city to engage with diverse communities. The city's mayor plays an especially important role as the face of this public message, personifying Bristol's vision of migrant inclusion and promoting the city as a safe, welcoming and hopeful place. Similarly, **Milan** proudly builds on the city's reputation as a Welcoming City. Since 2021, the city has developed a digital tool and web platform to facilitate access to civic services for all residents, with the explicit aim of including those with a migration background. **Helsinki** adopted a new city strategy in 2021 that commits the city to promoting non-discrimination, equality and human rights as an International City of Equality. Moreover, the city has published an internal guide to norm-sensitive communications, to increase city staff's understanding of how textual and visual choices in the city's communications can promote or hinder the inclusion of different population groups.



Frequently, the focus on communicating the cities' openness goes hand in hand with informing their citizens about their rights to equal access to services in a very practical manner.

Rotterdam's action programme 'No worries. This is Rotterdam'⁵ builds on the sentiment of living together in a city where everyone is a minority. To put this into practice, the city promotes the acceptance of diversity in schools, provides trainings on diversity and inclusion, and facilitates more than 350 dialogue meetings each year with citizens for improving social inclusion. Moreover, the city has taken public responsibility for its history of slavery and colonisation, including a formal apology by the mayor for the role of city officials in the slave trade. For **Riga**, access to city services and participation in public life is of great importance. The city has updated a guide about services provided by the municipality. The guide gives a general insight into education, health, social assistance, public transport services ensured by the municipality, as well as into opportunities for engaging in culture, sports and other leisure activities. The guide gathers information on and contact details of municipal and state institutions that provide the aforementioned services.⁶ It is available in Latvian, Russian and English languages. Since 2020, **Nantes** has implemented a campaign to communicate with the public about discrimination. To support this, the city has installed a hotline called 'AlloNantes Discrimination', via which citizens can lodge complaints and receive support when they experience discrimination.



⁵ Rotterdam's action plan is available at <https://bit.ly/3fVELQg>

⁶ Handbook (Guide) on Services Provided by the Municipality of Riga to foreigners (in English) is available at <https://bit.ly/3fO5ezn>.

2. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city ensures equal access and non-discrimination across all its policies

The vast majority of surveyed cities see equal access and non-discrimination for all groups in society as the crucial basis for local policies to foster inclusion and social cohesion. Several cities have developed dedicated strategies and action plans to tackle discrimination and racism, and are applying these across different policy areas to support the inclusion of migrants.

In **Berlin**, the Senate passed the 'Berlin Diversity Strategy' in 2020 as a key framework to strengthen activities that promote diversity and openness while combatting discrimination and extremism. The Strategy has four main objectives: actively dealing with the city's changing population; ensuring all of Berlin's citizens have access to equal opportunities; understanding and acknowledging the complexity of people's lived experiences; and improving the quality of services by building a diversity-competent administration. Similarly, **Ghent** is looking at non-discrimination in a holistic manner, particularly through its Action Plan against Racism and Discrimination 2020-25. This Action Plan includes a range of activities addressing different topics, among them supporting victims and tackling hate crime, ensuring equal access to the housing and labour market, and ensuring attention to diversity in the city administration, education system, and communication style.

In **Nuremberg**, building on its rich landscape of civil society organisations, ensuring equal opportunities is a key task of the city's Board of Trustees for Diversity and Cohesion. This body is convened by the mayor to focus on the full range of diversity as well as integration and human rights. With 66 members from civil society as well as governmental bodies and agencies, the Board will provide new ideas for local policy-makers to promote Nuremberg's diversity and strengthen social cohesion.

Stockholm sees its collaboration with local businesses, civil society, and other public actors as integral to promoting integration opportunities for newcomers. The city urges all stakeholders to commit to the local integration pact and work towards creating equal opportunities for all.

Vienna's Integration and Diversity Monitor analyses the current state and impact of diversity measures implemented by the city, and provides a foundation for decision-making in



politics and administration to respond to the diversity of an increasingly mobile society.⁷ Through the Monitor, Vienna can show that diversity-oriented policies have become an integral part of the activities of the city administration and that the administration's institutions apply a diversity strategy in the fields of personnel development and management, service delivery, public relations, knowledge management, complaints management, quality assurance and project management.

Toronto focuses on equity responsive budgeting to promote equitable access and outcomes for various groups, including migrants, refugees and undocumented individuals.⁸ The City uses this approach to analyse how changes in the City's budget impact different groups and to inform the decision-making process. On a more operational level, all City departments are required to prepare equity impact statements to accompany their budget proposals which are then presented to city councillors and the public during the budget development process.

⁷ Vienna's Integration and Diversity Monitor is available at <https://bit.ly/3fUPHxY>.

⁸ Toronto is the 34th and first non-European signatory of the Integrating Cities Charter.



3. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city facilitates engagement from migrant communities in its policy-making processes and removes barriers to participation

Equal access to opportunities builds on closely involving different communities in the running of a city, including in its policy-making processes. Many cities have put in place migrant councils or advisory boards that exchange with the local administration and contribute their perspectives on a wide range of policy areas. In comparison to the last Integrating Cities Report of 2020, the number of cities reporting the existence of permanent consultative migrant councils has increased.

Closer cooperation with civil society

In 2020, **Oslo** founded a new board for intercultural minorities, which the local government has to involve in the preparation of governmental decisions. Moreover, several of Oslo's city districts have their own boards representing their local communities. This strong presence of people with a migration background in advisory boards is also reflected in the city council itself, where 25% of representatives have a minority background. In a similar vein, **Rotterdam** draws on an expert pool of migrant communities to reflect on and contribute to the city's policy-making processes. This was crucial especially in the development of anti-racism policies following the city's reckoning with its colonial heritage. **Leipzig** has looked for ways to make it easier for the public to engage with its migrant advisory council. Since 2021, all inhabitants with a migration background could vote online for their preferred council candidate. Subsequently, the elected members of the council were confirmed by the city council. To engage migrant communities in these elections, Leipzig organised a large-scale multilingual and digital information campaign.

Support for migrant-led organisations

Several cities have reported on their support for civil society, especially migrant organisations, as an additional way to remove barriers to the participation of migrant communities in city life. **Leipzig's** Department of Migration and Integration provides the possibility of supporting migrant organisations through a grant from the city. Four organisations in 2020 and five different ones in 2021 benefitted from this opportunity and received funding to cover their running costs. Migrant organisations are active in the fields of (inter)cultural education, counselling and civic participation. Moreover, the city started a new project in 2021 to deepen the exchange between and empowerment of migrant organisations, providing eight open spaces and six thematic workshops for their mostly volunteer staff. **Riga** launches project competitions for NGOs aimed at promoting an inclusive society. The approved projects in 2020 and 2021 supported civic participation measures for the integration of newcomers in society and promotion of intercultural dialogue. Through the AMIF-funded VALUES project led by Eurocities, **Cesena** set up a consultative roundtable of 23 volunteering associations of citizens and inhabitants with or without a migration background. The main aim of this roundtable is to facilitate the integration of migrant communities through public participatory processes and exchanges with the municipality and cooperation between civil society organisations.



Participative budgeting

Involving a city's population in policy processes through participatory budgeting is another approach that is gaining more and more traction. While participatory budgeting mostly does not target people with a migrant background explicitly, access to proposing and voting on citizens' projects is facilitated for migrant communities by targeting specific neighbourhoods, reducing red tape and removing barriers to one's citizen status. In line with the principles of participatory budgeting, **Paris** allows any Parisian citizen to come forward and propose a project for implementation, regardless of their origin, nationality or administrative status. More specifically, the city's participatory budget includes an envelope that is dedicated to projects in neighbourhoods included in the 'Politique de la Ville' approach to reduce social inequalities, encouraging the participation of inhabitants with a migration background. In **Riga** the participatory budget was introduced in 2019, allowing anyone at least 16 years old with a registered address in the city or any NGO registered in Riga to submit their proposals to the municipality.⁹ Similarly, **Helsinki** launched a model of participatory budgeting in 2018. This budget rose

to a total of €8.8 million in 2020-21 for the implementation of ideas proposed by citizens. The total budget is divided between the major districts according to population size, with a fifth reserved for the implementation of proposals that apply to the entire city. Voting on the proposals takes place online and is accessible to anyone over 12 regardless of their place of residence. **Bilbao** also includes residents in policy-making processes through participatory budgeting. Among the types of projects that can be proposed are initiatives linked to coexistence, immigration and integration, and interculturality. **Malmo** has introduced 'The Malmo Initiative', a digital platform where the city's inhabitants can propose and comment on the municipality's responsibilities, including supporting new programmes.

⁹ More information is available at <https://bit.ly/3efSBwT>.

Cities as service providers

A key focus of the Integrating Cities Charter concerns the city's role as a service provider for its local population. The commitments subsumed under this role include the following: supporting equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, particularly access to language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education (Commitment 4); and ensuring that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers (Commitment 5). The following sections summarise the cities' reports about their work on these commitments.

4. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city supports equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, particularly access to language learning, housing, employment, health, social care and education

The signatory cities of the Integrating Cities Charter commit to being inclusive service providers. This takes the form of specific actions to support equal access for migrants to services to which they are entitled, such as education and language learning, housing, employment, health and social care. In general, cities have centralised services to facilitate access to migrants from a single point of entry and provide services in several languages spoken by the migrant community (thanks in part to multilingual city staff).

Cities put in place measures to ensure equal access to services, including extra support to overcome the obstacles migrants face in accessing services, particularly online (set up as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic). In 2020, **Berlin's** Senate Department for Education provided digital hardware, such as laptops or tablets, to families with little income to ensure equal access to home schooling. As of 2021, **Bilbao** organised digital technology courses for migrant

associations with the aim of tackling migrants' digital divide in the framework of the Plan of Measures for Social Cohesion, Economic and Employment Reactivation and Culture of Bilbao. **Cesena's** New Municipal Family Agency was established in 2021 to respond to the pandemic crisis with innovative services for vulnerable citizens and parents with children in school.

Box 2: Milan for Inclusion Centre

The one-stop shop Milan for Inclusion Centre provides newcomers, residents with a migration background, and refugees with tools to integrate and actively participate in society, by offering tailor-made integration programmes, information about administrative procedures, housing solutions, language courses, support and coaching for education and career development. The centre was designed based on human rights principles and Barcelona's SAIER and Antwerp's ATLAS one-stop shop. A prototype of the centre was opened in November 2020 thanks to funds from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and in the summer of 2022 was expanded thanks to funds allocated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies.

The centre:

- provides information, guidance and advice to people of non-Italian citizenship on matters concerning their legal status, settling options and social inclusion paths;
- provides information, guidance and advice to other municipal services, institutions and organisations present in the city.

Centralisation of services: one-stop shops, welcome points and international houses

To ensure equal access for migrants and refugees, cities have centralised services by setting up ad-hoc departments or one-stop shops to tailor access to services for vulnerable groups who otherwise would have difficulties in accessing those services.

Riga's support centre for Ukrainian refugees was established on 4 March 2022, and operates as a one-stop shop to provide municipal and state services. **Barcelona's** Service for Migrants and Refugees (SAIER) continues to provide to all residents living in Barcelona language courses and resources to access services related to housing, employment, health, social care and education. Barcelona's one-stop shop inspired **Milan**, which in the summer of 2022 opened the Milan for Inclusion Centre, a one-stop shop designed to centralise all services provided to residents with a migration background and refugees (see Box 2 below). Similarly, **Cesena's** municipal foreigners' desk refers migrants to dedicated public services (health, educational, legal, employment). **Oulu** is in the process of setting up an International House for migrants, and the Oulu Talent Hub caters to the needs of migrant students and spouses in Oulu by developing opportunities and services for international recruitment in the whole region. **Toronto's** Newcomer Services Kiosk Programme allows newcomers,

regardless of immigration status, to meet one-on-one with trained settlement workers at City of Toronto facilities to access information about all key services offered by the City and in the community.¹⁰

Multilingual city services and staff

Similar to the previous reporting period,¹¹ cities continue to offer their services in several languages spoken by the migrant community. **Barcelona** provides interpretation and mediation services through the one-stop shop SAIER, while **Berlin**, in cooperation with migrant associations, consistently offers information in multiple languages. **Bilbao** welcomes families who have recently moved to the city, by providing material with concise, clear and comprehensible information in seven languages on the Basque Country education system. In the most critical phases of the pandemic, **Cesena** activated new telephone and online channels to facilitate access of families with minors and single women to social and territorial services, including translation and linguistic mediation. **Leipzig's** Welcome Centre organised multilingual online information events for migrants, including information on the pandemic to ensure equal access to all municipal services. The city extended funding for the Language and Cultural Translation Services and now more service providers are eligible to use the service. Nevertheless, the city highlighted the urgent need for additional translating services in the health sector, especially for traumatised refugees.

¹⁰ In response to Covid-19 the programme transitioned to virtual service delivery to ensure newcomers were able to access services throughout the pandemic.

¹¹ Eurocities, (2020), 4th Integrating Cities report, available at <https://bit.ly/3rGmV6L>.



In the framework of the Charter Ghent Accessible City, one of **Ghent's** main priorities is the integration of newcomers through accessible communication. This includes training city staff to provide better services to non-native Dutch speakers, using language tools for translation or video remote interpreting, and providing additional opportunities for citizens who want to learn Dutch. **Vienna's** city administration staff speak many of the main migrant languages in Vienna, which reflect the city's diversity.

Language learning and integration courses

Language learning was deemed crucial to effective inclusion in local communities and cities increased their efforts in providing language classes and cultural mediation services. In many cities, language classes are paired with integration courses that provide information on local culture. In 2020, **Bilbao** carried out a literacy programme and Spanish classes for foreigners in a situation of or at risk of exclusion.¹² In **Cesena**, the Centre for Foreigners offers free Italian language courses (for illiterate, low-medium and high education levels) within the offices of Cesena's 12 city districts. Specific services, such as linguistic and cultural mediation, can be activated on request by the districts' schools or for citizens in vulnerable situations.

In **Helsinki**, newcomers have the right to take part in free-of-charge integration courses to learn the Finnish or Swedish language and on Finnish culture, working life and strategies for job seeking. These courses are also open to migrants who have already lived in the country for a longer period of time and unemployment benefits are provided by the state during the training. The city and metropolitan area of **Nantes** are implementing a project (*parcours linguistiques*) to accurately evaluate the individual needs of those who wish to learn French for professional or social reasons. In **Riga**, proficiency in the official national language is one of the preconditions for a successful integration process. Latvian language classes are provided by city-funded projects. Since December 2021, the municipality has been organising language clubs in cooperation with NGOs.

Most cities provide language classes free of charge, but in Austria, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands¹³ migrants must pay to attend compulsory language classes and/or integration and civic courses. Some cities have implemented measures to support migrants with limited financial means. In **Vienna**, learners receive financial assistance and civic courses are free of charge. In **Ghent**, the Integration Agency developed a greater supply of online Dutch lessons and civic orientation classes compared to previous years because integration courses are no longer free, due to recent regional legislation.¹⁴ Through a collaboration of several local stakeholders, **Nuremberg's** Central Contact Point (ZAMBe) can facilitate language courses for people who cannot access low-threshold

¹² The programme, mainly aimed at learning Spanish, was complemented with other services such as: support with homework for minors in schools, meeting and dialogue spaces, computer literacy classes, introduction to the Basque language, guidance service and preparation for official exams. A total of 230 people participate in this programme (2020-21 academic year).

¹³ Based on information collected in the 2021 European Migration Network Annual report, available at <https://bit.ly/3enjizt>.

¹⁴ Legislation recently approved by the Flanders Region established that newcomers would pay up to €450 to complete their compulsory integration course. Newcomers are now obliged to participate in voluntary work, an internship or a buddy project and there will be a greater focus on guidance to enter the labour market. The newcomer's integration path will be tailor-made to the individual.

German courses or integration courses. The pilot project of this collaboration is the 'Municipal German Language Acquisition Programme', financed by the municipality itself.¹⁵ **Rotterdam's** approach, in line with the country's 2022 Integration Act, focuses on civic participation in addition to language learning, and imparts a greater command of Dutch. Migrants receive help in finding a school for integration classes and in some cases obtain a government loan to pay for them.

Housing

Housing is one of the most difficult services to access for most migrants, particularly newcomers. The biggest challenge in most reporting cities is the lack of affordable housing and overcrowded dwellings. Cities provide specialised support to help migrants find accommodation, including mediation services to resolve housing conflicts, information and guidance on legal rights and on the local housing market, and support and counselling to find proper accommodation.

Cesena runs a housing social mediation service for vulnerable people and families in public housing. The Centre for Foreigners provides dedicated services, such as legal support, help with legal documents, and information on housing solutions for refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented migrants. In **Malmö**, the Housing Department offers free-of-charge information, guidance and advice regarding the Swedish housing market and how to apply for social housing to all city inhabitants, including newly arrived migrants. **Stockholm** offers temporary housing for newcomers who are registered with the municipality through the Migration Agency according to the Swedish Settlement Act.¹⁶

In **Vienna**, migrants who have lived in the city for five years or longer and have EU permanent residence status have access to city-owned housing. Of the 500,000 residents in some 220,000 municipal flats, 51% have a migration background.¹⁷ Residents with permanent residence status and the required financial means (thresholds, maximum income and financial means for building costs) have access to publicly funded housing. Some 60% of all Viennese live in publicly funded housing.

Employment and education

With regard to access to employment, cities implement long-term measures to accompany migrants in their search for a job. Recent studies show that unemployment rates of third-country nationals were comparatively higher than those of nationals.¹⁸ During the reporting period, cities implemented additional measures to support access to the labour market and education opportunities and promote entrepreneurship amongst the migrant population.

Bristol is currently developing a model to support people who have no recourse to public funds, by heeding lessons learnt during the pandemic. In **Helsinki**, public employment services, such as vocational training and courses in job-seeking skills, are available to migrants and other individuals.¹⁹ **Malmö** has been able to give several persons work experience within the municipal organisation (though not all are newly arrived immigrants). Other examples are the 'Introduktionsjobb' and 'Nystartsjobb' programmes that aim to help newly arrived migrants find jobs in cooperation with the national Swedish employment office.

Cities are aware of the importance of training and education for migrant job seekers and are developing initiatives to support recognition of skills and equal access to education opportunities. **Bristol's** Hope Virtual School supports children in care, a significant percentage of whom are unaccompanied asylum-seeking minors. This support includes the provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes through a Learning and Community Team and other providers. In **Stockholm**, migrants' lower education levels are the greatest risk factor for falling into unemployment and exclusion. The Public Employment Service and the city aim to develop new ways to find quick paths to education and work for migrants, for example by attracting employers' interest in hiring people with few skills or little formal education.

¹⁵ More information about the 'Municipal German Language Acquisition Programme' is available (in German) at <https://bit.ly/3RlwBZ2>.

¹⁶ Newcomers can have temporary housing for a maximum of two years. After that, these households receive extra support to find other accommodation, especially when migrants are unemployed (as having a job and fixed income are often prerequisites to renting a house).

¹⁷ Vienna Integration Monitor 2020, <https://bit.ly/2yQyuwa>.

¹⁸ Migrant integration statistics - regional labour market indicators, Eurostat, May 2021, <https://bit.ly/3RQPMQ4>.

¹⁹ The Helsinki Education Department finished a large integration project. It included building the model for newly arrived families and staff members, the staff training programme on language-awareness, skills recognition and combatting racism, totalling over 15,000 training sessions. In addition, it included piloting multilingual advisors who help pupils and parents with practical issues and foster cooperation with families in several languages.

5. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city ensures that migrants' needs are understood and met by service providers

As described in the previous section, cities have developed measures to facilitate access to services for migrants and vulnerable groups. To do so, cities cooperate with civil society to collect information about migrants' needs and ensure that all service providers deliver the same standards. Cities also continue to encourage migrant-led organisations and local advisory councils to gather data about migrants' current status and obstacles to integration. More and more cities implemented projects and studies on migrants' needs.

Working closely with civil society organisations

Cooperation with relevant stakeholders was deemed crucial by reporting cities to better respond to migrants' needs. For example, **Barcelona** works closely with civil society through the one-stop shop SAIER, which is managed by local NGOs specialised in migration. **Riga**'s Advisory Council on Society Integration is a consultative body of the Riga City Council, established in 2010 to ensure participation of the non-governmental sector in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the city's municipal society integration policy.²⁰ **Toronto** continues to work closely with the four quadrant Local Immigration Partnerships, which are consortiums of agencies that provide direct services to migrants. This provides the City with ongoing information about the needs of migrants living in Toronto from the perspective of service providers and community organisers.

In recent years, cities further increased the cooperation and engagement of migrant-led organisations and local councils. By working closely with migrant-led organisations, in particular to communicate information related to Covid-19 infections, **Berlin** adapted its communication mechanisms, by engaging with important figures of the communities or rolling out decentralised information points or vaccination options.



²⁰ The council consists of the municipality's representatives, City Council members and NGO representatives. It operates in accordance with the 'Regulations of the Riga City Advisory Council on Society Integration'.



Getting data from projects, studies and information campaigns

Cities reported on projects, studies and campaigns used to collect information about migrant communities' needs, encourage citizen participation and fight discrimination. The Intercultural Community Intervention project,²¹ developed in some **Bilbao** neighbourhoods (Irala, Ametzola, Bilbao la Vieja, San Francisco, Zabala y Otxarkoaga), created spaces where citizens of diverse origin could express their needs and describe their situations to the Bilbao City Council. Bilbao also has several programmes specifically addressing the needs of migrant women and youth.²²

Cesena, under the Regional Manifesto of Intercultural Institutional Communication, identified and defined good practices for communicating in an inclusive way for use by municipal staff and local stakeholders, including journalists and service managers. Through the 'Toronto For All' public education initiative, and the Toronto Newcomer Day, **Toronto**

will generate dialogue among residents by bringing together community and government agencies, newcomers and other stakeholders.²³ In **Leipzig**, a migrant survey (published in December 2021) was used to develop measures for improving the living conditions and needs of migrants. This resulted in a database that was used to develop new and ongoing measures of the city's 'Overall Concept for the Integration of Migrants' in Leipzig, as well as special programmes and other plans.

²¹ 'Barrios en marcha' project, more information available at <https://bit.ly/3fO61QR>.

²² The Municipal Women, Health and Violence programme, the programme for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation, the Programme for intervention with young people without family references.

²³ Toronto Newcomer Day is an annual event hosted by the mayor to officially welcome newcomers to Toronto and celebrate their many contributions. The Newcomer Day Information Fair provides newcomers with vital information about City and community services to support their settlement process. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the 2020 and 2021 events transitioned to a virtual format.

Cities as employers

The signatory cities to the Integrating Cities Charter committed – in their role as employers – to opening up their administration to diversity and making sure that their work environments are free of discrimination and that employees understand and respect diversity and equality principles. The cities work according to the following three commitments: taking steps where required to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of the administration's workforce across all staffing levels (Commitment 6); ensuring that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by their managers and colleagues (Commitment 7); and ensuring that staff understand and respect diversity and equality issues (Commitment 8). The three sections below report on the cities' continuous efforts in building city staff diversity, equity and inclusion capacity.

6. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city takes steps where required to reflect the city's diversity in the composition of its workforce across all staffing levels

The cities take steps of various scale to ensure that diversity is reflected in the composition of their workforces across all staffing levels. Opening up city administrations to diversity is not only viewed as a source of enrichment but also as a way to better understand and respond to the needs and concerns of an increasingly diverse population.

Strategies and action plans to make recruitment more inclusive

Most of the cities report having adopted anti-discrimination measures or recruitment strategies to create a more inclusive work environment. In June 2021, **Berlin** passed the 'Act for the Promotion of Participation' of people with migration backgrounds. This Act puts in place several measures, including targeted job vacancies, with the aim of reflecting the proportion of the population with a migration background across all levels in the city administration. **Helsinki** has adopted its new strategy, 'A place of Growth', for 2021-25, which reaffirms the city's commitment to promoting non-discrimination, equality and human rights in its operations. The city has implemented various projects to implement these principles, including the use of a virtual training method for group discussions. Also, after a successful anonymised recruitment pilot project, the city has now included anonymous recruiting as part of its recruitment process. To encourage its use, Helsinki has developed materials and training courses for managers. In another pilot project, English will become the

working language in selected working units to help recruit people who are not fluent in Finnish or Swedish.

In its internal Charter, **Nantes** commits to fighting against all discrimination and promoting diversity and equal treatment at work, notably through targeted job vacancies and by implementing a welcoming policy to raise awareness among new staff members of their right to be protected against workplace discrimination. Similarly, some cities, such as **Leipzig**, have set diversity and interculturality goals for the city to help recruit – and keep – employees with a migration background. Oslo is also about to adopt a new action plan on the recruitment of minority employees. The plan will include measures against bias in the recruitment process, with a focus on manager-level positions and diversity promotion as a way to ensure quality of services and citizens' trust. More practically, in a constant effort to improve its work environment, **Malmo** has started a collaboration with an external organisation called 'Malmo against Discrimination' to help the city understand why it encounters difficulties in attracting diverse candidates and what tools can be implemented to improve the diversity of its workforce. The city is also moving towards a more competency-based and anonymised recruitment process.

Boards and panels to support inclusive recruitment

In some cities, dedicated bodies or positions have been put in place to support their commitment to diversity. **Bristol** employs a 'Diversity, Inclusion and Employee Initiatives Manager' whose role includes providing advice to the Human Resources Department on recruitment processes (e.g. where to advertise jobs) and offering one-to-one support to staff members. In **Rotterdam**, the 'Inclusivity Panel', which is comprised of employees, makes on-request recommendations to recruiters and management staff about the recruitment and selection process. **Toronto** has adopted an 'Executive Talent Forum' made up of senior officials across all sections of the organisation to ensure that a diverse workforce is maintained when filling vacancies that are at director level and above.

Rotterdam trains management staff, recruiters and employees to tackle unconscious bias in the recruitment and selection process, with special attention for middle management positions. In the selection process of certain positions, when ranking applicants, **Barcelona** rewards the knowledge of foreign languages spoken in the city with extra points. Some cities, such as **Leipzig** and **Bristol** – the latter via its 'Our City, Your Jobs' recruitment event – directly approach people with a migrant background to advertise job and career opportunities within the public sector.



Supporting diverse staff beyond recruitment

Beyond recruitment practices, some cities provide extra support to make sure staff members with a migrant background are offered equal opportunities for growth. In **Bristol**, the city council has introduced the award-winning 'Stepping Up' programme, a leadership career progression programme aimed at increasing the diversity of senior leadership within public and private sector employers. **Paris** offers French language courses to staff with little command of French.

Opening up the recruitment process to diversity is not an easy task. Legal requirements on the nationality of public servants are often cited as an impediment to reaching this goal.

Milan uses temporary contracts to overcome that obstacle and recruit cultural mediators, interpreters and intercultural communication experts with a foreign background, mainly for front desk services. In general, cities report that management positions are less likely to be filled by people with a migrant background. **Malmo** points out that one of its biggest challenges is to fight stereotypes and prejudices of those who view certain roles and positions as rightfully belonging to 'white middle-aged men'. This is a challenge that all cities can relate to.

7. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city ensures that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by their managers and colleagues

Many cities implement measures to make sure that all staff, including staff with a migrant background, experience fair and equal treatment by their managers and colleagues. Their commitment to an inclusive and discrimination-free work environment is often reflected in protocols or codes of conduct that complement the existing legal framework. They also report the existence of designated contact persons or bodies to which discriminatory behaviour can be safely reported.

In **Toronto**, employee engagement is one of the six drivers of 'Excellence Toronto', the City's corporate-wide continuous improvement and innovation initiative, which examines how people are treated, encouraged, supported and enabled to contribute to the organisation's overall success. **Leipzig** has encouraged all corporations that are fully or partially owned by the city to sign a diversity charter and to implement diversity management within their corporations. In April 2021, **Paris** published the leaflet 'Stop racism at work! Let's take action together!', which describes what is considered racism at work and all the forms it can take, illustrated by real examples. The document invites managers to prevent and act upon any discriminatory behaviour – whether intentional or not – and identifies actions victims and witnesses can take. **Oulu** has published a good behaviour guide for employees, which includes a clear procedure for complaints and sanctions in case of discrimination.

On a yearly basis, **Toronto** conducts a confidential survey of all staff, called 'Count Yourself In', to better understand its diverse workforce, with the aim of creating a public service that reflects the population it serves and ensuring an engaged, diverse and productive workforce that meets current and future needs. Similarly, since 2021 **Rotterdam** has included in its annual employee satisfaction survey questions on inclusion and diversity. Based on the resulting data, each department and team can start a conversation about values and principles and determine which actions to take to improve their degree of inclusion.

Cesena reported that employees are evaluated on the basis of not only their work performance but also of the principles of conduct embodied in the city's personnel and disciplinary codes. Similarly, in **Berlin**, diversity competence is taken into account when assessing the professional performance of staff, with the possibility of receiving further training. The training is compulsory for management positions, as in **Nuremberg**. In **Malmo**, management teams organise a yearly workshop to investigate and analyse the risks of discrimination in their operational units' working conditions, terms of employment, recruitment and promotion, training and work-life balance status.

8. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city ensures that staff understand and respect the values of diversity and equality

To build an inclusive workplace, employers must make sure that staff understand and respect the values of diversity and equality. Many cities therefore invest considerable efforts into training their civil servants on these principles.

Helsinki has organised over 15,000 sessions on language awareness, skills recognition and racism awareness. In **Vienna**, 24,200 employees have attended courses and training programmes on diversity over the past three years. **Nantes** reported having trained more than 6,000 employees on equality at work, complemented by the opening of an internal hotline for staff to report discrimination and unequal treatment. In addition, since 2020 the city has contracted a service to provide legal information about foreigners to help civil servants and service providers understand migrants' needs. **Stockholm** reported offering training courses on diversity and equality to its staff to ensure that these values are well understood and respected in the workplace. In 2021, **Riga** focused on improving teachers' skills in intercultural dialogue and organised several educational events to support teachers in the successful integration of newcomers' children at school. In 2021, **Cesena** adhered to the 'Manifesto of Institutional and Intercultural Communication', which promotes stereotype-free and non-hostile institutional communication and the use of administrative language that is inclusive and respectful of differences. As a result, the municipal communication office and the staff of social services departments attended awareness-raising courses on inclusive language and behaviours. Finally, the annual **Bilbao**'s 'Municipal Staff Training Plan' includes training on interculturality, prejudices, stereotypes, and rumours linked to migrant populations.



Box 3: Participatory process in Nuremberg

Nuremberg is moving towards a more inclusive form of decision-making by relying on the unique knowledge of staff with a migration background to shape its diversity policies. City staff members with a migration background are organised into a network that meets several times a year in a confidential setting to make suggestions for improving city policies that directly affect them. They also hold regular meetings with the personnel office to identify ways to further open up the city administration to diversity. Likewise, in the context of the AMIF-funded project 'Intercultural Opening in Municipalities' (IKÖK), current city administration diversity policies are evaluated through a participatory process. The project aims at improving public services for foreign citizens and increasing the proportion of city staff with a migrant background. In this project, the city carried out interviews and organised workshops with members of the migrant network, migration advice centres and migrant organisations, to identify conditions for success and potential pitfalls in the city's process of opening up interculturality. The final evaluation provides recommendations for action that can be transferred to other municipalities.²⁴ It underlines the essential participation of the target group in the development and implementation of recommendations for action. The 'culturally sensitive approach' should be the cornerstone of the process of opening up a city to intercultural differences. This not only means working on the behaviour and social skills of staff members but also implementing strategic measures that consider differences between citizens and respond to diverse individual needs.



In April 2021, **Toronto** received the Diversio Certification (the global standard for inclusion) for its commitment to workplace equity, diversity and inclusion. In 2019, the City had engaged Diversio to provide a comprehensive analysis of its employee demographics, identities and experiences, as part of its multiyear 'Workforce Equity & Inclusion Plan'. As a result of the analysis, the City received certification for measuring and setting targets to increase diversity at all levels of the organisation and for making a commitment to long-term data tracking. The certification also rewards the City's strategy for improvement implemented through concrete programmes, policies and interventions to drive change. In addition, the City's 'People & Equity' Department launched an 'Equity & Inclusion Honour Roll'. This is an opportunity to profile City divisions that make a unique and substantial effort to advance equity and inclusion within the Toronto Public Service. The Honour Roll seeks to share information about these champions within the organisation, how they earned their title, and what other divisions can do to secure a spot on the next Honour Roll.

²⁴ More information is available (in German) at <https://bit.ly/3MkIKD>.

Cities as buyers of goods and services

While buying a wide range of goods and services, cities play a leadership role in implementing diversity strategies that value and celebrate differences. This section of the report focuses on three commitments of the Integrating Cities Charter: applying principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering (Commitment 9); promoting these principles amongst their contractors (Commitment 10); and fostering the development of a diverse supplier base (Commitment 11). While the procurement of goods and services in an inclusive way requires further improvement, cities are making considerable efforts to meet these three commitments.

9. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city applies principles of equality and diversity in procurement and tendering

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, cities kept ensuring the diversity of companies participating in public tenders and procurement. The public health emergency and its impact on employment have inevitably brought Covid-19-related concerns to the forefront in cities. Some of them, such as **Cesena** and **Helsinki**, have earmarked specific funds to support the local economy and groups at risk of unemployment. Moreover, the context has allowed cities to implement measures such as social clauses in contracts to promote equality and diversity throughout their partnerships and subcontracts.

Barcelona's city council has introduced new public contract conditions that require including information on staff with diverse cultural backgrounds and linguistic knowledge. This is to ensure that all workers carrying out municipal public service contracts reflect the great diversity of Barcelona's citizenry. In a constant effort to apply and monitor social clauses in tendering, some cities, such as **Rotterdam**, pursue procurement policies that apply values of equality, non-discrimination, and inclusivity, and require tenders to reflect the city's values. **Bilbao** has adopted internal instructions that promote social protection, diversity, equality, and the plurality of identities in tendering, underlining the importance of overcoming stereotypes. In 2021, the city included an intercultural perspective as an evaluation criterion in its annual call for grants. This follows up on the city's 2020 guide to intercultural competencies for the development of public administration projects.²⁵ The city and metropolitan area of **Nantes** use social clauses in public contracts as a way to increase employment among particularly vulnerable groups.

²⁵ The guide to intercultural competences is available at <https://bit.ly/3Mr06NZ>.

In early 2022, **Malmo** included equality as a requirement of procurement practices, which was already mandatory for its tenders. Through socially responsible procurement, the city creates employment opportunities by supporting ethnic minority-owned SMEs and reskilling people with a migration background. Furthermore, a specific focus on social profit aims to improve gender equality. In **Bristol**, an equality impact assessment has been put in place, whereby an 'equality team' reviews all tenders for how they meet the public sector equality duty. Moreover, all contracts of £25,000 or more must undergo an equality impact assessment.

10. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city promotes principles of equality and diversity amongst its contractors

Cities continued to show their commitment to promoting equality and diversity among their contractors. In addressing discrimination and barriers to equal opportunity, **Toronto** drives inclusive economic growth. The City's social procurement policy brings diversity into the City's contracting process and workforce development opportunities (e.g., employment and training) for those belonging to an equity-deserving community, for instance by including Indigenous Persons in the local economy.²⁶ In addition, the City has reported a commitment that addresses barriers to access to the labour market for small and medium-sized contractors. In providing access to competitive procurement opportunities, City of Toronto contractors have awarded approximately CA\$10 million in contracts to diverse suppliers.

Some cities, such as **Rotterdam**, have introduced evaluation criteria to ensure that their appointed contractors respect their commitment to a city based on equality and diversity. In **Bristol**, 20% of tenders' scoring is measured according to their social value commitment, one of whose evaluation criteria is the percentage of individuals recruited from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups.

Guidance on equality and diversity has been included in **Helsinki's** sustainable procurement handbook since 2015 and is part of the 2021 procurement handbook. Since 2015, non-discrimination has been a contract requirement, and the 2021-25 city strategy promotes equal rights for everyone. Similarly, in **Malmo** and **Ghent**, every procurement contract includes an anti-discrimination clause. **Paris** implements a

socially responsible purchasing policy by including in its public contracts social clauses to promote the social and professional integration of disadvantaged people, including refugees and newcomers.

11. Integrating Cities Commitment: The city promotes the development of a diverse supplier base

Cities have undertaken efforts to ensure their values of diversity are reflected in their supplier base. These include **Barcelona**, which has recruited staff of diverse origins as part of its 2021-30 interculturality plan. The plan's implementation incorporates requesting the service provider to have demonstrable experience in the field of cultural diversity. Furthermore, it supports the adoption of methodologies empowering people from diverse backgrounds in the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation phases of local projects. When it comes to developing projects in the field of immigration and interculturalism, **Bilbao** relies on providers and entities led by people with migrant backgrounds. The city of **Cesena** applies the principle of rotation, ensuring a diversified supplier base. **Oslo** is setting requirements for non-discriminatory practices for actors with whom the municipality interacts, in compliance with its action plan against hate speech and hateful attitudes.

²⁶ Toronto has the largest indigenous population in Ontario. Indigenous identity refers to those persons who reported identifying with at least one Indigenous group (North American Indian, Métis or Inuit), or those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, or those who reported they were members of an Indian band or First Nation. More information is available at <https://bit.ly/3VqOlPA>.

Conclusion

Cities are the key stakeholders at local level for ensuring equal opportunities and providing integration services for migrants and refugees. In the two and a half years since the last Integrating Cities Report, local authorities have again had to face considerable challenges. The Covid-19 pandemic's impact on public health and the socio-economic prospects of local societies have further exacerbated inequalities in cities and hit vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees particularly hard. The war in Ukraine has led to considerable numbers of refugees fleeing the country and required local authorities to step up to the challenge by welcoming them in their cities. The impact on social services at the local level will be felt for years to come, and cities urgently need additional financial support to cope with these developments.

While the times may be challenging, cities are making further progress in providing integration opportunities to migrants, drawing on their roles and responsibilities as policy-makers, service providers, employers, and buyers of goods and services. This Integrating Cities Report, which draws directly from cities' experiences and reports, has described their initiatives and developments in these four key areas and in the context of their commitments as specified in the Integrating Cities Charter. This report is part of Eurocities' continued contribution to the local implementation of the EU common basic principles on integration.

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