

REPORT
**EXAMPLES OF
GOOD PRACTICE
IN COMBATING
DISCRIMINATION AT
THE LOCAL LEVEL**



Publisher: Human Rights House Zagreb
Publisher represented by: Ivan Novosel
Written by: Klara Horvat and Dženana Kalamujić
Translated by: Hana Dvornik, Riječ i savjet / Word of Advice
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The Human Rights House Zagreb is a human rights organisation established in 2008 as a network of civil society organisations with the goal of protecting and promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The HRH's vision is to build a democratic, pluralist and inclusive society founded upon the values of human rights, the rule of law, social justice and solidarity. The HRH contributes to the protection, promotion, developing and advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms through research, monitoring, public advocacy and education. By publishing annual human rights reviews, thematic reports and statements, we help to create better laws and public policies.

www.kucaljudskihprava.hr • kontakt@kucaljudskihprava.hr

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INTRODUCTION

The background features a complex geometric design. A light blue trapezoidal shape is positioned in the upper right quadrant. A diagonal band of olive green runs from the middle left towards the bottom center. The remaining areas are filled with various shades of yellow, creating a vibrant, abstract composition.

This report, “Examples of Good Practices in Combating Discrimination at the Local Level”, was produced as part of the “Network of Cities and NGOs for Combating Racism and Discrimination” project, carried out since November 2017 by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights (YIHR), the Human Rights House Zagreb (HRH) and the European Grassroots Antiracist Movement (EGAM). The project aims to improve local-level protection mechanisms against discrimination and racism, by encouraging cooperation between cities and local civil society organisations. It seeks to enhance inter-sectoral cooperation in Croatia and provide an insight into local and international standards and approaches to combating discrimination and racism in order to stimulate local stakeholders’ engagement around these issues.

The key problem the project addresses is the lack of effective measures to promote diversity and combat racism and all forms of discrimination at the local level in Croatia. The project was preceded by an analysis of local strategies for tackling racism, xenophobia, discrimination and related forms of intolerance, conducted in 2016 by the Youth Initiative for Human Rights.¹ The local strategies of all Croatian cities with populations of more than 35,000 were analysed. Four cities in Croatia did not have a developed strategic plan, which made it impossible to analyse the ways local communities engaged in combating racism and other forms of intolerance. As far as the other cities are concerned, only Rijeka and Zagreb had strategic plans that touched on individual questions related to minority social groups (for instance, financing national minorities’ cultural projects). However, neither city had envisaged measures that concerned social groups other than national minorities, that are nevertheless susceptible to discrimination.²

Despite there being no measures and strategies to combat discrimination and promote diversity at the local level, many cities have shown an interest in becoming involved in a project whose activities would address the observed problems. In line with

the project's goal, six Croatian cities joined in the project. In selecting the cities, it was sought to encompass cities of various sizes, and to have an even geographic distribution.

A network of cities was set up, comprising the cities of Kaštela, Knin, Rijeka, Samobor, Sisak and Varaždin, whose representatives participated in meetings and strategic planning workshops, on the basis of which draft action plans to combat discrimination at the local level were developed for each individual city. The aim of the proposed action plans is to offer concrete measures to combat discrimination at the local level; measures that can easily be implemented within the cities' existing local development strategies, thus contributing to creating an open, inclusive and tolerant society and improving their citizens' quality of life. This report seeks to highlight the importance of combating discrimination at the local level and present examples of good practice that might be of use to local communities in Croatia as guidelines in adopting concrete measures to combat discrimination and promote diversity within the community.

- 1 Youth Initiative for Human Rights (2016), Report: Local Strategies on Tackling Racism, Xenophobia, Discrimination and Related Intolerances (Izveštje: Lokalne strategije za suzbijanje rasizma, ksenofobije, diskriminacije i povezanih netolerancija), Available at: <http://yihhr.hr/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Analiza-lokalnih-strategija-za-suzbijanje-rasizma-ksenofobija-diskriminacije-i-povezanih-netolerancija.pdf> (in Croatian and English)
- 2 Ibid.



**IMPORTANCE
OF COMBATING
DISCRIMINATION AT
THE LOCAL LEVEL**



Local self-government units play a key role in the process of implementing regulations and strategic documents, and due to their highest degree of acquaintance with local needs and challenges, are best placed to manage local development. It is precisely for this reason that they are capable of powerfully contributing to improving the quality of life of all members of the local community, and an active civil society and its good cooperation with local authorities represents an essential precondition to realise this goal.

The right to non-discrimination is a universal human right, guaranteed by a number of international instruments, while the principle of equal treatment is one of the fundamental values of the European Union as well as the Republic of Croatia, enshrined in the Constitution as one of its highest constitutional values.

International-level documents primarily include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,³ the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁴ and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁵ adopted by the United Nations, as well as the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.⁶ At European Union level, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union⁷ is a document that is legally binding for all Member States. In national legislation, in addition to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia,⁸ discrimination is prohibited by the Anti-Discrimination Act⁹ as the general anti-discrimination law, as well as provisions in a number of other acts, such as the Gender Equality Act,¹⁰ the Criminal Code,¹¹ the Labour Act¹² etc. With a view to establishing a comprehensive system of protection against discrimination, Croatia has adopted a National Plan for Combating Discrimination for the period from 2017 to 2022,¹³ as a strategic document of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which sets priorities and recommends objectives in combating discrimination, based on an analysis of the current

situation. In addition to this document, the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Plan for Combating Discrimination for the period from 2017 to 2019¹⁴ has also been adopted, as the operational document establishing specific measures for the implementation of the National Plan.

Combating discrimination at the local level is an important task for municipalities and cities, as it is precisely municipal and city institutions that are the closest to the citizens, and local officials' and staff's acquaintance with the anti-discrimination legislative framework is extremely important for them to avoid discriminatory behaviour in their own conduct, but also to act preventively. A local self-government unit plays an essential role in linking up institutions and citizens. Therefore, it is of high importance to focus on the abilities of local authorities to support their citizens in exercising their rights. Precisely due to their broad horizontal reach, cities have access to a variety of local stakeholders, civil society organisations and civic initiatives, which greatly facilitates gathering and disseminating information, as well as allowing the ability to assess the necessity and influence of local programmes and activities. Strategic measures focused on combating discrimination may significantly contribute to realising previously defined strategic objectives of local community development, and thus provide support to efforts to bring about an inclusive, pluralist and equal society.

Adopting strategic documents focused on combating discrimination at the level of cities, municipalities and counties, or including additional measures with this objective in the existing strategic documents often does not require significant funds, relative to the effect such measures may have on achieving an inclusive social environment and raising citizens' quality of life. Proposals for strategic measures ought to be the result of cooperation and continual dialogue between representatives of the local government, non-governmental organisations and all interested citizens. As part of this dialogue,

it would be possible to carry out an analysis of the problems and deficiencies in the exercise and respect for human rights in the community. With a view to promoting politics of equality and equal opportunity for all citizens, the aforementioned includes determining the level of need for upgrading the existing local instruments of human rights protection that would increase the efforts to realise a more inclusive social environment, founded upon the protection and promotion of the highest human rights standards. The strategic goals should provide concrete measures to combat discrimination at the local level, measures that it would be easy to implement within the existing local development strategies, thus contributing to improving citizens' quality of life.

In addition, creating a stimulating environment for the development of civil society is a fundamental precondition for democracy and the political stability of a society that might be improved by setting up a platform for structured dialogue between local authorities and civil society organisations. Cooperation between local self-government units and the civil society is extremely important when it comes to designing, implementing and monitoring the implementation of local policies of direct concern for citizens. The role of local civil society organisations is especially significant in the promotion of human rights through active participation in the process of implementing decisions of bodies of local self-government units and monitoring their implementation. Establishing a distinct expert, advisory and coordinating task force within the framework of the local administrative structure (for instance, a Council for the development of civil society) might contribute to broadening the sphere of action for local civil society associations and their active participation within the local community, thus strengthening their general contribution to human rights protection as well as increasing the living standard of the local population.

- 3** The UN General Assembly (1948), Universal Declaration of Human Rights, available at: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- 4** The UN General Assembly (1966), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, available at: <http://www.un-documents.net/iccpr.htm>
- 5** The UN General Assembly (1966), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, available at: <http://www.un-documents.net/icescr.htm>
- 6** Council of Europe (1950), The Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, available at: https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf (all protocols to the Convention available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/results/subject/3>)
- 7** European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016P/TXT>
- 8** The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Ustav Republike Hrvatske) (O.G. 56/90, 135/97, 8/98, 113/00, 124/00, 28/01, 41/01, 55/01, 76/10, 85/10, 05/14) available at: http://www.sabor.hr/sites/default/files/uploads/inline-files/CONSTITUTION_CROATIA.pdf
- 9** Anti-Discrimination Act (Zakon o suzbijanju diskriminacije) (O.G. 85/08, 112/12)
- 10** Gender Equality Act (Zakon o ravnopravnosti spolova) (O.G. 82/08, 69/17)
- 11** Criminal Code (Kazneni zakon) (O.G. 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17)
- 12** Labour Act (Zakon o radu) (O.G. 93/14, 127/17)
- 13** Government of the Republic of Croatia, National Plan for Combating Discrimination (Nacionalni plan za borbu protiv diskriminacije) for the period from 2017 to 2022, available at: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti//Nacionalni%20plan%20za%20borbu%20protiv%20diskriminacije%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202017.%20do%202022..pdf> (in Croatian)
- 14** Government of the Republic of Croatia, Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Plan for Combating Discrimination (Akcijski plan za provedbu Nacionalnog plana za borbu protiv diskriminacije) for the period from 2017 to 2019, available at: <https://ljudskaprava.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti//Akcijski%20plan%20za%20provedbu%20Nacionalnog%20plana%20za%20borbu%20protiv%20diskriminacije%20za%20razdoblje%20od%202017.%20do%202019.%20godine.pdf> (in Croatian)



**NETWORKING CITIES AS
AN EFFICIENT METHOD
FOR COMBATING
DISCRIMINATION**



Combating discrimination at the local level by no means implies isolating cities in approaching and solving this problem. The development of the entire surrounding area, as well as cooperating with wide range of municipalities and cities, are exceptionally significant to the overall development of a local community. Pooling common potentials and local communities' resources inevitably strengthens their capacities for finding adequate solutions to respond to real social challenges and needs. Although each local community reflects different characteristics and needs of its citizens, discrimination of some form is always present and goes beyond the limits of individual cities and municipalities. Regardless of the kind of discriminatory behaviour in question or the basis on which it is committed, it seriously undermines the rights and liberties of individuals or specific social groups, thus threatening a collapse in the entire community's standard of human rights. Networking cities therefore represents a possible approach in combating discrimination that can prove highly efficient, as intensive cooperation between cities and municipalities strengthens the entire community.

Throughout the world there are different types of cities networking initiatives aiming to enhance local anti-discrimination policies; they vary in size, purpose as well as cause for which they have been created. Among the largest such initiatives are, for example, the networks of cities run by UNESCO¹⁵ - the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR)¹⁶ and the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR).¹⁷ The ICCAR is an international coalition of inclusive and sustainable cities, within whose framework cities exchange knowledge and experiences with the aim of improving their policies in combating racism, discrimination, xenophobia and exclusion. The European-level coalition, ECCAR, is identical in goals and purpose. In order to take account of the particularities and priorities of each region in the world, coalitions of cities against discrimination under the aegis of UNESCO have also been founded in Africa, Canada, Asia, Latin America, the United

States of America, and 19 cities are part of the Coalition of Arab Cities. Each regional coalition has its own 10-point Action Plan, coordinated by a single, “lead” city.**18**.

15 UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) is a specialised organisation within the United Nations system founded in 1945. The organisation’s main goal is to contribute to peace and safety by promoting international collaboration in the fields of education, science and culture, with the aim of increasing respect for justice, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

16 UNESCO, International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/coalition-of-cities/>

17 UNESCO, European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR), available at: <https://www.eccar.info/welcome-eccar>

18 UNESCO, International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities (ICCAR), available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/coalition-of-cities/>

INTERNATIONAL COALITION OF INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE CITIES - ICCAR

The ICCAR coalition was established in 2004 as the International Coalition of Cities against Racism and has operated since 2016 as the International Coalition of Inclusive and Sustainable Cities. The change in the title was the result of the harmonisation of the Coalition and its efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Programme 2030¹⁹ from 2015, which sought to highlight the importance of cities as key sites in achieving sustainable and inclusive development. Today, the ICCAR brings together more than 500 units, members of the coalition united on improving inclusive urban development without discrimination,²⁰ thus continuing to contribute to the creation of the UN's New Urban Agenda – Habitat III.²¹ The New Urban Agenda comprises six thematic areas recognised as the spheres in which cities and city authorities may initiate changes and improve the quality of life through concrete activities. These areas are: social cohesion and fairness – liveable cities, urban working environment, spatial development, urban economy, urban ecology and environment, and urban housing and basic services.²²

EUROPEAN COALITION OF CITIES AGAINST RACISM - ECCAR

The ECCAR regional initiative was founded in 2004 in Nürnberg, Germany, as a network where cities exchange experiences and improve policies against racism, discrimination and xenophobia. At the same time, a handbook was adopted, the 10 Point Action Plan,²³ intended to provide support to cities implementing local antiracist and anti-discrimination policies.

Several years after it was founded, the members of the ECCAR network decided to provide it with a legal framework, and in 2008 the initiative was registered as an association. The basic goals of ECCAR member cities are combating every form of racism and discrimination at the local level in order to contribute to protecting and promoting human rights and respect for differences, supporting cities in implementing the Action Plan when it comes to determining priorities, optimising strategies and reinforcing cooperation among cities; representing and promoting the common interests of member cities within the European Union, the Council of Europe and towards the governments of European countries; strengthening cooperation with institutions and organisations dedicated to the same goal, strengthening cooperation with other European networks of cities; and, finally, sensitising the European public about the values of a society of solidarity and justice.²⁴ Today, the ECCAR brings together 121 cities from 24 European states. It is headquartered in Potsdam, Germany, and only those European cities with democratically elected local councils that support the association's purpose can become members of the network, whereas membership is not conditional upon the size of the population of the local self-government unit.

ECCAR'S 10 POINTS ACTION PLAN

The 10 Point Action Plan was adopted concurrently with the establishment of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism, and can be co-signed by European cities committing to integrate the Action Plan into their strategies and policies at the local level, that is, committing to secure all the necessary resources – human, material and financial – to allow its effective implementation. Although each city is free to choose the policies it deems the most relevant or urgent, cities are invited to carry out at least one activity for each point, and those local authorities that have already implemented one of the suggested activities, or are

currently doing so, are encouraged to improve or supplement the existing measures from the Action Plan.²⁵

The current obligations deriving from the Action Plan are divided into the following 10 points:

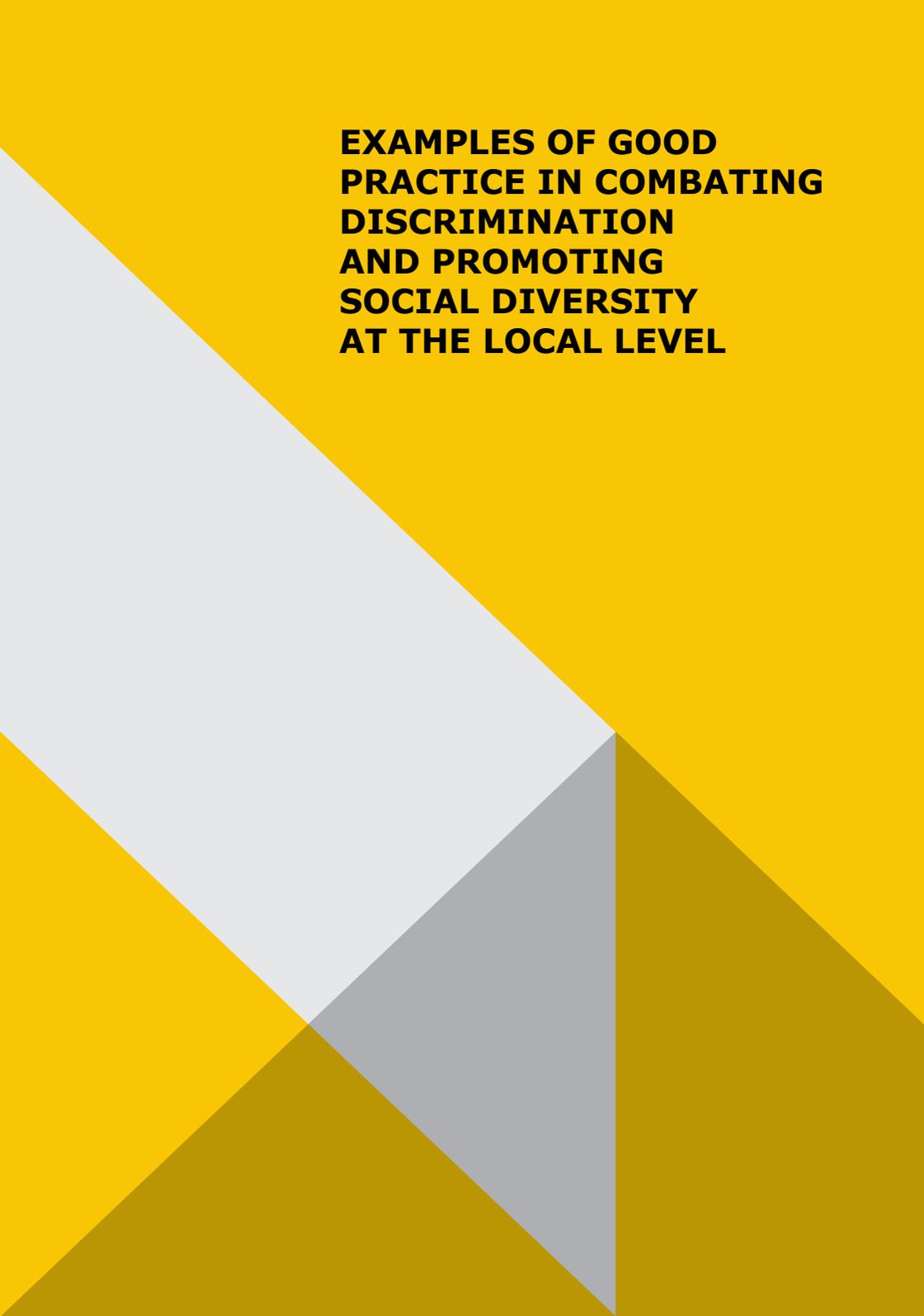
- Monitoring the situation, setting up oversight and cooperation with the relevant stakeholders in the fight against racism at city level
- Encouraging the collection of data on racism and discrimination, setting achievable goals and common indicators in order to assess the impact of municipal policies
- Providing support to victims of racism and discrimination and strengthening their capacities to defend themselves from such treatment
- Providing citizens with better information by means of a participatory approach, especially in the shape of consultations, about their rights and obligations, protection and the available legal means, as well as sanctions
- Establishing a practice of equal opportunities in employment and fostering diversity in the labour market through making use of the city authorities' existing discretionary powers
- A city commits to being a fair employer and provider of services, and to that end, to participate in monitoring the situation in implementing local policies, educating local authorities' employees on cultural and ethnic diversity and developing their competences in anti-discrimination practice. It likewise commits to undertake measures to increase the representation of members of vulnerable social groups in various bodies of the city government, especially executive bodies
- Undertaking measures to strengthen policies against housing discrimination in cities
- Strengthening measures against discrimination in accessing all forms of education, promoting education on mutual tolerance and intercultural dialogue
- Promoting cultural diversity in cultural programmes and urban public space

- Setting up mechanisms to combat hate crime, that is, providing support to existing mechanisms.

For each of the points in this Action Plan, cities are also provided with examples of activities that can be undertaken with a view to achieving individual goals. For instance, a city that has committed to implement activities to strengthen policies against housing discrimination in cities is advised to draft normative, legal instruments (such as an Ethical Charter or Code of Practice) for all physical or legal persons renting or selling apartments in order to help combat discrimination in access to housing.²⁶ Along with the Action Plan, the ECCAR also provides a handbook²⁷ to support cities in implementing policies against racism and racial discrimination or adapting existing ones. The handbook contains instructions on each step in implementing specific policies, beginning with their concepts, all the way to measuring their impacts.

- 19** UNDP, Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs, available at: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>
- 20** UNESCO (2012), Fighting Racism and Discrimination: Identifying and Sharing Good Practices in the International Coalition of Cities, available at: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/imagenes/0021/002171/217105E.pdf>
- 21** UNESCO, ICCAR and the New Urban Agenda, available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/fight-against-discrimination/coalition-of-cities/iccar-and-the-new-urban-agenda/>
- 22** Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning (Ministarstvo graditeljstva i prostornoga uređenja), UN Habitat, available at: <https://mgipu.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/5393>
- 23** ECCAR, 10 Point Action Plan, available at: http://www.eccar.info/sites/default/files/document/10%20Point-Action-Plan_engl.%202%20doc_0.pdf
- 24** European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR), General Information, available at: https://www.eccar.info/sites/default/files/document/ECCAR_basic%20information%2020_0.pdf
- 25** ECCAR (2017), 10 Points Action Plan – Toolkit for Equality, available at: https://www.eccar.info/sites/default/files/document/1_Toolkit-en_10PointsActionPlan.pdf
- 26** Ibid.
- 27** Ibid.



The background features a large yellow triangle in the upper right, a white triangle in the lower left, and a grey triangle in the lower right. These triangles overlap to create a complex geometric pattern.

**EXAMPLES OF GOOD
PRACTICE IN COMBATING
DISCRIMINATION
AND PROMOTING
SOCIAL DIVERSITY
AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

As part of the “Network of Cities and NGOs for Combating Racism and Discrimination” project, strategic planning workshops were held for representatives of city authorities, as well as advocacy workshops for local civil society organisations and interested citizens of the cities that are part of the network. The goal of the aforementioned activities was to gather experiences of the current efforts to combat discrimination in the networked cities, and to carry out an analysis of the situation based on the problems and proposals laid out from the city authorities’ perspective, but also the perspective of citizens, that is, civil society. The thematic areas on which future strategic plans will be based should arise from continuous dialogue between local authorities and representatives of civil society organisations, as well as an acknowledgement of the issues that ought to be afforded special attention, taking into account the situation in any individual location.

The purpose of implementing the described project activities adapted to local communities is to bolster cooperation between local self-government and civil society, encouraging high-quality communication between the two and joint action towards solving issues of interest to the local population.

The following segment will cite examples of good practice that were successfully applied in individual cities in Croatia, as well as international examples of good practice, showcased in order to suggest measures that would be easily applicable in the context of Croatian local communities. Each of the described examples may serve as a guideline for local authorities in adopting and implementing measures to combat discrimination and building an inclusive and open living environment, while they can also serve as inspiration to members of local civil society organisations in recommending specific activities to administrative bodies and advocating the desired changes.

EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN CROATIA

THE CITY OF RIJEKA – CHARTER ON COOPERATION BETWEEN THE CITY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

In 2004, the Rijeka City Council adopted a Charter on Cooperation Between the City of Rijeka and the Nongovernmental, Nonprofit Sector.²⁸ The goal of the Charter was to support the development and strengthening of the civil sector as an essential prerequisite for the democratisation of the society, by setting up modes of financing their activities, projects and programmes. The forms of cooperation envisaged in the Charter were development and consulting, informing and financing, while it also envisaged establishing a Coordinating Committee as a body tasked with coordinating all activities necessary to achieve the goals of the Charter, as well as to develop and maintain partnership between the City and associations. Such cooperation represents an important feature of the development and strengthening of civil society, and the National Foundation for Civil Society Development has given the City of Rijeka an award for its Charter on Cooperation Between the City of Rijeka and the Nongovernmental, Nonprofit Sector as an example of best practice in the cooperation between the public and the not-for-profit sector.²⁹

THE CITY OF ZAGREB – SECTOR FOR HUMAN RIGHTS PROMOTION, CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONAL MINORITIES

The Sector for Human Rights Promotion, Civil Society and National Minorities operates as part of the structure of the local self-government of the City of Zagreb. The sector consists of three departments specialised in implementing activities aimed at adopting strategic measures, protecting human rights and combating discrimination. The Human Rights Promotion Department deals with strategic planning, implementation and reporting on the implementation of strategic documents in the field of gender equality, combating racial and other

discrimination, the rights of national minorities, religious rights and liberties, sexual and gender minorities' rights. It also performs tasks related to training city officials to recognise discrimination and raise awareness of prejudice and other areas that concern planning, monitoring and reporting on the promotion of human rights in the City of Zagreb. The Civil Society Department of the City of Zagreb is tasked with drafting regulations as well as collecting and processing all invitations to tender for financing associations for protecting and promoting human rights issued by the City. The Department for National Minorities is tasked with improving and protecting national minorities' position by means of their participation in public life and in the administration of local affairs in the City of Zagreb; planning and securing finances for national minority councils and representatives; and implementing European projects, primarily those concerning members of the Roma national minority.³⁰

THE CITY OF SAMOBOR – URBAN YOUTH PROGRAMME

As part of the "When Young Hands Join Together" [Kad se mlade ruke slože] project, the City of Samobor, in collaboration with the Pozitiva Samobor association and the Public Open University, has created a Samobor City Youth Programme. It is a local document of utmost importance, which seeks to respond to the needs of the city's young people in order to elevate their standards and quality of life. The Youth Programme is in fact a strategy of the City of Samobor, the Youth Council and related organizations and institutions working with young people. It defines fundamental needs of the youth in Samobor, the activities and measures which directly respond to the identified needs, guidelines for their implementation, as well as the deadlines and responsible persons for the implementation.³¹ The programme itself has been drafted based on the guidelines provided by the young people of the City of Samobor, and was subsequently publicly presented to young people, experts and local self-

government employees (from fields such as sport, employment and enterprise, social policy, culture and young people's leisure time), who gave their comments and opinions to the proposals presented by young people and thereby helped to shape the guidelines.³² This example represents a successful instance of cooperation between city authorities and the civil society on advancing issues of interest for certain groups of citizens.

THE CITY OF RIJEKA – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHING THE RIJEKA 2020 INTERFAITH ALLIANCE

The City of Rijeka is a member of the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Network, whose purpose is joint support for the goals of cities accepting diversity and striving to shape an education, social and cultural policy, employment and housing policy as well as all other policies that should allow populations of diverse cultural backgrounds and religious worldviews to engage in productive exchange and interaction. By signing the Memorandum of understanding establishing the Rijeka 2020 Interfaith Alliance, the best-represented religious groups have become participants in the Rijeka – European Capital of Culture 2020 project, with the aim of further advancing interfaith dialogue and the tradition of acknowledging diversity in the City of Rijeka and the Primorje-Gorski Kotar County.

Religious groups will actively collaborate with the City of Rijeka and the Rijeka 2020 LLC and develop activities in areas including joint promotion of the European Capital of Culture project as a platform that will serve to represent the making of cultural connections between the community and cultural diversity, promote the cultural wealth and heritage of religious groups, propose social models and policies for dealing with prejudice and discrimination against religious groups through an intercultural approach, gather theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in creatively responding to prejudice and discrimination, especially as directed towards religious groups,

as well as to actively participate in the work of the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Network concerning the promotion of interfaith dialogue and intercultural dialogue in society in general.³³

THE CITY OF SISAK AND THE SURROUNDING AREA – “DID ANYONE ASK YOUR OPINION?”

In Sisak-Moslavina County, Platform 044, which comprises 12 member-organisations from the region (the Sisak Civic Rights Project, the IKS Petrinja association, the New World Luščani [Novi Svijet Luščani] youth association, the Rural Initiatives Centre [Centar za ruralne inicijative], the Glina City Red Cross Association, the Eco Development Cooperative [Zadruga Eko razvoj], the My City Sisak [Moj grad Sisak] civic initiative, the Sisak Boatmen’s Association, the Sports Associations Coalition, the SMC Blind People’s Association, the Roma Cultural Centre and the Franić family agricultural holding), installed boxes for citizens’ opinions, suggestions and complaints in several urban locations in Sisak, Kutina, Glina, Petrinja, Hrvatska Kostajnica and Luščani. The project called “Did anyone ask your opinion?” was initiated with the aim of ensuring a more immediate access for citizens, where Platform 044 acts as an intermediary between the citizens and the authorities. The associations were moved to undertake such an endeavour due to the huge number of unemployed, socially vulnerable, poor and isolated citizens, so that they might express their views and opinions on the problems they encounter and which they believe need to be urgently solved. For instance, as part of the project, a new bus station was installed outside the city health centre at the citizens’ suggestion, so that elderly persons would find it easier to access the health centre right next to the station.³⁴

28 The Charter on Cooperation Between the City of Rijeka and the Nongovernmental, Nonprofit Sector (Povelja o suradnji Grada Rijeke i nevladinog, neprofitnog sektora, Službeno glasilo Primorsko-goranske županije broj 37/04), available at: <http://sn.pgz.hr/default.asp?Link=odluke&id=2678>

- 29 Official Pages of the City of Rijeka, Civil Society and Voluntary Work sector, available at: <https://www.rijeka.hr/teme-za-gradane/aktivno-gradanstvo/civilno-drustvo-volontiranje/razvoj-civilnog-drustva/>
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INTERNATIONAL EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

RAINBOW CITIES NETWORK – MEASURES TO PROTECT LGBTI PERSONS IN THE FRAME OF CITY POLICIES

At the international level, the informal “Rainbow Cities Network” brings together 27 cities from 15 countries, working collectively to develop and implement policies and strategies for LGBTI persons, and share good practice and cooperate on projects. The informal network was formed as a continuation of the AHEAD project, following several informal meetings, and any city or region with active LGBTI policies, or intending to develop them, may become members. The cities in the network are represented by employees of city administrations, while public policy-makers engaged on the problems faced by the LGBTI population in member-cities meet every year, communicating regularly by means of an internal mailing list

and annually publishing summaries of policies and efforts on this issue. Regional or national cooperation among cities may permit effective exchange of expertise and public policy initiatives, as well as practical examples and materials pertaining to the LGBTI population's problems. Although LGBTI citizens are not limited to urban areas, the number of cities in less-developed areas that actively protect and promote this group's rights is still small. **35**

THE CITY OF REYKJAVIK (ICELAND) – CITIZENS' OMBUDSMAN

Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, has a local Reykjavik Citizens' Ombudsman's Office (Umboðsmaður borgarbúa), established in 2013. The city Ombudsman guides citizens and businesses in communication with the city regarding their rights and provides advice on avenues of appeal for the complaints that are lodged with him. The Ombudsman monitors the City of Reykjavik's general administration, as well as private bodies insofar as they have been legally vested with authority to decide as to individuals' rights and obligations. This also applies to cases where private bodies are bound by contract to minister and attend to certain undertakings that may have any kind of bearing on citizens' interests. **36**

Any natural person or representative of a legal person may lodge a complaint with the Ombudsman if they feel they have been unfairly treated by the City authorities, or by the individual bodies that perform administrative duties. The Ombudsman monitors the work of the administration of Reykjavik City, Reykjavik Social Housing (Félagsbústaðir hf.), Reykjavik Parking Facility Fund (Bílastæðasjóður). However, he does not intervene in disputes between private parties or accept complaints concerning units jointly owned and run in collaboration with other municipalities. **37**

CASCAIS MUNICIPALITY (PORTUGAL) – COUNSELLOR FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Recognising the importance of promoting gender equality as a vital factor for local development, the Cascais Municipality in Portugal started an initiative in 1998, appointing a person of reference for issues of equality within the local administrative structure, under the framework of the then-Commission for Equality and Women's Rights (now the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality). The Counsellor for Gender Equality plays a central role in eliminating gender stereotypes and promoting the development of municipal plans for equality, in line with the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life.**38**

The Gender Equality Counsellor's activities include, among other things, monitoring and streamlining the implementation of local policy measures from a gender perspective; monitoring and streamlining the implementation of measures envisaged in local strategies to promote equality and prevent domestic violence and other forms of discrimination; issuing opinions on the impact of administrative measures and regulations the municipality plans to adopt in the field of education, equality and non-discrimination, protection of maternity and paternity, reconciliation of professional, personal and family life of men and women, combating domestic violence and other forms of discrimination; and disseminating information on gender equality and submitting concrete proposals for action.**39**

AMADORA MUNICIPALITY (PORTUGAL) – COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO COMBAT PREJUDICE AND RUMOUR SPREADING

"Don't feed the rumour" is part of the communication strategy developed by the Amadora Municipality in Portugal since 2014, within the framework of the "Communication for Integration: social networking for diversity" project, promoted by the Council of Europe, which aims to reach a better understanding of the effects of rumours on the lives of people in the community.**40**

By providing methodological knowledge and intercultural integration strategies, this initiative aims to develop awareness on the impact of widespread and unfounded statements about immigrants in the city of Amadora, as well as the utilisation of the potentials for cultural diversity by means of the city communication strategy, which encourages combating all forms of discrimination such as racism, intolerance and xenophobia, and promoting inclusion, strengthening community cohesion and well-being. The initiative's activities included setting up a local anti-rumour network, made up of numerous organisations working directly with migrants, as well as of migrants themselves, mapping local rumours, training workers to act as mediators in various areas under the authority of the local administration (education, social services, sport, culture) and train local agents, as well as various activities such as debates, workshops, and cultural and sports events directed at promoting diversity.⁴¹

As part of the initiative, an expert analysis of the local population's attitudes towards the migrants living, working and/or studying in Amadora before and after carrying out the social activities was conducted. According to the results, the citizens who took part in at least one activity organised within the framework of the project have evinced a more positive stance regarding migrants, unlike the citizens who were either unacquainted with the campaign, or did not take part in it. With time, 75 organisations became involved in the campaign, and its greatest impact could be seen in the inclusion of this issue in the local authorities' agenda and in the adoption of measures to combat prejudice under the local migrant integration plan.⁴²

THE CITY OF BARCELONA (SPAIN) – CHILDREN'S DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

With the aim of fostering civic engagement among children from the earliest age, the City of Barcelona has endorsed the education and participation programme "Laia's plea", which represents a model

of children's democratic participation in society and stimulating the development of critical thinking. The program allows children aged 8 to 10 to acquire practical experience as citizens of Barcelona by discussing, in their teacher's presence and over several months, issues that have a bearing on the city and adopting a series of suggestions how the city might confront its existing problems. Proposals and ideas are conveyed to the city council and to all citizens, and each academic term focusses on a different topic, such as intercultural dialogue, improving the urban landscape, children's participation in culture etc.**43 44**

THE CITY OF BARCELONA (SPAIN) – THE CITY AS AN EMPLOYER AND SERVICE PROVIDER

The City of Barcelona has committed to being a fair employer and service provider and accordingly to take part in monitoring the state of implementation of policies, introduce training for local authorities' employees in cultural and ethnic diversity, and encourage the development of their capacities in anti-discrimination practice. The City has also committed to undertake measures to increase the representation of members of at-risk social groups in the city government, especially the executive bodies. For this reason, the Barcelona city council included social and ecological clauses in all contracts for services and products it enters into. Thus, at least 5% of all employment contracts for jobs in the city administration are given to persons at risk of social exclusion or persons with physical or mental difficulties, and a minimum of 5% of the city budget funds are earmarked for centres engaged on social integration and providing social services to the poorest. It is also planned that it should be mandatory that contractors performing works for the City of Barcelona, either on the basis of a service or a works contract, employ a minimum of 20% of workers belonging to a social group at-risk.**45**

THE CITY OF MADRID (SPAIN) – EMPLOYING TRANSSEXUAL PERSONS

Since 2008, the City of Madrid has had a contract with the Spanish National Organisation for Transsexual Persons (Asociación Española de Personas Transexuales) to promote the inclusion of transsexual persons in the labour market. The programme involves providing information on workers' rights and other legal aspects, with a special emphasis on the rights of transsexual persons in the labour market, as well as on psychological assistance and counselling. Furthermore, the Madrid city administration designates a civil servant tasked with monitoring applications to the programme. In addition, together with the Madrid employment bureau, the National Transsexual Persons' Organisation has published a book about the rights and experiences of transsexual persons in the labour market.⁴⁶

THE CITY OF NÜRNBERG (GERMANY) – ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS

The City of Nürnberg honours local firms that significantly contribute to equal treatment and opportunities in the workplace by publicly acknowledging them with a "Nürnberg prize for a discrimination-free business culture". The award is given for contributing to the struggle against racism and discrimination. It is conferred to companies that properly protect their employees' dignity and rights and support the city in its antiracist and anti-discrimination activities.⁴⁷ This example is easy for other cities and municipalities to follow, as it does not require much effort or funds, and can be very stimulating for raising awareness of the problem of discrimination in the business world, and for other employers to decide to take measures to protect the dignity and rights of all their employees.

THE CITY OF BARCELONA (SPAIN) – HUMAN RIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL

In 2013, the La Mirada cultural association, in cooperation with the city council, organised the Barcelona Human Rights Film Festival. The tradition

of holding such events began in 1993, spreading to other cities in the country and worldwide. The festival brings together producers from around the world whose work addresses issues in protecting and promoting human rights, and presents their work. The festival is accompanied by roundtables, discussions and workshops with film-makers and festival participants, as well as exhibitions and conferences on current human rights issues around the world.**48**

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on monitoring of public policies, strategic measures and discrimination present at the national level, and analysing the observed systematic shortcomings in correlation with information on specific problems identified locally, it is possible to create adequate foundations to efficiently combat discrimination at the local level. It is necessary to continuously motivate citizens and the civil society to cooperate with the local authorities in order to foster awareness among all groups of citizens that the local administration exists in order to create a living environment that is attuned to the citizens' needs. Ultimately, local administration officials are also citizens of the same community, whose interest lies in its improvement and development, which is precisely why the need for permanent inter-sectoral cooperation for the good of the local population as a whole needs to be brought to attention.

Adopting local strategic documents directed at combating discrimination, that is, adding further measures for this purpose to the existing development strategies, should not necessarily represent a great burden for local budgets, especially if the multiple effects such initiatives may have on achieving an inclusive social environment and raising the local population's quality of life are taken into account. Throughout the entire process of developing such measures, the advice and experiences of other cities and municipalities may serve as examples, and be of significant help in drafting the components of the measures for action. Local administration units that successfully implement certain practices are, almost without exception, open to exchanging experiences and cooperation, and networking for this purpose can significantly facilitate the entire process while simultaneously opening up numerous possibilities for further cooperation and development.





SOURCES

The image features a solid yellow background. On the left side, there is a complex geometric composition of overlapping shapes. These shapes include a large white parallelogram, a smaller white parallelogram below it, a grey parallelogram, and several yellow and olive-green triangles and quadrilaterals that interlock with the other shapes. The overall effect is a modern, abstract graphic design.

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