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EUROCITIES Charter on Integrating Cities

Our commitment to integrating migrants and migrant communities in European cities



integrating cities

Integrating Cities Charter

This Charter renews and updates the commitment of EUROCIITIES to the integration of migrants and the promotion of well-managed migration in our increasingly diverse cities.

With the 2004 *“Contribution to Good Governance concerning the integration of immigrants and reception of asylum seekers”*, EUROCIITIES presented a set of common principles for more cohesive and integrated cities. In 2006 this developed into the *Integrating Cities Process* - a joint effort between EUROCIITIES and the European Commission to promote local level implementation of the EU Common Basic Principles on Integration. This process was formalised in a partnership between EUROCIITIES and the European Commission in the 2007 *Milan Declaration*. It encompasses:

- the Integrating Cities Conference Series which brings together cities, the European Commission, national governments and civil society around integration issues. The first four conferences took place in Rotterdam, Milan, Berlin and London;
- a regular policy dialogue on integration between city representatives and the European Commission; and
- projects of mutual learning between cities in the field of integration governance.

This Charter was developed by the EUROCIITIES Working Group Migration & Integration and the cities of Amsterdam, Berlin, Leeds, London and Rome as partners in the *“Diversity and Equality in European Cities”* project - a peer review project co-funded by the European Fund for the Integration of Third Country Nationals.

We, the undersigned Mayors, recognise and value the contribution immigration and migrants have made to European cities. Over the past decades and centuries, immigrants have arrived with fresh experiences and new ideas that have brought progress in science, arts, commerce and economic development. They play a leading role in creating the diversity and vibrancy we experience in our cities today.

This pattern continues. More open economic cooperation and challenges such as conflict and climate change increase migration to Europe and within Europe. The majority of immigrants who come to work, study, join family members or seek asylum choose to come to cities. Some will stay for limited periods of time and many will choose to settle and make the city their home.

We acknowledge that migration brings economic, cultural and social benefits as well as challenges. While many migrants prosper, others are often the poorest in our cities. This inequality not only impedes the full realisation of the benefits of immigration, but also acts as a barrier to integration.

Integration is a two-way process, built on positive engagement by both newcomers and established residents. The process takes in all aspects of life: economic, social, cultural, civic and political, and continues a long time after arrival. Learning and speaking the official language of the city is crucial to this process and is essential to interaction. The greatest challenge we face is polarisation and conflict between newcomers and established residents when integration fails.

With a long history of receiving newcomers in European cities, we the Mayors, play a central role in making integration work in cities and shaping national and European integration policies.

Our vision of integration is one where all city residents can develop their full potential and have an equal chance of a life in safety and dignity. Cities conceive integration policies within a broader framework of diversity and equality, encompassing ethnic origin and religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability, and many have developed dedicated integration strategies.

This Integrating Cities Charter harnesses our duties and responsibilities as policy-makers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services to provide equal opportunities for all residents, to integrate migrants, and to embrace the diversity of the population that is a reality in our cities.

Delivering the Charter

As policy-makers we will:

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

As service providers we will:

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

As employers we will:

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

As buyers of goods and services we will:

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

At this fourth Integrating Cities Conference in London, we commit, on the basis of this Charter, to advance towards the aspirations we have stated as policy-makers, service providers, employers and buyers of goods and services. To deliver this we commit to:

- Developing and delivering an action plan to implement this Charter, either as part of a wider equality and diversity strategy or as a specific integration strategy, that reflects the institutional circumstances of our cities;
- Monitoring our progress towards our aspirations stated in this Charter based on a common set of indicators and publishing a report on the outcomes through EUROCITIES in 2011;
- Continuing our efforts, through peer reviews and other forms of mutual learning and knowledge exchange, to improve local integration policies;
- Engaging, together with EUROCITIES, in dialogue with national governments and European institutions on how to improve support for cities in the field of integration.

To support this, we ask European institutions to:

- Ensure European legislation on competition does not harm the application of social criteria in public procurement and public service provision; provide a clear legal framework and practical guidance on how to apply social criteria within these areas;
- Support programmes that raise awareness and develop the capacity of service providers to respond to the demands of a diverse population in cities;
- Provide support through funds and practical information for the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation and diversity policies;
- Support learning processes that help cities to meet the goals set out in this Charter and to monitor progress.

¹ The signatories of this Charter have different public duties for the delivery of public services. Where the signatory city is the direct service provider they agree to the provisions of this Charter. Where the signatory city is not the direct service provider, they agree to advocate the provisions of this charter with the service providers.

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