

# Intercultural Policies

Irene Ponzio

Bologna, July 2009

## Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Background information on the country</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations .....	5
2.2 National policy context.....	9
<b>3. Background information on the city</b> .....	<b>10</b>
3.1 Brief description of the city.....	10
3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups.....	11
3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics .....	13
<b>4. Local intercultural policies in general</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations with ethnic and religious organisations in the city</b> .....	<b>15</b>
4.2 Issues, demands and interests .....	17
4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue .....	18
4.4 Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city.....	23
4.5 Public communication.....	25
4.6 Summary and lessons learnt .....	26
<b>5. Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities</b> .....	<b>27</b>
5.1 Major issues, demands and interests .....	27
5.2 General approaches and policies to improve relations with Muslim groups.....	29
5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures to improve relations with Muslim groups .....	30
5.4 Public communication.....	32
5.5 Summary and lessons learnt .....	33
<b>6. Intergroup relations and radicalisation</b> .....	<b>33</b>
6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population .....	33
6.1.1 General approach, policies and measures against radicalisation .....	35
6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population .....	36
6.3 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt.....	36
<b>7. Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP</b> .....	<b>37</b>

**8. References..... 38**

**9. Interview partners ..... 40**

## Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project «Cities for Local Integration Policy» (CLIP), which started in 2006. Bologna is one of the 35 European cities exchanging information on their Integration Policies, initially with regards to the area of housing, and subsequently on other areas.

The project aims to collect and analyse innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level; to support the exchange of experiences between cities and encourage a learning process within the network of cities; to address the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies; to offer an objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discuss their transferability, communicating good practices to other cities in Europe and developing guidelines to help cities to cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants, and to support the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy-relevant experiences and outputs of the network to: European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and the various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network also entails cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Turin, Wroclaw and Swansea are handling the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the FIERI are responsible for this report on Bologna.

I would like to thank all the interviewees and participants I met during the field visit. I am particularly grateful to Chris Tomesani, head of the municipal Office of Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector, and to his collaborator Fabiana Forni, for her welcome and support in gathering materials and information.

The author is entirely responsible for the contents of this report and for any inaccuracies it may contain.

## 1. Introduction

This module of CLIP deals with phenomena of urban life that are related to the multi-national, multi-ethnic and multi-religious structures of urban populations which challenge the ability of municipalities to establish or foster peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. Thus, the main subjects of this study are the intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the intergroup relations. After a brief overview of Italy's migratory history and national policies, the report analyses the characteristics of the migrant population settled in Bologna. The following chapter, which constitutes the bulk of the study, concerns the Municipality's approach and policies towards ethnic and religious minorities. The CLIP network has decided to devote particular attention to Muslim communities due to the tensions between this religious minority and the majority population which have been witnessed in several European cities throughout the 1990s and 2000s. As a consequence a considerable part of the study is devoted to the analysis of the Muslim community's socio-economic structure and organisations, as well as to the relations

established with local authorities. Finally, the concluding part of the study examines intergroup relations and radicalisation processes in both the majority and migrant populations.

This study started with a review of the existing literature and databases. Research work comprised two main stages: gathering information by means of the so-called Common Reporting Scheme (CRS) compiled by the municipal Office for Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector, and a field visit in Bologna carried out by the author, with the support of the Municipality of Bologna. The CRS, which is the same for all the cities involved in the CLIP project, includes information on policy objectives, programmes and activities of the city, the characteristics of the relevant communities and relations with them. As far as the field visit was concerned, I interviewed key actors in the Bologna Municipality, religious and ethnic associations and federations, local journalists and researchers (see section n. 9). During the field visit, I collected documents produced by various local actors in order to obtain more precise information on their aims, activities and results.

## **2. Background information on the country**

### **2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations**

Italy became an immigration country in the second half of the 70s, with three main immigration waves. The first wave included people from Africa (mainly Senegal, Eritrea and Somalia), the Middle East, Asia (Philippines) and South America. The 80s saw increasing flows from the Maghreb. Other nationalities also emerged: Chinese, Peruvians, Nigerians (Pugliese 2002). At the beginning of the 90s, migration flows from Eastern Europe started: from Yugoslavia, Albania and Rumania, which became the fastest growing group. Nowadays, immigration in Italy is undergoing a process of settlement and the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the immigrant population have changed (Blangiardo 2005).

Longer stays, changes in gender balance, family reunification, more immigrants with children and more immigrant students in schools are some of the characteristics of this deep-seated phenomenon. Immigrants are now part of the country's socio-economic fabric and give rise to associations aimed at supporting the integration process and keeping connections with the countries of origin alive.

A diachronic analysis of the data on residence permits underlines the increase in the number of immigrants from Eastern Europe, with migrations from Poland, Romania, Ukraine and Bulgaria becoming progressively more significant since the late 1990s.

Migratory flows naturally follow a growth curve, but they are also characterised by internal transformations. The main change took place on the 1st January 2007<sup>1</sup>. The entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the European Union led, on the one hand, to a decrease in the number of non-EU citizens officially resident (with consequences in terms of free circulation, access to the labour market and expulsions) while on the other hand it did not improve the conditions of insertion and integration in the Italian socio-economic context.

---

<sup>1</sup> Among the ten countries which joined the EU in 2004, Poland is the only country that sends numerous citizens to Italy, both for temporary work and for settlement.

**Tab. 1 – Main nationalities of foreign documented citizens (December 2007)**

Country of origin	Number of foreigners
Romania	625,278
Albania	401,949
Morocco	365,908
China	156,519
Ukraine	132,718
Philippines	105,675
Tunisia	93,601
Poland	90,218

Source: Istat, 2008

At the beginning of 2008, there were over three million immigrants (3,342,651) with a regular residence permit in Italy from more than 191 countries, especially Eastern-Central Europe, North Africa, Latin-America and South-East Asia (Istat 2008). The current debate on immigration is frequently monopolized by the phenomenon of illegal entry, and this risks mistaking a part for the whole, and losing sight of the increasing number of legal movements. According to a recent estimate by Istat, Italy expects to see an annual increase of 110,000 new immigrants, with migrants accounting for more than 8% of the entire population by 2010. The immigrant population exceeded 4% in 2004. It is now around 6% (Billari and Della Zanna 2008).

National groups can be divided into different types according to the proportion of these two kinds of permits:

- immigration exclusively for work reasons (Senegal, China, Ukraine);
- immigration mainly for work reasons with family reunification below average (Philippines);
- a balance between the two types (Morocco, Albania);
- significant family migration (Romania) (Ismu 2009).

According to the geographical distribution of residence permits, at the beginning of 2008, 62.5% of the legal foreigners were in the North, 25% in the Centre and 12.5% in the South of Italy (Caritas, 2008). Nevertheless, there is a different ethnic composition of migrants in each city: the Chinese are over-represented in Tuscany (Prato) and Lombardy (Milan), Rumanians in Piedmont (Turin), Albanians and Filipinos in Lazio (Rome) (Ismu 2009).

As for gender composition, the data show a prevalence of female immigrants among some African groups (e.g. Somali and Ethiopians), Asian groups (Filipinos), Latin American groups (Brazilians, Peruvians) and Eastern groups (Ukrainians and Poles), while male immigrants prevail among various African groups (Tunisians, Senegalese). The age structure shows an extremely young immigrant population in Italy, with 70% of residents falling into the 20-54 bracket (Istat 2009).

Focussing on socio-economic status, some immigrant communities are at a more advanced stage of the migration process (e.g. family reunion). However, this does not correspond to successful insertion into the labour market. Men are mainly employed as workers, while the women's workforce remains to a large extent absorbed in specific areas of the tertiary sector, at the lowest level. As the data show, the economic distribution of regularly employed workers is as follows: 7.3% in agriculture (almost nine out of ten with short term contracts), 35.3% in industry and 53.8% in the service sector (Caritas 2008). The employment of immigrants is growing faster in sectors (services and the building industry) which are characterised by a high degree of casual and irregular work.

The highest concentration of immigrant workers is found in domestic service, where over half of the employees are immigrants, reaching around 75% in certain areas such as Rome and Milan. In Piedmont half of the construction firms – very small companies – are owned by foreigners. (Di Monaco, 2008) If we take into account domestic workers employed illegally (for example, the so-called «care-workers» from Eastern countries hired on a temporary basis), the percentage is even higher. Immigrant self employment, mostly male, shows an increasing trend (Ismu 2009).

However, the Italian context is also characterised by a certain proportion of irregular immigrants. It is difficult to quantify the current illegal immigrant population in Italy: it is estimated that about two thirds of foreigners in Italy have spent some time in the country under illegal residence conditions (Blangiardo 2005). Readmission agreements have been signed with the main sending countries in Eastern Europe, the Balkans and North Africa and are currently being extended to Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Subcontinent. The so-called *Centri di permanenza temporanea* (Temporary Reception Centres)<sup>2</sup> have been established to allow officials to ascertain the identity of people without authorisation to remain in the country, and to carry out repatriation.

From the religious point of view, the Italian scenario has changed considerably since the arrival of sizeable Eastern European migration flows. The presence of Romanians, Ukrainians and Poles has modified the religious composition of the migrant population. Although the media sometimes continues to stress the risk of Islamisation, it is inaccurate to speak of an «Islamic invasion», first of all in terms of statistics: according to estimates by Caritas, 48% of immigrants are Christian, 37% Muslim and 7% practise oriental religions.

---

<sup>2</sup> Law no. 289/98 established these centres, where illegal migrants can stay for six months at the most. Under Law no. 189/2002 they were rechristened CIE (Identification and Expulsion Centre).

**Tab. 2 - Residence permits by main religion (data at 1.1.2007)**

Religion	%
Catholic	22.0 <sup>3</sup>
Orthodox	21.7
Protestant	3.9
Other Christians	1.5
Muslim	33.2
Jewish	0.2
Hindu	2.5
Buddhist	1.9
Animist	1.2
Other religions	11.8
Total	100.0

Source: estimate drawn from Ministry of the Interior data (2008).

As the table shows, in the Italian context it is clear that the Muslim religion is not the main religion among immigrant groups.

Following the arrival flows registered in the course of the 90s there was a strong geographical diversification of immigrants from Islamic countries.

We must be cautious when dealing with numbers regarding religious beliefs: this is uncertain ground, especially when it comes to the faiths of immigrants. The method used to determine the numbers of Muslims – and Orthodox Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, etc. - among immigrants, is based on a projection of the religious beliefs of their countries of origin. It is therefore conjectured that the religious composition of foreign communities is similar to that in their countries of origin, without taking into consideration how, for example, religious behaviour might change over the course of time or how faith can change during migration, growing weaker or stronger. Addressing religion in the context of immigration therefore means working with estimates. This warning should be stated before undertaking any quantitative reasoning on immigration in Italy: the number of illegal and clandestine immigrants is, obviously, an estimate, as is the number of legally-resident people, because the data do not account for those under 14 years of age or those thought to have an expired resident permit.

Research on the Muslim presence offers numerous cognitive elements which provide an insight into most of the many internal differences, especially because in general «there is no distinction between practising and non-practising, Muslims are generally defined as people who in some way

<sup>3</sup> All the percentages are drawn from estimates for the country of origin.

find a more-or-less fixed point of reference in Islam for their identity» (Spreafico and Coppi 2006, p. 68).

## 2.2 National policy context

The first wide-ranging policy on immigration was only introduced in 1998. Law no. 286/98 explicitly encouraged the development of programmes and policies to favour cultural exchange. For this purpose, «the Law set up the National fund for Migration Policies, which in turn transferred most of it to local public administrations and NGOs» (Zincone and Ponzio 2008, p. 53).

The new law on immigration, passed by parliament on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2002 (no. 189) came in on a wave of massive law-and-order campaigns and «alarm calls» over immigration. It tightened the restrictions of the previous legislation, especially concerning entry and residence rules: the duration of residence permits for subordinate work was decreased and the possibility of coming to Italy as a «job-seeker» (vouched for by a sponsor) was abolished.

Policy changes, from 2002 onward, have been essentially aimed at controlling borders and reducing access to the welfare system (Ismu 2009). With regard to integration and intercultural policies, the aforementioned Fund for Integration Policy has been practically abolished: it has been merged into the National Fund for Social Policies, meaning that the task of developing policies specifically addressing immigrants now falls to the Regions. The few existing studies (Campomori 2008; Caponio 2006) show considerable differences among the Italian regions: only a few still devote a specific budget to immigrant integration (and the Emilia-Romagna Region, which rule the area where Bologna is located, is not among them).

However, despite these inconsistencies in national and regional policies, in this context local authorities have always played a crucial role in providing the necessary conditions for immigrant settlement and integration. Many local administrations, especially in the North, actually started to provide free advice, counselling and other services as early as the late 1980s and early 1990s, when national legislation was still considerably lacking in this respect.

The first efforts of local public authorities to facilitate the integration of immigrants have been complemented by the activities of a wide range of civil society organisations. In fact, in many cases these organisations have proven to be in the best position to provide immediate and concrete solutions to the practical problems commonly experienced by immigrants. In most cities, there is close cooperation between local government and the NGO sector on integration initiatives. This highlights one of the main characteristics of Italian immigration policy: in a situation characterised by a lack of intervention from central government, associations and the NGO sector have risen to the fore. In this way, dealing with increasing numbers of migrants, some needs were met in a timely manner. The other aspect of this *modus operandi* is the uncertain nature of these initiatives: they are funded on an annual basis, and lack continuity and final assessments of their efficacy.

Lastly, with regard to inter-religious dialogue, the main debate concerns relations with Islam. In Italy, recognition and the rights of religious minorities are regulated by bilateral agreements (*intese*) between the State and representative bodies of religious groups. Muslims have not yet

succeeded in concluding an agreement with the State, despite the fact that they are the second-largest religious group in Italy. According to Aluffi Beck-Peccoz (2004, p. 138), «laws currently in force can give satisfactory answers to some of the basic needs of Muslims», e.g. mosques, cemeteries, ritual slaughtering, the supply of Halal food. Nevertheless, without an agreement in place Muslim communities cannot enjoy the benefits which such agreements bring, e.g.: the right to abstain from work on religious holidays, to delegate teachers to public school to provide religious education, to allocate a quota of personal income tax to the Muslim community and observe other religious rites.

Four Muslim organisations are involved in promoting an agreement with the State. The main is UCOII (Unione delle Comunità e delle Organizzazioni Islamiche d'Italia – Italian Islamic Communities and Organisations Union), a federation of about 60 mosques across the country. The Centro Culturale Islamico d'Italia (Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy) is the second most important Muslim organisation in Italy, mainly supported by Islamic States. It is not an association, but a religious legal entity, recognized by a decree passed by the President of the Republic. This Centre is based at the Great Mosque in Rome, and promotes the official Islam of the States. The other two organisations (AMI – Association of Italian Muslims and Co.Re.Is – Muslim Religious Community) are composed predominantly of Italian citizens who have converted to Islam (Aluffi-Beckoz 2004).

In recent years, a new organisation has emerged, on a national level, called “GMI – Young Muslims of Italy”. It is a federation of young Muslim groups set up in various Italian cities, involved in the debate on Islam in Italy, representative of second generation Muslims (Frisina 2007).

Due to the increasing number of Muslims, their associations and demands, in 2005 the Council for the Islam in Italy (Consulta per l'Islam Italiano) was set up by the Ministry of the Interior: it is seen as a way to create an «Italian Islam», that is, «a community peacefully included in the economic and social fabric of our country, free to profess its religious creed and preserve its own identity, but at the same time, completely respectful of our values and our laws» (Cesareo 2006, p. 24).

The publication, in 2007, of the «Carta dei Valori della cittadinanza e dell'integrazione» (Charter of the Values and Significance of Citizenship and Integration) can be seen as another step towards the creation of an «Italian Islam». A Technical Committee oversees the Charter, promoted by the Ministry of the Interior. It establishes the values and principles «for all wishing to have permanent residence in Italy irrespective of whatever religious, ethnic and/or cultural group or community to which they may belong» (art. 1).

### **3. Background information on the city**

#### **3.1 Brief description of the city**

Bologna is the capital city of the Emilia-Romagna region, which lies in Central Italy. The province of Bologna has experienced a substantial process of urbanisation since the end of the Second World War. However, since the beginning of the 70s residents have been leaving the city in

favour of the other municipalities in the area (Anderlini 2003) and at 1 January 2008 the total population of the city of Bologna was 372,000<sup>4</sup>.

In Bologna immigration started in the 70s, mainly comprising students and political dissidents from Greece, Chile, Argentina, Iran and Palestine. These inflows point up two of the main features of the city. The first is the large student population attracted by the University of Bologna: students account for about 20% of the city's total population (Decimo 2003). The second feature is the presence of well-established, influential left wing political organisations and trade unions, making it attractive terrain for political dissidents. Indeed the Communist Party governed the city from the end of the Second World War until 1999, when a right-wing civic list won the election and governed for five years. One of the main consequences of the long-lasting predominance of the left wing parties is that Bologna is one of the most advanced cities in Italy in terms of local welfare and public social services.

The province of Bologna is characterised by small and medium sized businesses located in the outskirts of the city and in the other municipalities. In the area 30% of the working population is self-employed and while the secondary sector is losing workers to the tertiary sector, it still employs about 30% of workers. Thanks to its flourishing economy and advanced local welfare services, Bologna is the third city in Italy in terms of total employment rate and the first when it comes to female employment. However, the constant decrease in the size of the working population (about the 25% of residents in the Bologna province are over 65) makes the immigrant workforce particularly valuable. The area's many thriving businesses have in fact attracted economic migrants since the 80s<sup>5</sup>.

### 3.2 The city's migrant population and its characteristics/main groups

As of 1 January 2009, there were 86,700 foreign residents in Bologna (8.9% of residents), with 39,500 foreign residents in the city of Bologna (10.5% of the population). The increase in the number of foreign residents has been rapid: 243% in the whole area in the last decade (1998-2008) (Osservatorio provinciale sulle immigrazioni 2008b). In more specific terms, between 1998 and 2008:

- the increase was 176% in the city of Bologna and 306% in the rest of the province, which since 2000 has hosted the majority of foreign population (as of 1 January 2009 only 45.5% of the whole foreign population of the province lived in the city of Bologna);
- the number of women has risen faster than the number of men (248% in the city and 407% in the rest of the province) and since 2002 in the city of Bologna they have represented the majority of foreign residents (51.9% as of 1 January 2009).

As of 1 January 2009, 15.5% of the whole population of minors of the city of Bologna was foreign and 17.4% of children born in the Bologna province have foreign citizenship.

The largest groups are from Romania and the Philippines, as the table below shows. No official data is available on immigrants' religious affiliations.

---

<sup>4</sup> [www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole](http://www.comune.bologna.it/iperbole)

<sup>5</sup> Report on the economic situation of Bologna presented at the Extraordinary Provincial Council at 28th September 2006.

**Tab. 2 - Foreign residents in the City of Bologna by Nationality (30 June 2009)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Total residents</b>
Romania	5,507
Philippines	4,294
Bangladesh	3,906
Morocco	3,178
Moldavia	2,492
Ukraine	2,400
Albania	2,347
China	2,301
Pakistan	1,558
Sri Lanka	1,316
Tunisia	1,056
Poland	1,126
Serbia-Montenegro	1,000
Peru	870
Eritrea	779
All Nationalities	42,104

Sources: Municipality of Bologna

Despite the medium size of the area there are about one hundred immigrants' organisations in Bologna province<sup>6</sup>. According to our interviewees, this situation springs from the legacy of the local association movement, which is very active and has therefore fostered a high level of immigrant participation in civil society organisations.

A study carried out by the Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni – Provincial Observatory of Immigrations (2003) points out that while most resident immigrants live in the rest of the province, three quarters of immigrant organisations are located in the city. In any case the range of action of these associations usually goes beyond the city borders. While some studies (Paradisi 2003) and interviewees highlighted the unsteady nature of most of these associations, the study by the Provincial Observatory of Immigrations reveals that 60% of them was established in the 90s, thus making them longer-standing than in many other Italian cities.

The largest communities are also the most active in terms of developing associations, with the exception of Eastern European immigrants. However the presence of Eastern Europeans is recent in comparison to that of the other main communities living in Bologna and, as some studies point out (Ires Piemonte 1998, Ponzio 2002), in Italy immigrants from former Soviet Union countries are less inclined to form associations. Concerning nationalities, the research carried out by the Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni – Provincial Observatory of Immigrations

<sup>6</sup> This estimate was drawn from a study carried out by the Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni – Provincial Observatory of Immigrations (2003) and was confirmed by interviewees.

(2003) shows a quite surprising element: half of the nearly one hundred associations in the Bologna area are mixed, i.e. made up of foreigners and Italians. According to our interviewees, this is the result of the high level of association activity in the local area, which involved foreigners in local organisations since immigration began.

According to our interviewees, the legacy of local associations has determined two other features of immigrants' associations. First of all, as in the local society, where there are many cultural associations but few religious ones, among immigrants there are more cultural associations than religious ones. Secondly, strong local feminist movements have fostered the involvement of foreign women in associations. In Bologna ethnic female participation in associations is actually very widespread (Carchedi 2000): just 10% of ethnic and mixed associations are made up of men only, with 10% made up of women only – though 40% are characterised by a prevalence of men. Furthermore, it is worth noting that female presence is strongest in mixed associations (Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni 2003).

With regards to associations' support for the welfare of local migrant communities, most of the ethnic and mixed associations offer information (90% of associations made up of foreigners only, and 80% of mixed associations), aim to preserve and promote the culture and language of the countries of origin (80% of the first and 70% of the second), and manage socio-cultural mediation services (75% of the first and 60% of the second) (*ibidem*). The main difference between mixed and ethnic associations is the target for their activities. Mixed associations usually address both foreigners and Italians, while the activities of ethnic associations are more oriented towards fellow nationals (Paradisi 2003; Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni 2003). For instance, mixed associations promote the cultures of ethnic minorities through events and activities which address the whole local population, while ethnic associations promote them mainly through native language courses for children and events connected to religious or traditional celebrations.

The local administrations support these associations, as we will explain later, as they are seen as relevant instruments for immigrants' participation in the local civil society and a means of expression for the different cultures<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics

In the Bologna province Muslims represent nearly the half of the immigrant population, while in the city of Bologna the figure is about 40% (Barberis 2004). The main minorities come from Maghreb (Morocco and Tunisia) and the Indian subcontinent (Pakistan and Bangladesh), followed by immigrants from Eastern Europe and the African subcontinent (*ibidem*). The communities from Northern Africa are the oldest, while those from Albania and Asia only became significant in the 90s, and the Eastern European communities are the most recent.

As far as the gender ratio is concerned, as mentioned above, in 2002 women surpassed men in Bologna (par. 3.2). On the other hand, in the minorities from Islamic countries, while the female presence has grown, men are still overrepresented, as shown in the following table.

**Tab. 3 - Percentage of women in Muslim minorities resident**

<sup>7</sup> Municipality of Bologna, Triennial Plan of Health and Social Wellbeing 2009-2011 (Piano triennale della salute e del benessere sociale 2009-2011)

**in the city of Bologna (30 June 2009)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>% Female</b>
Morocco	45
Bangladesh	36
Albania	47
Pakistan	18
Sri Lanka	40
Tunisia	30
Senegal	27

Source: Municipality of Bologna

There is a large proportion of second generation residents: people born in Italy account for 10-20% of these minorities and are particularly numerous among Moroccans (20%) and Tunisians (21%), surpassed only by China (27%) and Serbia-Montenegro (34%) (Osservatorio provinciale sulle immigrazioni 2008b).

As for economic integration, while Muslims from Maghreb are mainly employed in the secondary and tertiary sectors, Muslims from Asia are very active in ethnic business. Most of them (and certainly the most visible) run little shops which sell mainly - but not only - food, are open till late into the evening and are often located in the city centre.

As we explained in the previous paragraph, religious ethnic associations, including Muslim ones, are very rare in Bologna. According to the data provided by the city's multicultural centre, the only Muslim religious organisation is the Islamic Culture Centre of Bologna (Centro di Cultura Islamica di Bologna). However, other cultural associations, mainly organised on an ethnic basis, also carry out religious activities, and some of them run small prayer rooms, which are often lent by the Municipality.

The Islamic Culture Centre manages the biggest prayer room in the city, runs a little library on Islam and organises Arabic and religious courses for children and adults. It also offers legal aid and information thanks to the collaboration of a lawyer. As the president of the Centre explained, they also give advice on «matters that can be only managed through Islamic laws», such as marriage problems. The Centre is led by a Syrian who arrived in Bologna in the Fifties and who is helped in this task by an Italian Muslim. It is worth underlining that in Bologna, like in other Southern European cities such as Lisbon (see the CLIP report), the Muslim community is led by immigrants who do not belong to the current main Muslim ethnic minorities, but who arrived in the host country before the beginning of the labour immigration and belong to the upper-middle class. This situation can favour dialogue, since these leaders are well-integrated and well-educated, but it also raises doubts about their real representativeness of local Muslim communities.

The Centre, as well as the religious services, is well-attended, with the exception of people from the Indian subcontinent, despite the fact that they are Sunnites like the rest of the Muslim immigrants in Bologna. The reason indicated by interviewees (both from the Islamic Cultural Centre and the Pakistan and Bangladeshi associations) is that immigrants from this geographical area do not speak Arabic, and therefore do not understand the sermons for the Friday prayer.

However, this problem should be easy to solve since the sermon is already translated into Italian and could be translated into other foreign languages, as happens in some of the little prayer rooms scattered throughout the city. Some interviewees suggested that the real reason the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis do not use the Centre's prayer room, and the reason behind the fact that the Centre does not translate its sermons, is probably connected to tensions within the local Muslim population.

Finally, it is worth underlining that many (non-religious) organisations made up of immigrants from Islamic countries seem to pay special attention to the transmission of language and faith principles to children, on the one hand, and to women's social integration, on the other. In particular, many of these associations are committed on a voluntary basis to giving training to women and helping them to find work. They also organise recreational opportunities in order to avoid women being isolated and promote activities to favour the transmission of social knowledge hampered by the distance from relatives (for instance concerning the care of babies). Indeed these associations appear to be very aware of the different role that women play in the sending and in receiving societies, and seem to be very committed to mediating between these two different cultures. This attention to the female condition is probably the product of the local cultural and social environment, where the women's association movement and the feminist movement are highly developed, promoting specific action and campaigns and therefore raising the awareness of immigrants in this regard.

## **4. Local intercultural policies in general**

### **4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations with ethnic and religious organisations in the city**

As we said before (par. 3.2) the support of immigrant associationism is explicitly pursued by the local administration and is one of the goals of the Triennial Plan of Health and Social Wellbeing 2009-2011 (Piano triennale della salute e del benessere sociale 2009-2011). Indeed the Municipality's attention to ethnic associations is not new: it started in the 90s, when the presence of immigrants and their participation in civil society began to be visible.

Concerning relations with ethnic associations, according to the research carried out by the Osservatorio Provinciale delle Immigrazioni – Provincial Observatory of Immigrations (2003) almost all the ethnic and mixed associations of the province of Bologna have relations with local authorities. In particular, the Municipality tries to consider and treat this kind of association in the same way as any other, requesting they address the relevant Departments according to the nature of their demands and needs. Nevertheless, the Department with the most contact with these associations is the Department of Social Policies, which encompasses the office dedicated to immigration (Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector Office) as well as the city's «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre. The Municipal Cabinet is also often involved in intercultural and interreligious dialogue events and debates. Lastly, the Neighbourhoods are becoming increasingly crucial in maintaining relations with immigrant associations as a consequence of the recent decentralization process undertaken by the Municipality of Bologna.

Although the Municipality's attention towards immigrant associations dates back some time, during recent years local authorities have changed their perspective. They have realised that immigrant association-forming is an expression of a foreign population but it does not represent it. Thus, at the end of 2007 the Council of Foreign and Stateless Citizens of the Province of Bologna (Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri ed apolidi della Provincia di Bologna) and, at a municipal level, the Neighbourhood Councils of Foreign Citizens (Consulte di Quartiere dei Cittadini Stranieri) were established. Before these Councils were established, there was a political debate in the Municipality about giving foreign residents the right to vote in local elections. Nevertheless, since similar attempts previously undertaken by other Italian cities had been already rejected by the central government on the grounds of unconstitutionality, the Bologna administration finally decided to adopt other channels of participation such as the Councils.

Each of the nine Neighbourhood Councils is made up of five people, elected directly by foreign residents in the neighbourhood<sup>8</sup>. Elections take place on the basis of the individual candidates, in order to discourage ethnic lists giving too much relevance to ethnic interests<sup>9</sup>. However, according to the president of the Metropolitan Forum of Immigrant Associations (par. 4.3), the smallest ethnic communities do not feel represented since there are no Council members of their nationality. This means that the ethnic communities still follow an «ethnic logic»; nevertheless, the election method adopted by the Municipality could progressively change this logic.

The Councils are consultative bodies, which can also propose measures and programmes concerning integration policies to the Neighbourhood Councils. Periodically, the Presidents of the different Neighbourhood Councils meet in the Municipal Conference, which has consultative tasks on a Municipal level in the field of integration policies. However, until now these Councils seem to have exerted a limited influence on local policies. In the interviews it actually emerged that the elected representatives have encountered various difficulties due to inadequate language skills or incomplete knowledge of institutional structures and processes. In order to solve these problems specific training courses were organised by the Municipality. These courses were appreciated, but as they have just finished it is difficult to evaluate their real impact.

From the perspective of intercultural dialogue, it is relevant to note that the establishment of the Council of Foreign and Stateless Citizens of the Province of Bologna and the Neighbourhood Councils of Foreign Citizens was the result of a participatory process that involved political, technical and administrative initiatives, including seminars, debates and conferences, with the aim of making these Councils an expression not only of the political authorities, but also of the civil society organisations. The immigrants' involvement was significant and during this participatory process new political movements and ethnic associations were promoted by foreign citizens and the existing ones were strengthened (Paradisi 2008; Osservatorio provinciale sulle Immigrazioni 2008).

It is worth underlining that the participatory process was also recently introduced into the Triennial Plan of Health and Wellbeing of the City, as well as the Annual Plan of Implementation which also concerns the intercultural policies. In fact, they are both written on the basis of the needs that

---

<sup>8</sup> In order to foster women's presence on the Councils, between a man and a woman with the same number of votes, the women prevails.

<sup>9</sup> In the case of Council of Foreign and Stateless Citizens of the Province of Bologna the candidates form the lists.

emerged in the Services Conferences held at neighbourhood level, in which civil society organisations, including ethnic associations, can also take part.

To sum up, we can say that the city of Bologna aims to induce immigrants and ethnic associations to use the same channels employed by the local population to express their needs, and in recent years several and significant initiatives towards this aim have been undertaken.

## 4.2 Issues, demands and interests

The major issue concerning the integration of ethnic minorities in Bologna seems to be the recognition of immigrants as part of the local society and the promotion of exchanges between ethnic minorities and the native population in order to foster a two-way integration process. With regards to the needs of immigrant minorities, those gathered from the interviews with ethnic associations all but coincide with those that emerged from the Public Inquiry (Istruttoria Pubblica) on Immigration held in 2007<sup>10</sup>. The Public Inquiry lasted three days (6 and 13 February and 6 March 2007). It was attended by 85 public and civil society bodies, 74 of which intervened, including immigrants' organisations<sup>11</sup>. The main requests that emerged from the Public Inquiry and the interviews are the following:

- to boost Italian language teaching;
- to make offices and public structures more competent in providing information and services to people of different cultures and languages;
- to give immigrants the chance to express their own cultures, since this is a condition of a reciprocal exchange between foreigners and Italians;
- to enable immigrants to raise their own visibility in order to combat the negative images conveyed by the media, since communication is regarded as a crucial element in the integration process;
- to pay attention to the language used by the media and public authorities with regard to ethnic minorities, since an incorrect use of language can generate reciprocal suspicion and fear;
- to view immigrants not as people in need but as resources for the local society, who should be treated not as poor but as citizens; the housing and labour problems pointed out should be handled from this perspective (not just providing council houses but also supporting access to the market, not just offering help with job-seeking but also to start up small businesses); furthermore, special attention has to be devoted to women and second generations, as they are more at risk of marginalisation;
- to support ethnic associations which ask the conditions for promoting activities and

<sup>10</sup> The Public Inquiry is regulated by the Statute of the Bologna Municipality which was approved in 1990 (art. 12), and which established that public measures can be drawn from a public inquiry that can be called by local administration or requested by at least 2,000 persons (the 2007 one on immigration was required by a civil society committee supported by more than 2,400 citizens). It should be held in the form of public debate which the associations and prominent groups of citizens can take part in.

<sup>11</sup> Municipality of Bologna, *Report for the Municipal Council about the Public Inquiry on Policies for Immigration*, May 2007.

initiatives by themselves, using the culture and the links with the country of origin as strategic elements for successful integration.

Concerning the last point, many associations underline that the voluntary contributions given by members have drastically decreased as a consequence of the economic crisis, thus the economic situation of the associations has worsened and greater financial support from the Municipality is needed.

As we will explain better in the next paragraph, the Municipality seems ready to meet the needs of the associations. In any case the demands of immigrant associations are not easy to satisfy and require medium/long term action.

### 4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue

In recent years the Municipality of Bologna has shifted from a multicultural to an intercultural approach, with the aim of building a local society that can be regarded as the result of exchanges between the different cultures. Indeed in Italy Bologna has always represented the cutting edge in terms of integration policies, adopting or promoting new approaches to immigration.

This shift towards an intercultural approach was marked by the name change of the Immigrant Service into the Intercultural Service (now the Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector Office). The Public Inquiry mentioned above is also part of this strategy and has been used to identify shared goals. More precisely, in the «Triennial Plan of Health and Social Wellbeing 2009-2011» (Piano triennale della salute e del benessere sociale 2009-2011) the Municipality has fixed the following goals, inspired by the results of the Public Inquiry:

- 1) to foster immigrants' associations by giving them premises and financial support;
- 2) to foster intercultural communication initiatives and new forms of participation and political representation for immigrants;
- 3) to develop the «Zonarelli» intercultural centre, fostering second generation associationism;
- 4) to favour intercultural initiatives which address the whole local population, in order to foster a sense of belonging, personal and collective responsibility, solidarity and dialogue.

As far as support for ethnic organisations is concerned, the research carried out by the Osservatorio Provinciale delle Immigrazioni – Provincial Observatory of Immigrations (2003) points out that 30% of associations in the province of Bologna claim to run services on behalf of local administrations and over 30% receive public funds through contributions or covenants. However, mixed associations seem to be at an advantage: they run more public services and receive more funds than ethnic associations. This is probably the result of their Italians members' better knowledge of the local institutional context.

At the local level, most of the economic support, as well as the premises, are usually distributed among ethnic and mixed organisations (as applies to any local organisations) through calls for tenders published both by the Municipality and the Neighbourhoods. In this regard, some associations pointed out that it is easier to receive money to start new projects than continue existing ones, even if the results are good and the initiatives can be regarded as good practices,

risking wasting the experience gained. Furthermore, while it is the intention of the local authorities that calls for tenders should guarantee transparency in the distribution of resources, some ethnic associations say they face difficulties in answering these calls due to limited language skills and a lack of information. Thus, the risk is that the local administration support goes mainly to the more powerful, better established associations which, as we have just said, are usually the mixed associations.

This last problem is linked to another issue that emerged from the aforementioned Public Inquiry on Immigration (par. 4.2): the public structures' ability to provide information and services to people with different cultures and languages. In Italy this problem is usually solved by using cultural mediators; however, local authorities always find it difficult to supply mediators for all the different services used by immigrants, as the expense would be too high, and the services with few foreign clients therefore generally do not have mediators. Bologna has adopted a successful solution, which can be regarded as a best practice: the Centralised Service of Cultural Mediation and Social Interpreting. The Service is contracted to a non-profit association of mediators (AMISS) and gives different municipal services, as well as other public or private organisations (schools, hospitals, training centres, juvenile detention centres, etc.), the opportunity to use mediators from more than twenty countries. The Service can be used both for meeting limited and occasional needs and for developing complex projects, such as the «Parents' Permanent Workshop» set up in a city school in order to create opportunities for contact between Italian and foreign parents, their children and teaching staff<sup>12</sup>. The Municipality and the ASL (Azienda Sanitaria Locale – Local Health Agency) pay an annual sum to the Service to guarantee a certain number of mediation hours for their own services, while other organisations pay each time they use the services. In any case it costs much less than hiring mediators for all the services and organisations that use the Centralized Service.

As for communication and exchanges between majority and minority cultures, it is worth underlining that in the city there are many organisations that organise Italian language courses, often with the support of the Municipality. Among them, the CGIL (Italian General Labour Federation) organises free Italian language courses, which include trips to places of historic interest, learning the principles of the Constitution, visits to city libraries and services and so on, in order to increase immigrants' knowledge of both the national language and the local society and culture. The CGIL courses, which could be regarded as a best practice, register a quite high attendance (around 500 persons per year)<sup>13</sup>.

As well as these initiatives, the main instrument used by local authorities to implement the new intercultural approach is the city's «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre, established in 1999 in order to foster immigrants' involvement in city life. Its task is to develop and maintain relations with ethnic and mixed associations. Indeed according to «Zonarelli» nearly all the associations in the province of Bologna are members of the Centre (with the exception of only a few associations located outside the city with a very small range of action). Therefore, we can say that the Municipality's relationships with associations are quite institutionalised. In Bologna the tendency to «institutionalise» civil society has always been quite strong, i.e. the local authorities tend to

---

<sup>12</sup> In terms of figures, in 2008 2,473 hours of mediation were provided: 1,580 in schools and 893 in other services.

<sup>13</sup> Trade unions also organise meetings for immigrants, to provide information about legislative measures in the labour or immigration field, often held by immigrants who work with the unions on a regular basis.

organise, register, support and intensely involve civil society organisations in institutional activities (Ponzo 2008b).

The Department of Social Policies of the Municipality provides the human and economic resources needed for the Centre's functioning and appoints the director. The Municipality runs the centre through a Steering Committee which is made up of Councillors from the municipal Departments of Culture and Education, a representative of the Institution for Social Inclusion, the President of the Neighbourhood where the Centre is located and the President of the Municipal Conference (par. 4.1), the Provincial Councillor from the Social Policies Department and three representatives from associations. The associations are brought together in the Associations Coordination which elaborates activity proposals according to the Steering Committee's directions. The activities of the Centre are also developed through involvement in European, national, regional and local calls for projects in the intercultural field. These calls can be answered by the Municipality or the associations while the projects are always implemented by partnerships.

The Centre hosts also cultural, sporting and artistic events (language, cooking and music courses, meals, film screenings, concerts, seminars and conferences, etc.) in order to highlight the cultures of ethnic minorities and foster intercultural dialogue. However, some associations underline that there is not enough space available, since there are many associations which want to organise activities inside the Centre. Furthermore, they point out that the Centre is not easy to reach, hampering immigrants' participation in the activities. In order to make it easier for immigrants to get involved, some associations have suggested establishing branches in different neighbourhoods.

Although several associations use the Centre's premises and services or are involved in activities and projects in various ways, the organisations which take part in the Associations Coordination are only a small part of those that belong to the Centre. There are several possible reasons for this. According to some representatives of the local administration, probably not all of the associations are really interested in intercultural dialogue. As we said before, while mixed associations are strongly committed to improving intercultural dialogue through social and cultural activities, ethnic associations are mainly concerned with preserving their culture of origin. We can add two further possible explanations: first of all, the weakness and limited resources of many associations hamper involvement in the Associations Coordination and its planning activities; secondly, the strong steering role played by local authorities might discourage associations' participation.

Despite these difficulties, the «Zonarelli» centre has become the main instrument for implementing the Municipality's new intercultural approach. This strategy regards the second generation as a strategic element of the intercultural dialogue. Indeed the new «Zonarelli Intercultural Centre Project» is focused on the empowerment and the social visibility of new generations and has been developed through the project «2 X 1 X 2g. Expression and Identity» financed thanks to an agreement on the integration of second generations between the central government (DG Immigration of the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Policy) and the Italian metropolitan cities, including Bologna. The goal of the project «2 X 1 X 2g. Expression and Identity» is to foster the participation and social visibility of second generations and encourage exchanges with Italian young people. The «Zonarelli» Centre implements most of the activities, thanks to its collaboration with immigrant associations. The most interesting activities are the following:

- «Crossing TV», a web tv run by Italian and foreign young people;
- «I Go Around With the Radio on My Shoulder», a series of workshops on interculturality that will end with a feast and the participation to the city festival Par Tòt Parata;
- The «Second Generations Festival», a festival featuring meetings, readings, videos, music and theatre performances promoted by second generations.

Lastly, together with the CD-Lei (Centro di Documentazione-Laboratorio per un'Educazione Interculturale – Documentation Centre-Laboratory for an Intercultural Education), which is a partner in the project, mentoring activities involving both migrant teachers and migrant students have been developed in schools. Indeed CD-LEI can be regarded as another crucial instrument in the implementation of the new intercultural approach, even though it was established quite some time ago (1991), like «Zonarelli». It involves different municipal and provincial Departments, as well as the University of Bologna and trade unions, and aims to foster intercultural dialogue in schools. It offers support to young people from an ethnic background, in order to help them find a stable balance between their family traditions and the hosting society and, on the other hand, it tries to foster the integration of students' families through initiatives such as Italian language courses and computer training for the mothers, discussion groups made up of Italian and foreign parents, and social activities developed within certain schools. Furthermore, it offers permanent training for teachers on intercultural issues and support to schools for the development of intercultural projects; it fosters the exchange of good intercultural practices adopted at the local, national and international levels (it runs a multicultural library which also contains an archive of the intercultural projects carried out by schools) and the promotion of networks between public institution and non-profit organisations aimed at developing initiatives for the integration of foreign students and their families (Ognisanti 2008).

To return to «Zonarelli», as for promoting and raising awareness of immigrants' cultures of origin, in partnership with the immigrant association «Mother Tongues», the centre runs native language courses for second generations, and the «Mother Tongues Festival». The Centre also organises the «Festival of Cultures», designed to be a showcase for different cultures and an opportunity for exchanges between cultures, generations and genders. The aim of the Festival is to promote a new image of Bologna as the «city of the new citizenship» through the expression of cultures that, although different, are all engaged in building shared ways of exchange and dialogue.

Indeed as a consequence of adopting an intercultural approach, the stress is more on exchange than on preserving immigrants' original cultures. In other words, the enhancement of the original cultures is seen not a value *per se*, but as a pre-requisite of a fair and fruitful exchange between ethnic minorities and the local population. In this perspective, the municipal initiatives focused on immigrants' original cultures address the whole of the local population rather than just the minorities.

Besides the aforementioned initiatives, the other measures directed towards the majority population and aimed at improving relations with ethnic minority groups consist mainly in intercultural education in schools, and cultural events, such as documentaries and films, meetings, conferences aimed at redefining the concept of identity, giving relevance to immigrants' original culture and breaking down prejudices and stereotypes. These events are usually promoted by associations and civil society organisations with the economic or logistic support of the Municipality or Neighbourhoods.

Finally, it is worth underlining that even though the Municipality recognises the significant role played by mixed associations in favouring intercultural dialogue, no special actions have been undertaken to foster this kind of organisations, which are treated like the others.

Besides the «Zonarelli» Centre, another best practice for the support of immigrant associations is the Metropolitan Forum of Immigrant Associations. The Forum was established a couple of years before the «Zonarelli», in 1997, by a group of forty associations, thanks to a European project carried out by the Municipality. Until 1999 the Forum was located in the municipal Immigration Service's premises and was highly involved in the formulation and implementation of local integration policies. In 1999, it was moved into the «Zonarelli» centre by the newly elected centre-right local government (par. 3.1). From that moment its visibility and involvement in the Municipality's integration policies decreased. However, the local administration continued to view it as a sort of representative body of the immigrant population, since there was no institution made up of elected representatives of the local foreign population. Since the recent establishment of the Neighbourhoods Councils of Foreign Citizens (par. 4.1) the role of the Forum has weakened. Nevertheless, the Forum is still involved in integration projects by the Municipality and in the management of services addressed to immigrants as well as still sometimes playing a consultative role as far as local immigrants' policies are concerned.

In the meantime, the Municipality moved the Forum out of the «Zonarelli» centre in order to better distinguish the two platforms. Indeed following the adoption of the new intercultural approach their functions have become clearer, even though they are both committed to supporting immigrants' associations: while «Zonarelli» is more focused on intercultural dialogue, the Forum mainly addresses foreigners and is made up of ethnic associations only. Furthermore, the Municipality is not part of the Forum's Steering Committee, which is elected only by the associations through a democratic mechanism. The Municipality provides the premises, while funding comes from local, national and European projects carried out by the Forum. However, the Forum's involvement in municipal projects and services can be regarded as a sort of indirect support. Currently it runs a multimedia services centre and computer training courses for immigrants and associations, as well as the recently concluded Equal project, which involved running a vocational guidance front office. Lastly, it takes part in the «Civic Assistants» project on a voluntary basis, in partnership with the Policies Security Sector of the Municipality: twenty volunteers from the Forum tour public places as schools or parks with the aim of preventing uncivil behaviours. To sum up, the Forum can certainly be regarded as a best practice, since it fosters cooperation between different ethnic associations and is an important channel for immigrants' participation in civil society.

While the Municipality has invested a lot in intercultural dialogue, no special platforms have been established for fostering interreligious dialogue. Indeed religious associations are excluded from the Metropolitan Forum and «Zonarelli», which both explicitly state that religion has nothing to do with their activities. The relations between the Municipality and religious minorities are not institutionalised and contacts are forged on specific issues, as we will see in the paragraph about Muslim minorities. Nevertheless, the Municipality and Neighbourhoods usually provide venues for religious celebrations and prayer rooms.

According to the Municipality's representatives, this situation is due to two main factors. First of all, it is usually difficult to identify persons or organisations recognised and legitimated to represent whole religious communities, since in Italy there is no agreement between the State and all the religious minorities (par. 2.2). Secondly, the Municipality prefers not to interfere in religious

matters. We can add that in Bologna religious matters have never been considered relevant to the Municipality's actions or policies. We can presume that the traditional predominance of the Communist Party in local government has probably contributed to this attitude (par. 3.4.); the limited development of interreligious dialogue therefore also appears to be a political legacy.

Indeed the main local institution engaged in interreligious dialogue seems to be the CD-LEI, the activities of which primarily address to schools. In this regard, its main initiatives are (Ognisanti 2008):

- a. training activities for school teachers, at the end of which the CD-LEI produces materials distributed in schools and available on line ([www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/cd-lei.php](http://www.comune.bologna.it/istruzione/cd-lei.php));
- b. promoting or participating in public events (mainly seminars) on interreligious dialogue;
- c. promoting projects to foster dialogue between cultures and religions in schools, i.e. workshops in which external experts explain the cultures of different countries, including the religious aspects (according to the CD-LEI's archive, about 10% of schools' intercultural projects include religious issues);
- d. promoting an intercultural approach in the teaching of the Catholic religion which, looking to the POF (Piani dell'Offerta Formativa – Educational Supply Plan), seems to be particularly developed in schools with a high proportion of students from an ethnic background.

Lastly, the Municipality recently promoted a travelling photo exhibition called «The Skies above Bologna» (I Cieli sopra Bologna) about the practices of the different religious communities living in Bologna. Music events, debates, workshops on interreligious dialogue related to the photo exhibition were often organised by cultural associations and supported by the Neighbourhoods which hosted the exhibition in turn. For instance, Saragozza Neighbourhood organised «Make Dialogue» - five workshops focused on five different faiths - aimed at raising awareness of the different religious groups living in the city and fostering a society based on pluralism. However, «The Skies above Bologna» is not part of medium/long term project on interreligious dialogue, being an isolated initiative promoted by cultural associations and supported by the Municipal Cabinet.

#### 4.4 Relationships between different ethnic groups in the city

The local population has traditionally been open to immigration. Unfortunately, no surveys on Bologna are available. Some interesting results however emerge from a survey concerning the Emilia-Romagna region (Colombo 2007). As Colombo underlines, the population of Emilia-Romagna exhibits moderate positions on immigration: as we can see in the following table, only limited shares of population think that immigration implies only disadvantages or only advantages.

**Tab. 4 - Answers to the question «Taking into consideration both today and the future, do you think that the foreign population in the region implies....»**

Only advantages	8.7
-----------------	-----

More advantages than disadvantages	37.4
More disadvantages than advantages	33.1
Only disadvantages	11.3
No answer	9.5
Total	100.0

Source: Colombo (2007)

It is worth noting that among the respondents who think that immigration implies only disadvantages or more disadvantages than advantages, there was a larger proportion of people who do not know any migrants or show a local or national identification rather than a global one.

As far as relations between minorities are concerned, nearly all of the city's ethnic and mixed associations are in contact with other associations; these contacts are obviously fostered by the «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre and the Metropolitan Forum (Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni 2003). Trade unions, which are strong and well-established in Bologna (par. 3.1), also play their part, representing a relevant means of interethnic cooperation, although they operate more in the social field than in the cultural one<sup>14</sup>. For instance, the CGIL (Italian General Labour Federation) has an Immigration Committee made up of Italians and foreigners of different origins that has the task of orienting the trade union's policies on immigration<sup>15</sup>. Furthermore, in some small and medium firms the union representatives are immigrants and they represent not only foreign workers but also Italian ones.

However, all the associations interviewed point out the need to develop stronger cooperation between associations, besides the ones stimulated and supported by local institutions. Up till now no relevant common organisations have been established autonomously by immigrant associations and the Forum and the «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre are probably not seen by immigrant associations as instruments for lobbying the Municipality effectively. In this regard, the associations interviewed believe that the problems faced by the various ethnic organisations are very similar and if they acted and lobbied together, they would probably obtain more from the Municipality. However, according to these associations, competition for resources prevails over cooperation. This could in part be a negative effect of the calls for tenders used by local institutions to distribute resources since this mechanism generally tends to stress competition rather than cooperation. However, as far as projects are concerned, the calls often reward networks of organisations fostering cooperation or at least the creation of clusters of associations working together.

Despite these problems, interviewees did not highlight any conflicts between different ethnic minorities. Nevertheless, during the field visit immigrants from Arab countries often underlined that immigrants from the Indian sub-continent are particularly isolated, hampering cooperation. This perception is probably exacerbated because it is unexpected among people belonging to the same religious minority. However, it is true that Bangladeshi and Pakistani immigrants have great difficulties in speaking Italian and sometimes only know a few words, even if they have been in

<sup>14</sup> In the cultural field the main intervention consists in the language classes mentioned above (par. 4.3).

<sup>15</sup> This Committee exists not only at municipal level, but also on the regional and national levels.

Italy for a long time or are presidents of relevant associations. This difficulty, on one hand, could be the product of infrequent relations with other Italian and foreign groups and, on the other hand, can hinder relations with other immigrant associations and minorities that use Italian as a common language.

## 4.5 Public communication

The Municipality of Bologna has not developed a strategy for public communication relating to ethnic and religious minorities. Nevertheless, according to the Municipality's representatives, since the Public Inquiry held in 2007, in their public communications about immigration all the local authorities have stressed interculturality and the contribution of the different cultures to local society.

Furthermore, in November 2008 local authorities, including the Bologna Municipality, signed the Agreement on Intercultural Communication promoted by the Emilia-Romagna Region. Various Italian media organisations and several multicultural media, the Intercultural Centres of Emilia Romagna and the University of Bologna also signed the Agreement. The goal is to improve immigrants' opportunities for self-representation, enhance dialogue and mutual knowledge between immigrants and the native population, and increase communication on institutional initiatives. The actions that should be undertaken are: research and data gathering on the representation of immigration in the media, information campaigns directed at journalists, the promotion of multicultural media and the development of training activities. Until now, except for some training activities for journalists from the multicultural media, the only action adopted has been the creation of a network of multicultural media at a regional level called MIER (Media Interculturali Emilia Romagna – Emilia Romagna Intercultural Media). Some of the multiethnic media which are part of the network are afraid that the Agreement's impact will be limited since it depends on the financial resources that will be available to implement the aforementioned activities. Indeed the journalists from the local media who were interviewed had never heard of the Agreement.

As a matter of fact, up to now there have not been any foreigners on the editorial staff of local media. Nevertheless, the ethnic associations, the Metropolitan Forum of Ethnic Associations and the «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre are usually consulted by local media as far as ethnic and religious minorities are concerned. Furthermore, the local media tries to pay attention to ethnic community integration processes. For instance a couple of years ago, the «Resto del Carlino», a traditional Bologna newspaper which is usually classified as centre-right, dedicated a twice-weekly page to an ethnic community. The page addressed both foreigners, providing useful information, and the local population interested in knowing more about the immigrant population living in the city. The more left wing newspapers also try to provide information about the life of immigrants in Bologna, giving news on ethnic or minority religious festivals, the integration of the second generation in schools and so on.

However, the «media logic» usually prevails. According to our interviewees, the local media usually pays attention to immigration-related matters only when conflicts or problems arise. This was, the case of the mosque, for instance, which is illustrated in the following paragraphs, and the Council of foreigner citizens of the province of Bologna. As Brambilla (2008) points out, during the

Council's first year of activity the media did not pay attention to its work or position on topics even if on the media agenda, whereas attention grew when it came to the problematic election of the Council President.

Concerning the ethnic media, as we said before, the promotion of self-representation by second generations is one of the main goals of the project «2 X 1 X 2g. Expression and Identity» carried out by the Bologna Municipality together with the central government through the «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre (par. 4.3). One of the main results is «Crossing TV», a web tv channel managed by Italian and second generation young people. Its purpose is to convey the self-representation of young people, including those belonging to the second generation. The project was very successful and is often indicated as a best practice in national conferences and seminars. Recently it has attracted the attention, not only of scholars, but also of private enterprises, as well as public and private institutions that need consultancy on second generations' communication practices. This fact is crucial, as the editor in chief of «Crossing TV» underlined, since the local authorities usually only fund project start-ups, not the continuation of existing initiatives, as we explained previously.

More in general, ethnic media is not widespread in Bologna. The only two local ethnic media indicated during the interviews were the newspaper *Il Tamburo* (The Drum) and the radio *Asterisco* (Asterisk). These are the only local media managed by an editorial staff made up purely of foreigners, albeit from different countries. Both of these media, which focus on matters concerning immigration and integration, came into being within the Metropolitan Forum of Ethnic Associations (par. 4.3) and were initially financed thanks to the National Funds for Integration Policies (par. 2.2). Currently they are still supported by public funds, otherwise they would risk closure. This kind of editorial project does not in fact have not enough of a market to survive autonomously. Among the media with a mixed editorial staff it is worth remembering *El Ghibli*, a on-line review of literature of migration, developed with the support of the Province of Bologna.

In Bologna there are no ethnic local media produced by one minority only or using foreign languages. It seems that some years ago the Pakistani community tried to produce a local newspaper in Pakistani language, but the project failed due to limited sales. According to interviewees, this sort of local media is not competitive: if ethnic minorities want news about their countries of origin, they use the internet or satellite television; otherwise, for information on local services and events it is better to use Italian to address all of the foreign population, since there are no ethnic communities large enough to guarantee sufficient circulation.

## 4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

In Bologna intercultural dialogue is fairly well developed. There appear to be three main reasons for this. Firstly, exchanges and dialogue have been fostered by the great development of ethnic and mixed associations, which seems to spring, at least partly, from a strong local legacy of associationism.

Secondly, intercultural dialogue has been improved thanks to the Municipality's support for immigrant associations. For instance, the «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre and the Metropolitan Forum provide key logistic support for associations. Furthermore, they offer channels of

communication with the local administration and give assistance when it comes to raising the visibility of minorities in the city. However, the associations do not have much involvement in the planning activities of the platforms, and some associations feel the need to develop further cooperation in order to get their voices heard by the local administration. Indeed the fairly strong dependence of these platforms on the Municipality probably limits their independence and «voice».

The third and probably most significant factor is the Municipality's ability to combine specific measures like the aforementioned platforms with the attempt not to treat immigrant associations differently from other associations: they answer the calls for tenders just like any other associations, they take part in the Services Conferences like all the other important local organisations and so on. This difficult balance is a key element of the new intercultural approach recently adopted by the Municipality. According to this approach, reinforcing immigrants' cultures of origin is not a value *per se* but an instrument which guarantees fair and fruitful exchanges with the native population.

## 5. Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

### 5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

The major demands of Muslim minorities in Bologna emerged from the field work concerning places of worship. Indeed the city has many little prayer rooms located in public (former or still active) first accommodation structures or in private apartments and garages, while the largest one is in the Islamic Cultural Centre of Bologna. Thus, Muslims usually ask for bigger prayer rooms and, during Ramadan, for dedicated spaces that can host all the believers. The Municipality and the Neighbourhoods usually try to satisfy these demands according to the available premises.

However, these requests have recently been channelled into calls for a proper mosque, generating great debate in the city. According to the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre, the mosque issue is related to the necessity of having a sufficiently large place of worship which belongs to the Islamic community rather than the Municipality, in order to be sure that it can never be closed down. The other (non-religious) associations made up of Muslim immigrants interviewed during the field visit are interested in the mosque, not only for reasons of space, but also in order to boost recognition of the city's Muslim community.

The opinion surveys actually register a very open attitude among the local population towards the idea of building a mosque. For instance, according to the aforementioned survey carried out in Emilia Romagna region, more than two thirds of the region's residents declare they would be in favour of the creation of a non-Catholic place of worship near their homes, and in the larger municipalities, such as Bologna, the level of acceptance was even higher (see the table below).

**Tab. 5 - Answers to the question «If a non-Catholic place of worship was built near your home (for instance a mosque, a Buddhist temple, or an Orthodox church), would you be against or in favour of it?»**

Attitude	Percentage
----------	------------

In favour of	62.7
Against	30.8
No answer	6.5
Total	100.0

Source: Colombo (2003)

Nevertheless, when this idea became a concrete hypothesis hostility became quite widespread among the residents of Bologna. Some of the ethnic associations interviewed reported their disappointment on this attitude. Yet the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre was not surprised: according to him, the hostility of the local population towards Muslims has grown considerably in recent years, as a consequence of international terrorism and the rise in the number of Muslims living in the city. In actual fact no discriminatory behaviours or hate crimes specifically directed towards Muslims were mentioned during my field visit and no longitudinal studies on this topic are available to support this conjecture. Nevertheless the Islamic community has gained increasing importance among the concerns of the local civil society, becoming one of the main issues in public debate in recent years, as we will explain in the forthcoming paragraphs.

Another significant demand from the Muslim community concerned the creation of an Islamic cemetery, but this was met in 2004, after several years of negotiation. The Municipality finally reserved part of the city cemetery to Muslims, where the tombs point to Mecca and there is a specific section for foetuses. However with regards to the most problematic elements, i.e. the practice of «permanent burial» and the placement of the body directly into the ground wrapped in a simple, plain cloth as Islam prescribes, Italian law prevailed: the possibility to exhume the body after ten years and the obligation of using a coffin have been imposed (Ghesini 2004). In any case this situation is viewed as acceptable by the interviewees from the Islamic minority.

Besides these needs related to religion, the Islamic Cultural Centre and the associations made up of immigrants from Islamic countries accord great importance to the transmission of cultural and religious principles to new generations (par. 3.3) and would like to receive support from the Municipality, at least to pay the teachers. As we explained, the Municipality has developed a specific project in this regard called «Mother Tongues», which aims to teach the language spoken by parents to second generations (par. 4.3). Some associations view the project positively while others think that the language courses provided are not intensive enough to be effective and prefer to organise these activities by themselves.

Lastly, Muslim minorities underlined the need for further recognition from the local administration. Indeed according to the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre, who has been in Italy since the 50s and has been in contact with the local administration since the beginning of the 90s, nowadays the Municipality is more cautious when it comes to openly supporting the Islamic organisations than in the past, because the local population's attitude towards Muslims has worsened in recent years.

## 5.2 General approaches and policies to improve relations with Muslim groups

The Municipality of Bologna has not developed an integration policy specifically addressed to Muslims, since it is not considered necessary in the light of the absence of significant problems related to this religious minority. With regards to contacts with the Islamic communities, they are neither institutionalised nor regular, like with the other religious communities. Nevertheless, there are no Muslim communities that are totally isolated. Given the erratic nature of the contacts, the Municipality and Muslim minorities agree on the need to strengthen relations and make them more regular. Nevertheless, to date no specific actions have been undertaken to achieve this goal.

The reasons for the sporadic nature of contacts are the same mentioned by the Municipality in accounting for the marginal role of interreligious dialogue in municipal policies (par. 4.3): religious matters are not regarded as an arena for public action and the lack of representatives recognised by all the Muslims gets in the way of developing a stable dialogue. Nevertheless, the local administration gets in touch with Muslim minorities when matters concerning Islamic religion become issues of public relevance. In these situations, the Municipality usually identifies the main interlocutor in the Islamic Cultural Centre, which is the biggest and one of the oldest Muslim organisations in the city and the only one with an explicitly religious nature (the others are ethnic cultural associations that also carry out religious activities, such as running little prayer rooms). However, this solution entails some problems, as we will see below.

The main sectors of the local administration which have contacts with Muslim minorities are the Department of Social Policies and, at least during the last local government (2004-2009), the Head of Cabinet. Muslims are also part of some Neighbourhood Councils of Foreign Citizens but not as representatives of the local Islamic communities. As the president of the Islamic Cultural Centre explained, Muslim minorities do not want to become political actors: the intention is to keep political matters separate from religious ones, in this way following the Municipality's approach in this regard.

Even though there are no institutionalised contacts with Muslim minorities, they receive the support of the Municipality, which grants prayer venues. As we said previously, the building where the Islamic Cultural Centre is located, and the other prayer rooms in the city, are provided by the Municipality. Except for this support, the Centre does not receive any money from the local administration and its only funds come from worshippers' donations.

The Centre does not receive financial aid from abroad either. This is the result of a desire to avoid influence from foreign countries, as the president explained. Indeed he said that the Moroccan government puts some pressure on offering economic support in order to create established places of worship where Moroccan national festivals can be celebrated, but to date with no result.

While the Municipality is not greatly committed to supporting interreligious dialogue, the different religious minorities seem to be a little more active. Public meetings and seminars involving representatives of the different religions (especially Catholic, Jews and Muslims) are sometimes organised. The main activity in this regard consists in workshops organised every two months by the local Catholic Church and the Islamic Cultural Centre. During each workshop a specific topic is analysed from the two perspectives, the Islamic one and the Catholic one. Particular attention is

given to encouraging the participation of young people, in order to foster tolerance among the new generations of both religions.

Despite these initiatives, the relations between Muslims and the Catholic Church are fairly ambivalent. Though cooperation and dialogue are fostered, at times conflicts arise. For instance, the Bishop of Bologna recently said publicly that the numerous shops run by Muslims in the city centre (par. 3.3) might be financed by money from the oil trade, insinuating the existence of ambiguous, potentially unethical business influenced by foreign countries. He also openly criticised the Muslim common prayer in Piazza Maggiore (Bologna's main square, where the municipality and the Basilica of San Petronio are situated) during the pro-Gaza demonstration held on 3 January 2009: the Muslims explained that it was the time of one of the five prayers prescribed by Islam and that they did not intend to challenge the Catholics; however some, including the Bishop, did not give credit to this interpretation<sup>16</sup>.

Although inside the local Church there are different stances on this issue, the positions of the Bishop could in part be explained by the fact that the Diocese of Bologna has always been particularly traditional (Ponzo 2006). As a matter of fact, the previous Archbishop was also well known in the country for his opposition to Muslim immigration, which he saw as a threat to Italian Catholic culture (Allievi 2003). The result is that the Catholic Church in Bologna is sometimes involved in initiatives aimed at fostering interreligious dialogue with Muslims, but it cannot be regarded as crucial promoter of this dialogue.

### **5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures to improve relations with Muslim groups**

As we said before, the Municipality has no policies on developing relations with Muslim minorities. The negotiation concerning the building of the mosque probably represents the main effort to date undertaken by the Municipality to establish a dialogue with Muslim minorities and foster relations between them and the majority population. Indeed this could change the current pattern of relations and is worth exploring in detail.

This issue has been a challenging one since the beginning. The Municipality's main interlocutor has always been the Islamic Cultural Centre. Even though the other Muslim associations interviewed did not openly criticise this choice, the local administration underlined that a large part of the Muslim minority does not feel represented by the Centre. Indeed according to the Centre's president the leadership of the mosque should be held by Arabs since «Arabic is the language of the Koran». During the field visit, the associations made up of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent (who do not currently attend the Islamic Cultural Centre's prayer room, see. par. 3.3) declared that they will attend the Friday prayer in the new mosque but that they would also like the sermon translated into their native languages. Once again, these linguistic problems seem to conceal difficult relations between the different Muslim communities, that could be the cause of future leadership conflicts. In actual fact Muslims from Asia are at least numerous as Muslims from Arab countries, even if they arrived in Bologna later and are less integrated (par. 3.3). It is therefore unlikely that they will relinquish having an influence over the management of the mosque. Furthermore, conflicts among Arab migrants are also likely to develop since the Centre is

<sup>16</sup> *Raccolta firme del Carroccio: no alla moschea in via Pallavicini*, «Corriere di Bologna», 7th January 2009; *An e Lega contro l'Islam. Presidio al Crescentone*, Il Bologna, 10 January 2009.

strongly linked to UCOII (Unione delle Comunità e delle Organizzazioni Islamiche d'Italia – Italian Islamic Communities and Organisations Union), which is regarded as one of the most radical national Muslim federations and is thus criticised by part of the local Muslim community.

It is important to underline that the idea of building a mosque and the central role assigned to the Islamic Cultural Centre spring from the fact that the Centre has a piece of land bought by the Islamic Goods Management Body of UCOII where, according to the City Plan, it is possible to build worship buildings. Thus we can infer that the local administration has been forced to undertake the negotiation and choose that particular interlocutor. Indeed if the construction of the mosque respects urban rules, it cannot be forbidden, unless the Municipal Council changes the urban rules to preserve public interests.

Given this situation, the local administration made two requests to the Islamic Culture Centre, which were both accepted. The first concerned the establishment of a Foundation for the management of the social and cultural activities (but not the religious ones) of the Centre when it will manage the mosque, since these are regarded by the Municipality as activities of public importance. More precisely, the Municipality requested the establishment of a Steering Committee with six members, three appointed by the Muslim community and three appointed by the local authorities. At the outset the Islamic Cultural Centre was against this solution due to the fact, as its president explained, that in the future the local administration could be led by Islamophobic parties such as the Northern League that might hamper the Centre's activities. However, it finally accepted this solution since the building of the mosque was regarded as a priority. Nevertheless, the Municipality's request reveals what we said previously regarding the platforms for intercultural dialogue: the Municipality tends to play a strong steering role on immigrant associations' activities since in Bologna the tendency to «institutionalise» the local civil society has always been very strong (par. 4.3).

The second request of the local administration concerned the location of the mosque. The land at the disposal of the Islamic Cultural Centre is not considered a good place to build a mosque, since the high attendance at the Friday prayer could create traffic problems. Thus, the Municipality offered another piece of land in the San Donato neighbourhood, proposing an exchange of land. The Islamic Cultural Centre accepted but another problem arose: many of the neighbourhood's residents raised doubts about the new mosque. The Municipality's response can be regarded as a successful good practice. It undertook a participatory process that also involved the Islamic Cultural Centre, in order to illustrate the project to the residents and discuss it with them. After several meetings most of the residents changed their minds. This initiative demonstrates that Islamophobic attitudes can be overcome through dialogue and interactions.

Despite these positive results, the negotiation has now reached a stalemate. According to the Municipality, the Islamic Culture Centre did not respect the agreement while, according to the Centre, the Municipality stalled the negotiation so as not to lose votes in the local elections (at the beginning of June 2009). Alongside the reasons for the break in the negotiations, it is worth noting that all the Mayoral candidates, both centre-right and centre-left, were against a big city mosque: the centre-right Forza Italia candidate was against any mosque, while the centre-left Democratic Party and the centre-right civic list candidates expressed a preference for small places of worship

scattered throughout the city rather than one big mosque<sup>17</sup>. Thus, even though the Democratic Party won the local election, the negotiation may have to start over again.

## 5.4 Public communication

Since the Municipality has not developed a specific policy towards Muslims, it does not have a specific communication strategy concerning this religious group. This is evident as far as the mosque issue is concerned. As the local administration underlined, the local population's opposition to the mosque was also due to the badly managed communication process and the incapacity of the local authorities to convey the right messages. The issue was presented in the wrong way. For instance, the announcement made by the Islamic Cultural Centre that the Bologna mosque would have the highest minaret in Italy was a source of great alarm.

The positive aspect is that the Centre had the opportunity to express its position in the local media. Indeed it is always consulted by the media when they report on issues concerning Islam, as the Centre's president explained. This practice was confirmed in our review of the 2009 local newspaper articles on the mosque issue.

However, local media mainly devote attention to the local Muslim community when conflicts arise. Indeed the other main Islam-related topic focused on by local media in 2009 was the common prayer made by Muslims during a pro-Gaza demonstration in the main square of Bologna where the Basilica of San Petronio is situated (par. 5.2).

Moreover, although the Islamic Cultural Centre is always consulted by the local media on issues related to Islam, in the cases of the mosque and the common prayer in the central square great attention was given to the Northern League, despite its fairly marginal role in the local political context and its perpetual anti-immigrant stance. In actual fact since this attention was common to centre-right and centre-left local newspapers, it would appear not to be related to the political orientation of the local media, but rather to the media practice of stirring up controversy to sell more papers.

While there are few examples of local ethnic media, there is no local Muslim media. The Islamic Cultural Centre's president believes that Muslim local media could be useful. Surprisingly, he identifies the target in the local population rather than in the Muslim migrants and thinks that the utility of these media is mainly due to the possibility of conveying a positive image of Muslim minorities fighting stereotypes. According to him for this purpose it would actually be even more useful to regularly reserve a page in various international magazines or newspapers, devoted to explaining the problems faced by Islamic minorities in Europe and proposing possible solutions, reasserting the aforementioned close links between international events and political positions, on

<sup>17</sup> *La moschea? Non nel mio mandato*, Il Resto del Carlino, 17 January 2009, p. 5; *Delbono dice no alla moschea*, Il Bologna, 23 January 2009, p.1; *Giusto il no alla grande moschea*, Il Resto del Carlino, 23 January 2009, p. 5; *No alla grande moschea*, Il Resto del Carlino, 13 February 2009, p. 4; *Moschea, ancora un anno in via Pallavicini. Gli islamici: "No, soluzione entro 100 giorni"*, Corriere di Bologna, 22 April 2009, p. 6; *Dal no alla mega moschea ai graffiti. I programmi (quasi) fotocopiati dei big*, Corriere di Bologna, 12 May 2009, p.1; *Moschea? Neanche piccole. E lotta alla prostituzione*, Il Resto del Carlino, 20 May 2009, p.5.

one hand, and local public opinion, on the other. This idea highlights another interesting element: Muslim minorities' interest in local public opinion and interreligious exchanges.

## 5.5 Summary and lessons learnt

The Muslim minorities appear to be well integrated. Nevertheless relations with the local population and with the Municipality could certainly be improved, as both sides hope. The negotiation concerning the mosque highlights the potential of and obstacles to this process.

On one hand, the mosque issue revealed the attitude of suspicion among the local population towards Muslim minorities (higher than what emerged from opinion surveys) and, on the other, it showed how dialogue can successfully overcome this attitude and improve relations between the Muslims and the native population. Indeed the participatory process undertaken by the Municipality produced some good results.

Secondly, the negotiation process regarding the mosque points up a very frequent problem in local authorities' relations with Muslim communities: the lack of a representative of the whole of the local Islamic population. In the case of the mosque, as in the case of the Muslim cemetery, the Islamic minorities were not able to reach agreement autonomously and designate one or a few representatives. In both cases, the Municipality chose to negotiate with the Islamic Cultural Centre since it is the main Muslim religious organisation in Bologna, but many minorities (including the large Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities) do not feel represented by the centre and their voices risked remaining unheard. To date no acceptable solution has been found in Bologna in this regard.

Lastly, the Municipality's attitude risks reinforcing the distrust of the local population with regards to Muslim minorities. The request to establish a Foundation with a Steering Committee half made up of local authority representatives, with the task of managing the cultural and social activities of the mosque, probably springs from the aforementioned «institutionalising» tendency of the local authorities; it also suggests that the Muslim community's activities need to be kept under control as they might be dangerous or illegal. Furthermore, the Mayoral candidates of all the political parties showed very cautious positions concerning the building of the mosque. Despite the intentions, this attitude from the political authorities could really damage the recognition of Muslim minorities.

Unfortunately, while in many Italian cities the Catholic Church is quite active in forging interreligious dialogue in the place of the local authorities, in Bologna it shows a rather ambiguous attitude towards Muslims, with the risk of feeding the fears of the local population.

## 6. Intergroup relations and radicalisation

### 6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population

No radicalisation tendencies within the majority population emerged during the field visit. Nevertheless, in actual fact the Northern League, a party characterised by its anti-immigrant

stance, organised protests against the building of the mosque and the common Muslim prayer in the major square of the city during the pro-Gaza demonstration in January (par. 5.2). This is not, however, a local phenomenon but a national one (the Northern League is one of the two parties in the national government coalition). Furthermore, in Bologna the party is not particularly well-established. Indeed despite its opposition to the mosque, in Bologna the Northern League recognises that Muslims have the right to have places of worship, and it acts in a less provocative manner than in the Italian cities where it is more embedded.

Several reasons for the lack of radicalising tendencies emerged from the field visit. We have tried to summarise them in the table below.

**Tab. 6 - Factors that prevent radicalisation among the majority population**

<b>Factors that prevent radicalisation</b>	<b>Effects on the prevention of radicalisation among the majority population</b>
High level of economic activity and high demands for immigrant workforce	Low competition in the labour market and perception of the economic advantages related to immigration
Left-wing political tradition characterised by pro-immigrant stance	Marginalisation of extremist and xenophobic movements and parties
Local government tendency to «institutionalise» civil society organisations (i.e. organising, registering, supporting, involving associations in institutional activities)	No isolated local organisations
Adoption of anti-racism and anti-discrimination programmes with preventive aims	Prevention of xenophobic movements

First of all, Bologna shows a very high rate of economic activity and, at the same time, a great need of foreign labour force to compensate for the decrease in the local population (par. 3.1), thus immigrants are crucial for small/medium enterprises located in the area. This situation probably reinforces the perception of the positive impact of immigration on local society and avoids the development of xenophobic movements related to the idea of competing with foreigners in the labour market.

Secondly, the left-wing political tradition of the city government has always marginalised extremist and xenophobic movements and parties in the local political context.

Thirdly, local authorities tend to «institutionalise» the civil society (by establishing specific platforms, federations of associations, local representative bodies, etc.) (par. 4.3 and 5.3). The result is that there are no isolated organisations without contacts with the local authorities. This situation obviously contributes to preventing the development of radicalisation process.

Lastly, the local administration has adopted several measures to combat racism and discrimination, as we will explain in the next paragraph.

### 6.1.1 General approach, policies and measures against radicalisation

Since the 90s the Municipality of Bologna has developed anti-racism and anti-discrimination programmes in order to prevent radicalisation processes in the majority population. In the 1990s, for instance, the Municipality, together with the ONG Cospe, promoted the training course «Police for a multicultural society» which involved around sixty police officers<sup>18</sup>, and the project «Monitoring racist behaviours», which set up a free helpline to report discriminatory behaviours.

The Municipality is also now a member of the European Coalition Against Racism (ECCAR). The Coalition was established in Nuremberg on 10 December 2004, as a UNESCO initiative. It aims to establish a network of European cities to support learning processes and the exchange of skills relevant to combating racism. The activities of the ECCAR are based on a «Ten Point-Plan of Action», which defines ten main areas of action, supplemented by several concrete examples for municipal measures and activities:

1. Greater Vigilance Against Racism
2. Assessing Racism and Discrimination and Monitoring Municipal Policies
3. Better Support for the Victims of Racism and Discrimination
4. More Participation and Better Informed City Dwellers
5. The City as an Active Supporter of Equal Opportunity Practices
6. The City as an Equal Opportunities Employer and Service Provider
7. Fair Access to Housing
8. Challenging Racism and Discrimination through Education
9. Promoting Cultural Diversity
10. Hate Crimes and Conflicts Management

The Plan aims to support member cities in their struggle against racism and help them set priorities, optimise their strategies and intensify their co-operation.

The Municipality of Bologna is also involved in the Regional Centre Against Discrimination. Within this project, the Municipality of Bologna manages two types of offices:

1. the «antenna nodes», that provide information, collect reports of discrimination and promote projects aimed at rising awareness and fighting xenophobia and discrimination;
2. the «connection node» that coordinates the front offices located in the province, which are run by local administrations and non-profit organisations.

Another important instrument in combating discrimination against immigrants is the Ombudsman, although this does not specifically address foreign citizens. It is elected by the City Council but is independent. Its main task is to defend citizens against measures and behaviours delayed, omitted or irregularly adopted by the local administration. The citizens who apply to the Ombudsman are not charged.

Summing up, we can affirm that the key elements of the Municipality's fight against racism and discrimination are:

- a. the prevention strategy, which has led to the adoption of specific actions, even though discrimination behaviours are not widespread;

---

<sup>18</sup> ISI (Istituzione dei Servizi per l'Immigrazione – Immigration Services Institution), *Relazione di consuntivo 1998 – Balance Sheet 1998*, ISI.

- b. close cooperation with the other local public institutions and with non-profit organisations working in this field.

This strategy seems to have produced good results to date, as we explained in the previous paragraph.

## 6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population

No radicalisation tendencies within the minority population were indicated during the field visit. According to the results of the field visit, the factors that might explain this situation seem to be very similar to those responsible for the lack of radicalisation among the majority population (par. 6.1).

**Tab. 7 - Factors that prevent radicalisation among the minority population**

<b>Factors that prevent radicalisation</b>	<b>Effects on the prevention of radicalisation among foreign minorities</b>
High level of economic activity and high demands for immigrant workforce	Good economic and social integration of immigrants
Left-wing political tradition characterised by pro-immigrant stance	Advanced integration policies favour immigrants' inclusion in local society and avoid marginalisation. Local authorities' attention to the foreign population avoids immigrants becoming resentful towards the local government and population
Local government tendency to «institutionalise» the civil society organisations (i.e. organising, registering, supporting, involving associations in institutional activities)	No isolated ethnic organisations

In the Bologna area, the high demand for immigrant workforce and the advanced integration policies have favoured the economic and social integration of immigrants, helping to prevent radicalisation processes.

Furthermore, local authorities' attention to the foreign population and their commitment to integration policies have avoided immigrants developing processes of marginalisation and feelings of resentment towards the local government and population.

Lastly, the local authorities' tendency to «institutionalise» civil society has limited the number of isolated foreign groups, preventing radicalisation.

## 6.3 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt

In conclusion, radicalisation phenomena are absent in Bologna in both the majority and minority populations. This situation seems to be the result of both social and institutional factors:

- a. the flourishing economy;
- b. the left-wing political tradition;

- c. the contacts developed by the Municipality with civil society organisations, avoiding their isolation;
- d. the Municipality's prevention strategy and its strong cooperation with the other local organisations active in this field.

Indeed it is impossible to say which of these elements plays a more important role in limiting radicalisation. In any case it is evident that the Municipality has played a central role.

## 7. Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

In Bologna intercultural dialogue is fairly advanced. This is partly due to the legacy of local associationism, which has stimulated the development of ethnic associations, and mixed associations in particular, which certainly constitute an important means of exchange between different cultures. Furthermore, strong local feminist movements have favoured immigrant women's participation in associations and have encouraged a fruitful reflection on gender roles within the immigrant organisations. Therefore, the social context of the receiving society and the forms of local associationism could be regarded as key factors that influence the ways in which immigrants participate in the civil society and shape the intercultural dialogue.

However, given the goal of CLIP projects, we are more interested in municipal strategies and actions. From this perspective, the main lesson learnt by the case of Bologna is the relevance of *specific platforms in order to develop intercultural dialogue*. The two main platforms (that can still be regarded as good practices ten years from their creation) are the city's «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre and the Metropolitan Forum of Immigrant Associations. Although these have both the task of supporting immigrant associations, their functions have been clearly distinguished: while «Zonarelli» focuses mainly on intercultural dialogue and usually develops activities which address the whole of the local population, the Metropolitan Forum is mainly focused on ethnic associations and its activities are mainly addressed to the foreign population. Thanks to these platforms, the Municipality does not just give support to immigrant associations but also provides opportunities to organise activities and exchange ideas. Furthermore, in this way it fosters the involvement of immigrant associations in municipal projects and the implementation of services: ethnic organisations can raise money by carrying out activities useful to the local society. Thus, this involvement becomes a sort of «citizenship school» enhancing the participation of associations and, at the same time, fostering the intercultural character of local services and policies. However, the ample use of calls for tenders for this purpose could have a negative effect, by favouring the stronger associations over the weaker ones.

Another lesson that can be learnt from the case of Bologna is the crucial role that the «*visibility of minorities*» can play in the development of intercultural dialogue. The adoption of an intercultural approach has raised the visibility of the immigrants' cultures of origin and has led to most of the Municipality's intercultural activities addressing not only ethnic minorities, but also the majority population, in order to convey the idea that all the minority groups living in Bologna contribute to creating the local culture.

*The involvement of second generations in intercultural dialogue* could also be regarded as a good practice, a lesson learnt. Isolation, radicalism and rejection of the host society are usually more prevalent among second generation than first generation migrants, since young people with ethnic backgrounds often find it difficult to develop a clear sense of belonging to places or groups. Furthermore, the idea of involving Italian young people too seems to be the best way to develop an effective intercultural approach. To make young people, both Italian and foreign, the key elements in the construction of a new intercultural society could be a winning choice. However, this project is just beginning and we cannot predict how successful it will be.

Finally, a crucial element that has fostered intergroup relations in Bologna is represented by the Municipality's *programmes to fight racism and discrimination*, contributing to prevent radicalisation processes and develop a fertile terrain for fruitful exchanges and cooperation between the different cultures.

With regards to intercultural dialogue, the main challenge is probably religion, which is a crucial part of cultures. In Bologna, religion has never been considered an object of public action. However, if religious issues are not managed, they risk hampering intercultural dialogue and intergroup relations, especially in the case of the Muslim minority, the largest religious minority in the city. Indeed the activities of the CD-LEI in this regard are appreciated and one of the few interventions undertaken in this field by the Municipality, i.e. the participatory process concerning the construction of the mosque which took place in the San Donato neighbourhood, had a positive outcome, getting residents to change their minds and look favourably on the mosque. This episode suggests that the intervention of the Municipality could really help overcome prejudices and tensions between the different religious communities and in particular towards Muslims.

## 8. References

- Allievi, S. (2003), *Islam italiano. Viaggio nella seconda religione del paese*, Turin, Einaudi.
- Aluffi Beck-Peccoz, R. (2004), *The legal treatment of the Muslim Minority in Italy*, in Aluffi Beck-Peccoz, R. and Zincone, G. (eds.), *The legal treatment of the Islamic minorities in Europe*, Peeters.
- Anderlini, F. (2003), *Dopo l'urbanizzazione. Sprawl suburbano e dinamica sociale. Bologna e altre metropoli*, Bologna, CLUEB.
- Barberis, E. (2004), *Quanti sono i musulmani in provincia di Bologna?*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni, *Islam e Bologna. Un anno di ricerche di tirocinio all'Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni*, Dossier no. 1, October, Bologna, pp. 2-5.
- Barigazzi, G. (2008), *Le ragioni del progetto*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni, *Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna. Idee e pratiche di cittadinanza*, Dossier no. 5, December, Bologna, p. 2.
- Billari, F. and Della Zanna, F. (2008), *La rivoluzione nella culla. Il declino che non c'è*, Il Mulino, Bologna.

- Blangiardo G. C. (2005), *L'immigrazione straniera in Italia: un decennio di statistiche per descrivere ed interpretare una realtà nuova e mutevole*, in ISMU (2005), *Decimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2004*, Franco Angeli, Milan, pp.35-60.
- Brambilla, M. (2008), *Attività di comunicazione nel progetto "Consiglio dei Cittadini stranieri"*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni, *Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna. Idee e pratiche di cittadinanza*, Dossier no. 5, December, Bologna, pp. 8-11.
- Caldera, D. (2004), *Tempi di lavoro e di culto dei lavoratori musulmani, con uno sguardo all'Intesa*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni, *Islam e Bologna. Un anno di ricerche di tirocinio all'Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni*, Dossier no. 1, October, Bologna, pp. 14-16.
- Campomori, F. (2008), *Immigrazione e cittadinanza locale. La governance dell'integrazione in Italia*, Rome, Carocci.
- Cesareo, V. (2006), "2005: The Crisis of Traditional Integration Models", in Ismu, *The Eleventh Italian Report on Migrations. 2005*, Polimetrica, Milan, pp. 9-34.
- Colombo, A. (2007), *Gli stranieri e noi. Immigrazione e opinione pubblica in Emilia-Romagna*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Caponio, T. (2006), *Città italiane e immigrazione. Discorso pubblico e politiche a Milano, Bologna e Napoli*, Bologna, Il Mulino.
- Carchedi, F. (2000), *Le associazioni degli immigrati*, in E. Pugliese (ed.), *Rapporto Immigrazione. Lavoro, sindacato, società*, Rome, Ediesse.
- Caritas/Migrantes (2008), *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione*, Ed. Idos, Rome.
- Frisina, A. (2007), *Giovani musulmani d'Italia*, Carocci Editore, Rome.
- Decimo, F. (2003) *Gli elementi di un conflitto urbano. Questione abitativa e immigrazione marocchina a Bologna*, in G. Sciortino and A. Colombo (eds.), *Stranieri in Italia. Un'immigrazione normale*, Bologna, Il Mulino, pp. 71-103
- Ghesini, M. (2004), *Islam e Società multiculturale: il problema dell'immigrazione nell'area bolognese*, final dissertation, Faculty of Political Science, University of Bologna.
- IRES Piemonte (1998), *Il filo di Arianna. La città, I servizi, gli immigrati a Torino: rapporto finale della ricerca per l'iniziativa LIA, progetto locale della città di Torino*, Turin, The City of Turin.
- Ismu (2009), *XIV Rapporto sulle migrazioni in Italia. 2008*, Franco Angeli, Rome.
- Istat (2006), *La violenza e i maltrattamenti contro le donne dentro e fuori la famiglia*, Istat, Rome.
- Istat (2008), *Data set on migrant population in Italy*, available on the following website: [www.demo.istat.it](http://www.demo.istat.it)
- Lelleri, R. (2003), *La parola ai protagonisti*, in *L'associazionismo degli immigrati in provincia di Bologna*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle migrazioni (2003), *L'associazionismo degli immigrati in provincia di Bologna*, Dossier no. 1, September, Bologna, pp. 17-34.
- Osservatorio provinciale delle migrazioni (2003), *L'associazionismo degli immigrati in provincia di Bologna*, Dossier no. 1, September, Bologna.

Osservatorio Provinciale delle Migrazioni (2006), *La mediazione interculturale nei servizi. Il caso di Bologna*, Dossier no. 1, January, Bologna.

Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni (2008), *Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna. Idee e pratiche di cittadinanza*, Dossier no. 5, December, Bologna

Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni (2008b), *immigrati in provincia di Bologna. I numeri e le tendenze*, dossier no. 4, November, Bologna.

Paradisi, R. (2003), *Associazionismo e partecipazione*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle migrazioni, *L'associazionismo degli immigrati in provincia di Bologna*, Dossier no. 1, September, Bologna, pp. 1-2.

Paradisi, R. (2008), *Il Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri*, in Osservatorio provinciale delle Immigrazioni, *Consiglio dei cittadini stranieri e apolidi della Provincia di Bologna. Idee e pratiche di cittadinanza*, Dossier no. 5, December, Bologna, pp. 3-7.

Ponzo, I. (2002), *Romeni a Torino e network analysis*, Degree thesis, University of Turin, Political Science Faculty.

Ponzo, I. (2006), *Il black box delle politiche locali. Le politiche locali di accoglienza degli stranieri: i casi di Torino e Bologna*, Final Dissertation, Faculty of Political Science, University of Turin.

Ponzo, I. (2008a), *Quello che i comuni hanno in comune. Politiche locali di accoglienza per gli immigrati*, in "Polis", vol. 3, pp. 451-479.

Ponzo, I. (2008b), *Smontare il livello locale. I fattori di dinamismo e di inerzia nell'accoglienza residenziale per stranieri*, in "Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia", no. 4, pp. 547-578.

Ognisanti, M. (2008), *Relazione sulle iniziative e sui progetti di educazione al dialogo interreligioso nelle scuole di Bologna*, CD-LEI, Municipality of Bologna, mimeo.

Spreafico, A. and Coppi, A. (2006), *La rappresentanza dei musulmani in Italia*, XL Edizioni, Rome.

Zincone, G. and Ponzo, I. (2007), *Out of paradigms: the Italian reasonable way of integration*, in "Canadian diversity/Diversité canadienne", pp. 51-56.

## 9. Interview partners

Berardino Cocchianella, Head of the Municipal Cabinet

Chris Tomesani, Head of the Office of Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector, Municipality of Bologna

Fabiana Forni, Office of Development, Intercultural Integration of Policies and Third Sector, Municipality of Bologna

Fausto Amelii, Director of the city's «Zonarelli» Intercultural Centre

Asher Colombo, Professor at the University of Bologna

Rita Bartolomei, journalist on «Il Resto del Carlino»

Linda Chiaramonte, freelance journalist

Elena Nicolini, Editor of the «Zonarelli» Newsletter

Silvia Storelli, «Crossing TV»'s editor in chief

Roberto Morgantini, Manager of the Foreign Workers Centre of CGIL (Italian General Labour Federation) trade union

Richard Amechi, President of the Metropolitan Forum of Immigrant Associations

Safir Association

Jeunesse Marocaine Association

Diversamente Association

KankurwaKai Kashi Association

Federation of Filipino Associations Bologna

Associazione Greater Dhakka Bangladesh

Association of Bangladesh Community

Integrazione Vera Association

Islamic Cultural Centre of Bologna