



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

**Intercultural and interreligious Policies  
in Hospitalet, Spain**



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**Foreword**

This report is part of the Eurofound project "Cities for Local Integration Policy" (CLIP), which started in 2006. Hospitalet is one of the 34 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies and in this case intercultural and inter-religious policies.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities and encouraging a learning process within the network of cities, addressing the role of social partners, NGO's, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies, providing objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discussing 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, supporting 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 is also a cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Turin, Wroclaw and Swansea are taking care of the publications of the CLIP project. The researchers of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam are responsible for this report on Hospitalet. A lot of people made the data collection for this report possible. First the staff of the *Diputació de Barcelona*, particularly Adela Collell Blanch, who was the CLIP contact person. Secondly our contact person of the municipality of Hospitalet, Jesús Husillos Gutiérrez, the responsible officer of the *New Citizenship Services*, the main office that works with immigrants in Hospitalet, who helped to gather all necessary data on Hospitalet for this report. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. We are also grateful that we could gather information by interviewing officials of the Mediation Service and the local police and Catalan police, and the representatives of the Moroccan Mosque, an Arab Educational Organisations, a Nigerian church, the Catholic church, the Ecuadorian and Bolivian community organisations, who have been willing to talk to us. And finally three researchers, one independent, one from the Autonomous University of Barcelona and one from the University of Amsterdam have provided us with data and useful comments. I want to thank all those who have cooperated in giving information and particularly Jesús Husillos Gutiérrez for coordinating the city visit.

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Anja van Heelsum  
July 2009, Amsterdam

## 1 Introduction

This module of the CLIP project focuses on ‘intercultural and interreligious dialogue’: on the one hand the policies that the city of Hospitalet has introduced on this subject, and on the other hand the way in which the immigrants that are involved think about their needs regarding this subject. As Heckman explains in his introduction paper for this CLIP module, the topic of this module

“has to do 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 keep peaceful relations among the different segments of the population. In present day political discourse, relations between different ethnic and religious groups, immigrants and natives are predominantly discussed in terms of “intercultural dialogue” and/or “interreligious dialogue”. We will conceptualize these phenomena as cases of intergroup relations. This conceptualization stands for an abstraction working with the assumption that there are similarities in the relations between quite different “groups” (Heckman 2008: 3).

This understanding has been established in the field of intergroup relations research in social psychology and sociology. The approach focuses on interactions and relations and stresses that general explanations and practical recommendations can be made for the relations between different groups.

“...intergroup relations refer to states of friendship or hostility, cooperation or competition, dominance or subordination, alliance or enmity, peace or war between two or more groups and their members” (Sherif and Sherif 1969, 222). “Intergroup behaviour refers to the actions of individuals belonging to one group when they interact, collectively or individually, with another group or its members in terms of their group membership...” (ibid, 223). ”

As Heckman states, from a political and practical point of view two dimensions of intergroup relations are of particular interest for local governments: conflict between groups and policies to avoid or solve conflict between groups, i.e. conditions of social cohesion in a city.

“The concept of “group” on which intergroup relations research is based is rather broad. In the CLIP project it includes the city administration, the city council, political parties, churches, labour unions, welfare organizations foundations, local media and anti – immigrant movements among others in the majority society. On the part of the minorities it includes religious groups and national minorities. Among the religious groups Muslim communities find particular attention. Where Muslims are not the most relevant group another faith – based community is of interest in our research. It is noteworthy that most of the religious groups are organized on an ethnic basis.” Heckman (2008: 4)

Led by this conceptualization of intergroup, a questionnaire has been developed, with three parts: A) local intercultural policies in general, B) local policies towards Muslim communities and C) Intergroup relations and radicalisation. This questionnaire has been sent to the contact person at the Diputació de Barcelona, at the provincial authorities of Barcelona, where it was filled with information from Hospitalet. After receiving the answers in the questionnaire, we contacted the official in Hospitalet in the ‘New Citizenship Service’ (the office that works for immigrants). Through the city representative a city visit was arranged and interviews took place with officials of the administration, representatives of immigrant associations and religious associations. We also arranged interviews with researchers. Section 8 the full list of interviewees is shown. The combination of the answers in the questionnaire and the information from the interviews was used to write this report. The report is set up more or less in a similar way for all cities, though we have added section 4.2 ‘Immigrant and religious associations and the policies towards them’. In 4.3 we will define intercultural and inter religious dialogue as cooperation on the organisational level, either formal or informal. In 4.4 we will look at attitudes in the population, under the heading relations between ethnic groups in the city.

Hospitalet’s policies towards immigrant integration are actually formulated in such a way that they are intercultural policies, so we will treat this as one subject in section 4.1. A concept in the *Hospitalet Action Plan* inspired by the Catalan government is ‘*Convivència*’ that is living together, while sharing values, having a common idea about society, having similar ideas about the use of public space, and a kind of public identity. It points to a process that is necessarily bi-directional (both immigrants and autochthonous have these same values) and all the involved partners should be aware that immigrants will be staying. In the case of Hospitalet the central place where the activities take place is the New Citizenship Service. Hospitalet has developed a strong focus on a policy to avoid and solve conflicts in neighbourhoods. This mediation is not particularly directed towards interethnic relations, but towards all intergroup relations between citizens, so also towards conflicts between younger and older citizens, or between religious groups like Pentecostals and Catholics, or towards people who have a different opinion on the use of public space. Hospitalet considers the religious background of immigrants relevant for the policy, but only because 1) religious organisations are often the only point of contact with particular communities, 2) religious organisations are very noticeable in the public space and 3) they are rather often the cause of conflicts in the neighbourhood because of noise. Latin Americans are considered the main problem group, both the individual and the Pentecostal Churches.

'Muslims' are not mentioned anywhere in policy documents of Hospitalet and relations are considered smooth. The administration also doesn't have any policy towards radicalisation, firstly that is not experienced as a problem and if it would become a problem, it is the responsibility of the national government, as we will explain in section 6 of this paper.

## 2 Background information on the country

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

#### *Spain*

Spain is situated at the crossroads of the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, Europe and Africa. Between 700 and 1200 the south of Spain was part of several Muslim empires and a lot of movement took place towards Morocco in the south and Italy in the east. In 1236 the Christian reconquista progressed to the last Islamic stronghold, Granada and a period started in which the empire became a successful seafaring and colonising nation. The Spanish empire was one of the largest in world history and included the areas in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and a large part of the current United States and of South America and the Caribbean. Except in North America, Spanish is still the national language in many of these territories and there is some movement of people up and down, for instance from Spain to Latin America and back. To put it shortly, Spain's history is characterised by a strong international orientation.

In the first 80 years of the 20th century the economic situation in Spain was not very successful. Emigration was more common than immigration. Between 1850-1950 3.5 million Spanish left for the Americas (Ortega Perez, 2003). From 1950 onwards Spain's workforces moved to the richer industrial areas in northern Europe. During the 36-year dictatorship of General Franco, Spain became internationally isolated. Only some former emigrants to and political refugees from South America immigrated to Spain. Emigration of guest workers to the north came to a halt because of the world wide economic crisis of 1973.

After Franco's death in 1975, the country made the transition to a democratic state and the economic situation improved fast, with King Juan Carlos as head of state. In the constitution of 1978 respect for linguistic and cultural diversity within a united Spain is expressed, contrasting the suppression during Franco's rule.

Currently the country is divided into 17 autonomous regions with their own elected authorities. The level of autonomy of each region differs. Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia have a special status with their own language and other rights. Catalonia has extra powers in taxation and judicial matters after the referendum of 2006 when a Catalan constitution was approved<sup>1</sup>. One of Spain's most serious domestic issues is a left over from the dictatorship and related to the autonomous regions: the problem with the ETA and the tension in the northern Basque country.

Since 1975 650,000 Spanish former emigrants returned to the country, while approximately two million Spanish improved their position in and continued to live abroad (Borkert i.e. 2007). On the other hand a considerable number of retired people from the European Union moved to the Spanish coast.

Economic growth increased further when Spain became a member of the European Union in 1986. The Spanish economy boomed from 1986 to 1990, averaging 5% annual growth. After a European-wide recession in the early 1990s, the Spanish economy resumed moderate growth starting in 1994. Immigration accelerated fast after this, and Spain changed from an emigration country to an immigration country.

Between 2000 and 2004 the number of migrants to Spain tripled, amounting to 7% (3,050,847). In 2004 Spain received the largest number of immigrants in the European Union. The economic crisis that occurred in 2008 has hit Spain hard, because its economy was largely dependent on construction. Immigration is recently diminishing, but statistical material on January 2009 was at the time of the research not yet available.

**Table 1 Spanish nationals and the largest immigrant groups to Spain by nationality and country of birth on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008**

	Number	%	Born in Spain	Born Abroad	Pct 2 <sup>nd</sup> generation
Total population of Spain	46,257,822	100%	40.113.294	6.044.528	
Foreign nationals	5,268,762	11%	261.897	5.006.865	5%
Spanish nationals	40,889,060	89%	39.851.397	1.037.663	
<i>EU countries (in 2006)</i>					
United Kingdom	352,957	1%	9.941	343.016	3%
Germany	181,174	0%	7.927	173.247	4%
Italy	157,789	0%	7.431	150.358	5%
<i>Rest of Europe</i>					
Romania	731,806	2%	28.89	702.916	4%
Bulgaria	153,974	0%	4.969	149.004	3%
Ukraine	79,096	0%	3.062	76.034	4%
Poland	78,560	0%	4.419	74.141	6%
<i>Non-Western Countries</i>					
Morocco	652,695	1%	77.453	575.242	12%

<sup>1</sup> The *Estatut* (constitution) has been approved by the Catalan Parliament and by Referendum but still has to be approved by the Spanish Constitutional Tribunal.

Ecuador	427,718	1%	13.53	414.188	3%
Colombia	284,581	1%	5.517	279.064	2%
Bolivia	242,496	1%	6.989	235.507	3%
Argentina	147.382	0%	2.477	144.905	2%
China	125,914	0%	13.93	111.984	11%
Peru	121,932	0%	2.228	119.704	2%
Total South Americans	1.784.890	4%	30.734	1.624.126	2%

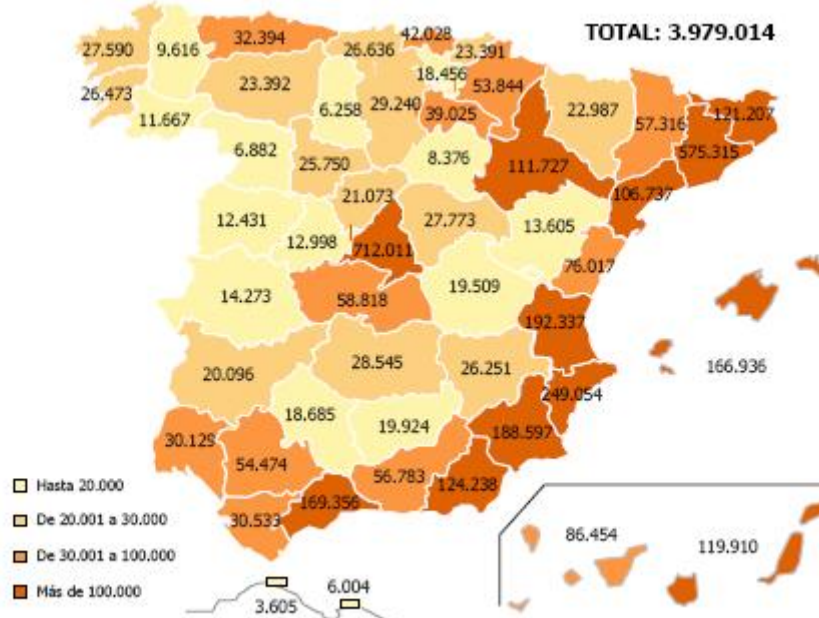
Source: website of *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE, National Statistics Institute Spain) visited on 5 Feb 2009

Spain itself is dominantly Catholic. Immigrants from Latin America are generally Christians, though not all Catholic. There are no data on religious denomination, so we can only make estimates of the numbers of non-Christians. We will only estimate roughly the number of Muslims, Hindu's, and Buddhists, because these seem the major categories. To estimate the number of Muslims, we took the overview of immigrants groups from the National Statistics Institute, and selected the countries with a large or majority Muslim population. These are: Morocco, Mauretania, Algeria, Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Bosnia. This way we are sure that we have included the largest Muslim populations. We assume that the overrepresentation because one also finds a minority of non Muslims in these countries, and the underrepresentation because a lot of smaller populations from other countries are missing in this list, will counter balance each other.<sup>2</sup> We reach an estimated number of 832,976 Muslims in Spain, on 31-12-2007. The four largest groups come from Morocco (648,741), Algeria (45,845), Pakistan (36,388) and Senegal (33,227).

### Catalonia

Catalonia has been economically more successful than many other parts of Spain. It had a leading role in the industrialisation in the beginning of the 19th century and is still ahead in GDP and economic growth. First the fast growing industry attracted labourers from other parts of Spain, particularly from Andalusia, Extremadura, Aragón where the agriculture was collapsing. Some prejudice developed, as we heard in the interviews. For example: Andalusians are easily considered as different from the native population in language and habits, since they didn't speak Catalan, and many of them were farmers. Near industrial plots, housing districts were sometimes to a large extent inhabited by what are called 'national immigrants' in Catalonia, for instance de Ca n'Anglada district in Terrassa. Since 2000 labourers also come from countries outside the European Union. Figure 1 shows that Catalonia receives most immigrants in Spain. Catalonia receives 22% of Spain's immigrants, compared to 18% for Madrid and 13% for Valencia and 13% in Andalusia. Actually the relative number that Catalonia receives increased in the last 2 years, while it decreased in the other regions.

**Figure 1 Immigrants with residence permit in the different Spanish regions per 31 December 2007** (this is the last update available in February 2009).



Source: Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración : Anuario Estadístico de Inmigración 2007, update: 08-09-2008. (<http://extranjeros.mtas.es>)

<sup>2</sup> In Senegal 5,7% of the population is Christian. In Iran 1% is Christian and 1% is Baha'i.

In a similar manner, we estimate the number of Hindu's by assuming all immigrants from India are Hindu's at 20,772 and the number of Taoists/Buddhists at 119,862 by assuming that all Chinese are Taoists/Buddhists<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2 Immigrant categories to Catalonia (nationality) per 1 Jan 2008,**

		Number	Percentage
Total		7,364,078	100%
Spaniards		6,260,288	85%
Foreigners		1,103,790	15%
	Europe	331,478	5%
	European Union (27)	282,046	4%
	Central and Eastern Europe	44,300	1%
	Rest of Europe	5,132	0%
	Africa	278,129	4%
	Northern Africa and Maghreb	220,259	3%
	Sub-Saharan Africa	55,503	1%
	Central and southern Africa	2,367	0%
	America	393,105	5%
	North America	5,598	0%
	Central America	51,829	1%
	South America	335,678	5%
	Asia	100,528	1%
	Middle East	3,139	0%
	Central and Eastern Asia	85,847	1%
	South Eastern Asia	9,616	0%
	Japan	1,926	0%
	Oceania	497	0%
	Stateless	53	0%

Source: Idescat, (Catalan government Statistical service) based on census data <http://www.idescat.cat/poblacioestrangera/>

As table 2 shows, the percentage of immigrants in Catalonia is higher than the percentage of immigrants in Spain as a whole. The five largest national groups are Moroccans (209,007) Rumanians (88,081), Ecuadorians (80,995), Bolivians (60,801) and Colombians (46,287). Catalonia is subdivided in four provinces. The figures for the Barcelona province are not very different from the Catalan figure, slightly more South Americans and Asians and slightly less other Europeans and Africans.

The average percentage of immigrants in Catalonia is 17%, although some cities reach higher figures, such as Barcelona 21%. The highest figure (40%) is found in the beach towns Lloret de Mar and Salou with a large number of European migrants, and the non European hotel staff. In Hospitalet the percentage of immigrants has dramatically increased from 2% in 1998 to 24% in 2007. It is clear that the economic boom that is taking place since 2000 has led to an explosion of activities, especially in the field of building, on which the growth of the Spanish economy depends heavily.

The immigrant groups in Spain are relatively new, so most of them still have the nationality of the country of origin, except for about 10% of the Moroccans and 10% of the Chinese. Another consequence is that the percentage of males still exceeds the percentage of females in most ethnic groups, while among the Spanish population the percentage of females is slightly higher. This imbalance is particularly visible among African (66% males) and Asian immigrants (61% males). The groups with the lowest percentage of females are Senegalese (81 % males) and Pakistani's (85 % males). Only among South Americans the percentage of females (54% females) exceeds the males (*Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*<sup>4</sup>).

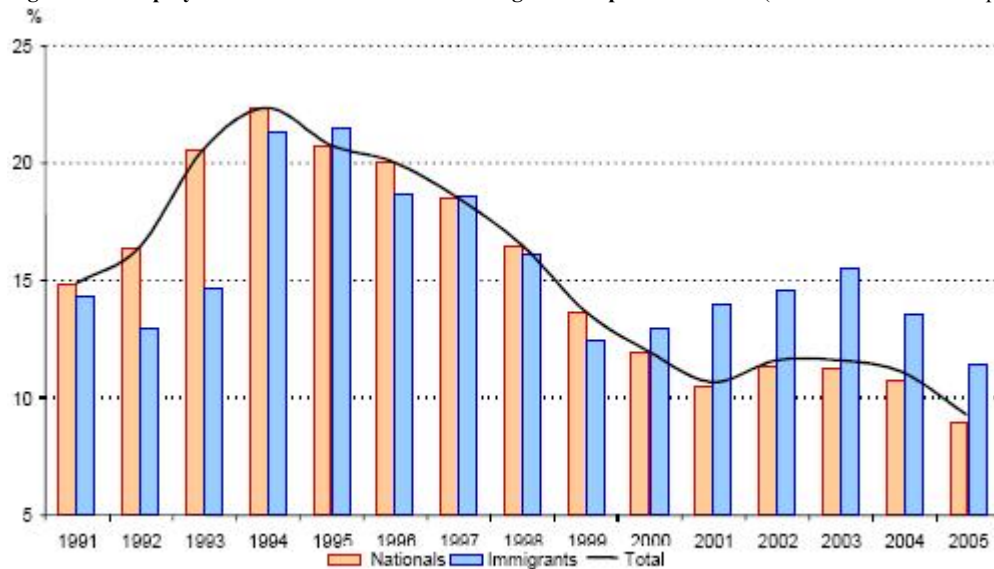
Another consequence of the recent arrival is that the population is young. The large majority of immigrants are in the working age (15-64). Only immigrants from the European Community and North America have a considerable number of elderly. While the percentage of people above 64 is 18% among the Spanish, we nearly don't see elderly from Africa, South America and Asia (*Observatorio Permanente de la Inmigración*).

One of the most significant socio-demographic phenomena in last years has been the increase of the number of elderly in Spain. That the age division of immigrants is in many cases the reason why there is no decline of the population in cities. The fertility rate in Spain in 2006 was only 1.28 children per women, which is one of the lowest in Europe. Immigrants have an important share in the number of births. Not all ethnic groups get a lot of children, since there is a surplus of single men. The percentage of children between 0-15 years old is the highest for the African immigrants.

The Economic Office of the president (2006) shows that immigrants have created a large proportion of the job opportunities and the Spanish unemployment went down because of immigration (Economic office of the president 2006). Immigrants were attracted by the economic situation until recently, but they are also more vulnerable in times of economic crisis.

<sup>3</sup> Studies on the religion of Chinese give very different results: from 8% (US State Department) to 91% (Centre for the Study of Contemporary China) of the Chinese populations identify with Taoism/Buddhism as one of their religions. Del Mar Greira states that in Spain there is also a considerable number of Protestant Christian Chinese, though the large majority is Taoist /Buddhist.

<sup>4</sup> <http://extranjeros.mtas.es>

**Figure 2 Unemployment rates of nationals and foreigners in Spain 1996-2005** (Economic office of the president 2006)

Source: INE.

As figure 2 shows, unemployment was going down until 2006. The unemployment figure was 8.3 % in Spain, and 6.7% in Catalonia in 2006 (Monthly newsletter of labour statistics, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs). But the economic crisis has hit Spain harder than other European countries. The most recent figure available in March 2009 from the national statistics bureau INE reports an overall unemployment rate of 13,9% in the whole of Spain and 11,8% in Catalonia in the fourth quarter of 2008. In 2009 the unemployment is going up further, according to BBC on 24 April 17,4% for the first quarter of 2009, twice the European Union average.

The crisis has affected the African and Latin American and East European groups to a large extent. For Catalonia those “working autonomously” particularly Chinese and Rumanians were hit; in the agricultural sector Moroccans and Rumanians; and of the women working in the homes of people the Bolivians were most hit (Pajares 2009:6).

Table 3 gives an indication of the religious diversity in Catalonia. It shows how many religious premises existed in 2007: 73% of the premises were Catholic, 13% Protestant, 5% Muslim, 4% Jehovah Witnesses and all others are between 0 and 1,5 percent. The number of Protestant churches is increasing rather fast.

**Table 3 Number of Religious centres in Catalonia per confession (2007)**

Confession	Number of centres	Percentage
Catholic	2534	73%
Protestantism	453	13%
Islam	169	5%
Jehovah Witnesses	147	4%
Oriental churches	18	1%
Buddhism	42	1%
Judaism	4	0%
Adventist churches	16	0%
Mormons	14	0%
Hinduism	30	1%
Baha'i	10	0%
Sikhs	6	0%
Others	6	0%
Total of non Catholic centres	913	26%

Source: Catalan government website, <http://www.gencat.cat/vicepresidencia/afersreligiosos>

## 2.2 National policy context (Spain)

### *Immigration policies*

Spain didn't have an immigration policy until the 1980s. When it joined the European Union, the country was under pressure to restrict non-EU citizen immigration. The immigration policy of 1985 'Ley de Extranjería' approached most immigration as a temporary phenomena, immigrants were conceptualised as workers, who required regulation by the Ministry of Labour (Ortega Pérez 2003). When Amnesty International criticized the toughness of the 'foreigner's law' in 1989, the first attempt to draft an integration law took place in 1990 (Borkert i.e. 2007). This led to the establishment of the *Dirección General de Migraciones* (General Directorate for Migration). Initiated by left wing politicians, a large regularisation of illegal immigrants took place in 1991. This ultimately had little impact, since three years later 50% of the immigrants that had legalised their status with a one year work permit, had in 1991 fallen back to the illegal status. To compensate for ineffective and restrictive admission policies, regularisation programs have taken place in 1994 (on ground of family reunification), in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005. The municipalities have their own registration of citizens, the *Padrón*, which includes the irregular. If a worker gets a year contract he or she can ask the municipality for a work and residence permit and regularise, but the regularisation office is slow. Recently, the system tends to legalise people gradually the whole year and avoids the large scale regularisations that were criticised by the EU. Besides Spain's work-permit system, the country has experimented with a labour quota system to respond to the long and short-term shortages on the labour market. While it was intended to regulate the immigration flow, it was seen by many illegal immigrants as a way to gain a legal status and most applications came from undocumented immigrants already in Spain. It was reformed in 2002 so that applications can only come from abroad based on bilateral agreements with Ecuador, Colombia, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Poland and Romania.

A rather unique law in Europe was passed in 2008, which makes it possible that immigrants that have lived and worked legally in Spain for two or more years, can return to Morocco and get their welfare in Morocco.

### *Integration policies*

Besides measures to control the immigration, a start was made for programmes for immigrants' social integration. In 1994 an 'Inter-ministerial Plan for the Integration of Immigrants' was presented, with the intention to grant immigrants the same civil and social rights and responsibilities as Spanish citizens. The concept integration was in this manner directly linked with citizenship and the philosophy was based on the principle of equal rights and freedoms for every person. In line with the institutional rights of the autonomic regions, Spain tends to promote and recognise the cultural autonomy of migrants (Borkert i.e. 2007:29). The policy was not directed at specific groups, but at granting equal rights for instance for immigrant children at schools.

Only in 1998 the Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Foreigners in Spain and their Integration was passed, which focussed clearly on integration and political and social rights of non-EU foreigners. It took force in January 2000.

When *Partido Popular* got to power in 1996, this centre right wing government led by Prime Minister Aznar was interested in liberalising and privatising the economy and less in social provisions. A new organ, was established the '*Delegación de Gobierno para la Extranjería y la Inmigración*' within the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which meant a shift of power away from the Ministry of Social Affairs during the Socialist times. In 2000 the so-called 'Plan Greco' was presented, which went more in the direction of migrant adaptation. According to Ortega Pérez Plan Greco addresses four key areas:

1. Global, coordinated design of immigration as a desirable phenomenon in Spain, as a member of the European Union;
2. Integration of foreign residents and their families as active contributors to the growth of Spain;
3. Admission regulation to ensure peaceful coexistence with Spanish society;
4. Management of a shelter scheme for refugees and displaced persons (Ortega Pérez, 2003).

In Plan Greco the autonomous communities play an important role to implement immigrant integration.

The current left wing (PSOE) government led by Zapatero that took over in 2004 tends to focus more on improving the social provisions and work situation for immigrants. Officials who work for immigrants experience this as positive, and the money allocated for initiatives in the social sector has gone up.

In 2006 an agreement was signed in which all the political forces of the Spanish state agree on how to develop integration policies, the Civic Responsibility Pact. On 19 February 2007 the '*First Strategic Plan on Immigration and Citizenship*' proposed 2 billion Euros for three-year integration measures.

There is currently a discussion on the complicated bureaucratic system and some interviewees voice the opinion that "Because of the number of levels - the national, the regional Catalan, the provincial Barcelona, the county and only then the municipality – it is complicated to arrange things and consequently the budget of the municipalities is too limited, while actually immigrants' access to social services depends on the work of the municipal and on their registration in the municipal administration". On the other hand we noticed that municipalities are very much supported by the provincial and Catalan authorities in formulating policies on a field that they hardly know. It is easier to employ experts on the higher bureaucratic levels, who can provide guidelines for the practical work in the cities.

#### *Policies on the division between church and state*

The division between church and state is a highly politicized issue in Spain. Attempts by the left to get rid of strong interrelations between church and state meet with strong resistance from the right. Article 16 of the Spanish constitution is the article "*Libertad ideológica y religiosa*", freedom of ideology and religion. This is relevant for the division between church and state. In article 16.2 the constitution states "no one could be obliged to be afraid because of reasons of ideology, religion or belief", while article 16.c states "No religion shall have a state character. The public authorities shall take into account the religious beliefs of Spanish society and shall consequently maintain appropriate cooperation relations with the Catholic Church and other confessions".

Historically strong relations between state and particularly the more conservative elements of the Catholic Church (*Opus Dei* and *Legionarios de Cristo*) are easily associated with the Franco times. Zapatero intends to make the relations more neutral and open, removing some influence, privileges, and control from the Franco times, particularly the influence in the educational system. He suggested reducing the symbolic presence of religion in general, for instance crosses in city halls and schools, swearing on the bible during inaugurations of ministers (secular ministers say "I promise" instead of "I swear"). But this has not been received enthusiastically by the conservative '*Partido Popular*' nor with the '*Conferencia Episcopal*', the meeting of bishops and cardinals. This conference is slowly loosing the enormous power they had earlier, though they still own TV- and radio stations and newspapers and can therefore influence people and more active than 15 years ago in the public sphere.

In Catalonia we find three kinds of schools: public schools, completely private schools, and state assisted private schools ('*Concertades*'). Since there are not enough public schools, these schools are indispensable to cope with the number of pupils. Public schools are free, private schools more expensive. When a private school is officially approved as a '*Concertades*', the fee that the parents need to pay goes down since only half is paid by the parents and the other half by the Catalan government<sup>5</sup>. At least half of the state assisted public schools are Catholic, some are from the Opus Dei movement (with a separate boys and girls building). Muslims have the right to form Islamic school, just as Opus Dei has the right to establish their specific school, but as far as we know Islamic schools do not yet exist.

Generally the power of the Catholic church is diminishing in Catalonia, compared to the rest of Spain, which is shown by the fact that in 2008 21% of respondents in the opinion poll by the '*Institut de Ciències Polítiques i Socials*' (Institute for Political Science) of the Autonomous University of Barcelona says that the church is of zero importance to them. The mean value given is 4.3 on a scale of 0-10, while for instance the Catalan government gets 5.5 and the municipalities 5.7.<sup>6</sup> This does not mean that the power of the Catholic Church has disappeared completely. Aspects of the religious freedom law are heavily debated. And the effect of personal relationships between particular powerful figures and the Catholic Church should not be underestimated. This is also

<sup>5</sup> Actually parents can refuse to pay any fee, as a court decision showed in 2008, usually they pay for extra curricular activities.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.icps.cat/archivos/sondeigs/SC2008cast.pdf>

true for the conservative Catholic movements, *Opus Dei* and *Legionarios de Christo*; their members know each other from elite schools and have a network in powerful positions.

In 1992 the acceptance of the Jewish, Protestant and Muslim religious groupings was formalised. As the US Department of State explains on its website in a section on Spain:

“Representatives of Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic religious groups signed bilateral agreements with the Government in 1992, recognizing their "deeply rooted" or “*notorio arraigo*” status. These agreements provide certain tax benefits and give civil validity to weddings performed by the religious groups. They also permit the religious groups to place their teachers in schools and chaplains in hospitals and prisons. Protestant entities signed the accord as the FEREDE; Jewish entities signed as the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain (FCJE); and Islamic entities as the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE). The CIE is composed of two federations: the Spanish Federation of Islamic Religious Entities (FEERI) and the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain (UCIDE).

In 2003 the Government expanded the concept of "well-known deeply rooted" beliefs (*notorio arraigo*) to allow other religious groups to sign bilateral agreements and granted the status to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), although without signing a bilateral agreement. On November 9, 2007, the MOJ granted *notorio arraigo* status to the Buddhist entity, as it had to the Jehovah's Witnesses on January 16, 2007; however, the Buddhist, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Mormon communities do not receive the same benefits and privileges granted the other "deeply rooted" religions. Although the Government has indicated that it would amend the laws governing tax benefits and privileges for religious groups to extend these benefits to all groups achieving

*notorio arraigo* status, Parliament did not adopt this proposal prior to disbanding in December 2007 in advance of elections. On May 7, 2008, the Deputy Prime Minister of the new Government met with the Constitutional Commission of Congress to publicly announce the Government's plans for legal reform over the next 4 years, among them legal reform to promote religious freedom to make its laws consistent with the pluralistic society that the country has become. While the MOJ indicated that they want to present and enact legislation dealing with this matter, at the end of the reporting period, no serious effort has been made to move the project forward. In fact, while MOJ officials insist that the biggest obstacle is concern regarding foregone revenue, Ministry of Economy officials do not appear to be aware of the issue and no effort has been made on their part to calculate the revenue impact of the law.” (Source: US State Department website on Spain <sup>7</sup>)

The ministry of Justice keeps databases on of the religious and on other civic society associations. To become an official partner of the Spanish government, associations need to register with the Ministry of Justice in Madrid to become an official and legal association, and end up in the database of religious and ideological associations. <sup>8</sup> This make it possible to react on calls for proposals from the Ministry of Justice, and funding can be obtained of the ‘*Fundacion Pluralismo y Convivencia*’ <sup>9</sup> This concerns only social activities, never religious ones. On the Spanish national level, there are two federations of Muslims, which are legitimate representatives of the Muslims in Spain, UCIDE (full Islamic) and FEERI (originally established by converts, but expanded). The two come together in the ‘*Comisión Islámica de España*’ (CIE). This CIE is the legitimate representative organ that gives voice to Muslims, and that communicates on legislative initiatives, and with the Main Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. Currently there is a debate about the representativeness of CIE. Particularly Moroccans complain that the CIE does not represent them sufficiently.

But there is also – not recognised as legitimate representative - the ‘*Junta Islamica*’ which is an association that gathers some Muslim converts (mainly autochthonous) that formerly were part of FEERI such as the first president of FEERI, Mansur Escudero. They are more progressive and leftist than the others.

Also on the Catalan level there is a register for organisations. It is compulsory to register here, before being registered as a partner for a city government. As on the national level, there are UCIDE and FEERI in Catalonia, and there is also *Junta Islamica Catalana*<sup>10</sup>. This association does not have many members but it is well-known because it promotes the celebration of the ‘*International Congress on Islamic feminism*’ <sup>11</sup> and other activities.

And, finally, it is important to take into account the role of the ‘*Consell Islàmic de Catalunya*’. The Council was promoted by Mohammed Chaib, a Muslim elected representative in the Catalan Parliament from the PSC, who is the first Muslim Spanish parliamentarian, among others in 2001. Currently the *Direcció General d’Afers Religiosos* - the office from the Catalan government that takes care of religious affairs - was created and was looking for interlocutors within the religious communities. The Catalan government decided to promote this council in detriment of the other Spanish federations. In 2001 there were a big conflict for the

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108473.htm>

<sup>8</sup> This website gives the database <http://dgraj.mju.es/entidadesreligiosas>.

<sup>9</sup> This website gives information <http://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es>

<sup>10</sup> <http://islamcatala.wordpress.com/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://feminismeislamic.org/eng/index.htm>

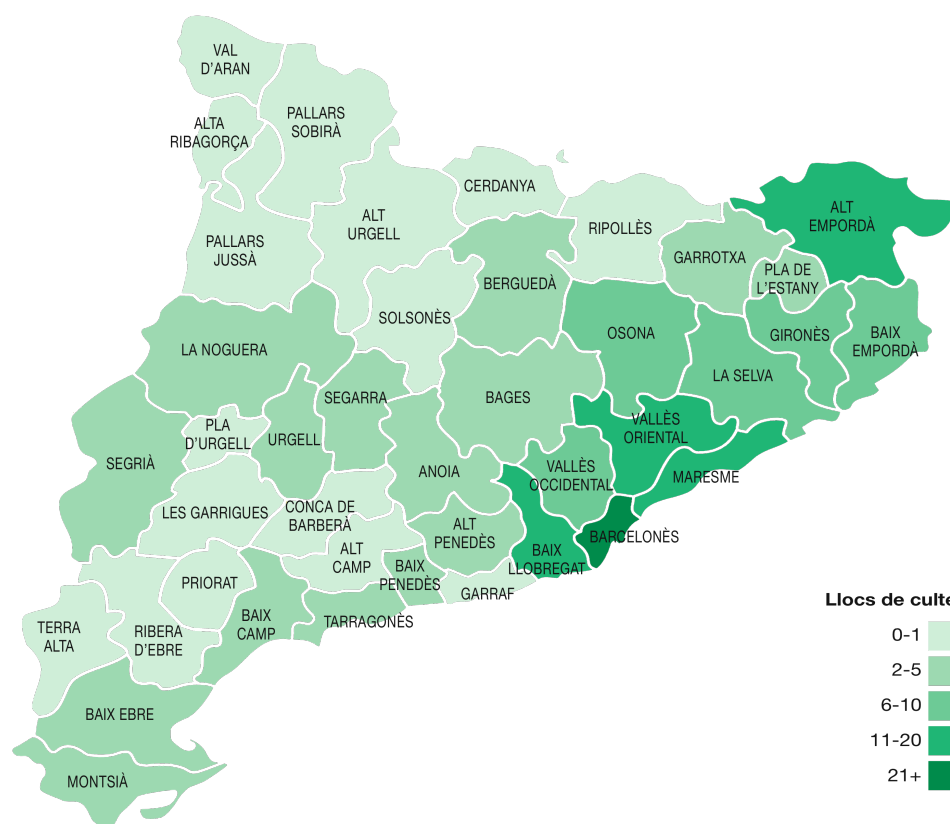
building of a Mosque in a Catalan town (Premià) and the Catalan government was looking for mediators, this is how Muslim councils became more important.

The concentration of Muslim premises in Catalonia per county is shown in figure 3. Concentrations are visible in and near the city of Barcelona. Hospitalet is part of the Baix Llobregat County.

Figure 3 Map of the concentration of Muslim premises per county in 2007.

## Mapa comarcal dels llocs de culte islàmics

Dades de 31 de gener de 2007



### Llocs de culte per comarca:

Alt Camp	1	Baix Penedès	4	Maresme	13	Segrià	3
Alt Empordà	11	Barcelonès	22	Montsià	5	Solsonès	1
Alt Penedès	4	Berguedà	2	Osona	7	Tarragonès	3
Alt Urgell	0	Cerdanya	1	Pallars Jussà	1	Terra Alta	0
Alta Ribagorça	0	Conca de Barberà	0	Pallars Sobirà	0	Urgell	2
Anoia	2	Garraf	1	Pla de l'Estany	2	Val d'Aran	0
Bages	3	Garrotxa	2	Pla d'Urgell	1	Vallès Occidental	10
Baix Camp	3	Gironès	8	Priorat	0	Vallès Oriental	12
Baix Ebre	2	La Noguera	2	Ribera d'Ebre	0	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>169</b>
Baix Empordà	9	La Selva	8	Ripollès	1		
Baix Llobregat	19	Les Garrigues	1	Segarra	3		

Source: Catalan Government Website (<http://www.gencat.cat/vicepresidencia/afersreligiosos>)

### 3 Background information on the city

#### 3.1 Brief description of the city

Hospitalet, or in full l'Hospitalet de Llobregat, is the second largest city of Catalonia after Barcelona itself, and had 264,404 inhabitants in 2007, actually 266,973 in 2008, but since most of the data are from 2007, we will use the 2007 figure. It lies between the airport and Barcelona. With the economic growth of the Barcelona region in the last 30 years, the area became a cheaper alternative. The growth of housing areas in the middle of the industrial area in the south has caused a mixture of extremely different neighbourhoods. Compared to the rest of the province there is a lot of housing for rent. Only 40% of the inhabitants live in their own property, and that is why immigrants have a higher chance to find a house in Hospitalet. There is also higher mobility of the population than in other cities. Most of the housing areas consist of building with more than five floors. As figure 3 (the old centre and figure 4 (Gornal/Bellvitge) illustrate, Hospitalet's neighbourhoods look completely different.



**Figure 3** The old city centre of Hospitalet with the City Hall (picture Anja van Heelsum)

Two train lines and a large highway cross through the city. The area is connected by both Renfe and Ferrocarril railway to the airport and the Sants Station of Barcelona and also with the Barcelona metro system. When passing through it from the airport the unattractive 20 floor high-rise of Bellvitge and Gornal neighbourhood is visible (see figure 4). The administration of Hospitalet considers the dividing lines caused by the railways and the highway a big problem. Plans by the city (with the help of Catalan and notional government) to put them underground are ready and building should start in 2010, but the effect of the economic crisis that has hit Spain hard may cause delay.



Figure 4 The railway line that crosses through Hospitalet with Bellvitge (left) and Gornal (right). (picture Anja van Heelsum)

Figure 5. The neighbourhoods (“barri’s”) of Hospitalet (source: Hospitalet Ajuntament)



Figure 5 shows a map of the Hospitalet neighbourhoods. In terms of city planning and social problems, the ‘northern’ neighbourhoods have most attention, on the map La Torrassa, Collblanc, Les Planes, La Florida, Can Serra and Pubilla Cases. The neighbourhoods contain edifices which were built during Franco’s dictatorship (1950), free construction so every house is different, and generally the population density is very high and concentration of immigrants in blocks can be as high as 40%. The

areas have fewer parks and are crowded. Extra attention through a Catalan 'Law of neighbourhoods' (comparable to the *Vogelaarwijken* in the Netherlands) goes to La Torrassa, Collblanc, La Florida and Pubilla Cases. The money is used to increase social facilities like hospitals and schools, to increase the number of parks by simply removing blocks.

A stretch that is considered less of a problem is the central part of Hospitalet: the neighbourhoods Centre, San Josep and Santa Eulàlia. Inhabitants are slightly richer and there are less social problems. It is the oldest part of the town, with 19 century buildings, like the Town Hall. The types of buildings are extremely mixed. In one street one can find old and new apartment building, 19<sup>th</sup> century two floor family homes, a brand new glass tower and industry.

A third most Southern stretch Bellvitge/ Gornal is again from the Francoist times with high-rise over 13 floors: - Granvia is mainly industrial. Bellvitge / Gornal look at first sight like the typical slum that can be found near all larger cities, but a closer look makes clear that it is rather peaceful and inhabited by elderly Spaniards with dogs. The administration considers it an area, that doesn't need a lot of attention. There is enough space between the flats for the inhabitants to sit outside and walk their dogs, and there are not many reports of social problems or reasons for the police to interfere.

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

Immigration from other Spanish regions started before international immigration, and has acquainted Hospitalet with the problems of immigrants with another culture who don't speak Catalan and with the sometimes hostile reactions of the local population.

Currently only 46% of the population of Hospitalet is originally Catalan. As table 3 shows, internal Spanish immigrants constitute 29% of the population, while third country nationals constitute 24% of the population.

**Table 3 Population of Hospitalet by country or area of origin (31-12-2007 and 2008)**

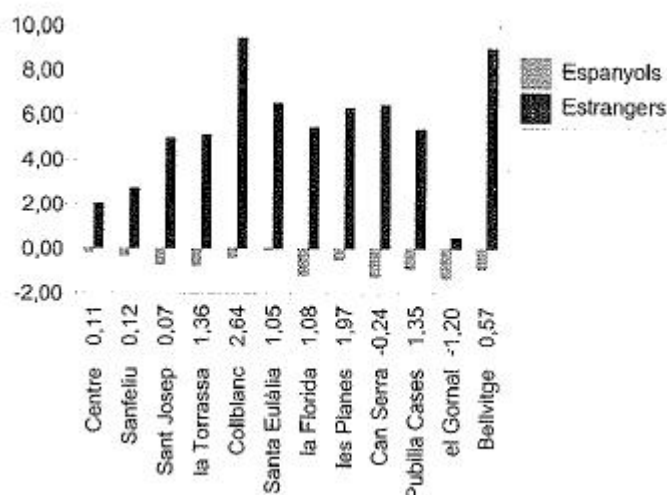
	Country or area of origin	Number 2007	2008	%	% increase 2007- 2008
Total		264,404	266,973		+1%
Of Spanish origin		201,572	200,337		-1%
	Originally Catalan	120,779		46%	
	Andalusia	32,420		12%	
	Extremadura	8,647		3%	
	Castilia Y Leon	8,541		3%	
	Castilia Y La Mancha	7,007		3%	
	Galicia	6,901		3%	
	Aragon	4,389		2%	
Third country nationals		62,832	66,636	25%	+6%
	Ecuador	13,746	14,061	5%	+2%
	Bolivia	10,122	10,582	4%	+5%
	Morocco	5,970	6,210	2%	+4%
	Peru	5,399	5,621	2%	+4%
	Dominican Rep	3,169	3,607	1%	+14%
	Colombia	3,172	3,246	1%	+2%
	Pakistan	2,402	2,943	1%	+23%
	China	1,717	1,867	1%	+9%
	Romania	1,774	1,858	1%	+5%
	India	1,458	1,783	1%	+23%
	Brazil	1,044	1,117	0%	+7%
	Argentina	1,099	1,113	0%	+1%
	Italy	1,000	1,053	0%	+5%
	Chilli	1,089	1,022	0%	-6%
	Paraguay	548	728	0%	+33%
	Filipinas	395	477	0%	+21%
	Ukraine	379	408	0%	+8%
	Others	8,349	8,940	3%	+7%

Source: Data on regions in Spain from CLIP questionnaire; the figures on foreign nationals are from the *Padrón* Hospitalet.

That means internal immigrants still outnumber immigrants from abroad, though this is fastly changing. Hospitalet needs the foreign labour, since its population is ageing like in the rest of Spain. As already mentioned, international migrants formed 2% of the population in 1998 but the figure increased very fast to 24% in 2008. The increase was highest between 2001 and 2004, but is still going on – though the crisis is slowing it down. There is a high removal rate and the net migration of Spaniards was negative (7511 arrivals and 5140 departures, so -2371 in 2008), while that of foreigners was positive (17,855 arrivals and 9955 departures, so +7900 in 2008). As the last column in the table shows, the increase of certain groups is much faster than of others. For instance there is a fast increase of Paraguayans (33%), Pakistani's (23%), Indians (23%) and Filipino's (21%), while there is a less dramatic but ongoing increase of Ecuadorians (2%), Moroccan (4%) and Bolivians (5%).

As figure 6 illustrates, immigrants often end up in the northern neighbourhoods, like Les Planes with 38% of the population is now from foreign origin, followed by La Torrassa with 37%, Pubila Cases with 37%, La Florida with 35%. As figure 4 shows the increases is stronger in Collblanc and Bellvitge. The lowest percentage is found in Gornal 5%, followed by Centre 12%. The oldest foreign community is the Moroccan one, which exists already for 30 years in Hospitalet.

**Figure 6 Migration balance in 2008 of Spaniards and foreigners for the neighbourhoods of Hospitalet**



Source: Hospitalet

Third country nationals have many nationalities; no single nationality makes up more than 5% of the population. As the table shows, the largest immigrant communities come from Latin America (41,986), with Ecuadorians and Bolivians on top. As the table shows, most immigrants come from countries where the Christian religion is dominant, which we will further investigate in section 5. Only Moroccans and Pakistani form larger non-Christian communities.

The Spanish immigrants were already part of the working class, but international immigrants have more often temporary contracts and are paid less than Spaniards. Besides this, the number of people who have not managed to regularize their papers is considerable. Men tend to work in factories, construction and agriculture, while women in domestic work, elderly and childcare and in the tourist sector in Barcelona. Immigrants tend to live more crowded in small apartments and they have more children than the Spanish inhabitants of the neighbourhoods. The percentage of immigrant children at the local schools is high, particularly in a neighbourhood like La Florida.

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

As on national level, also on local level, there are no data on denominations of citizens. We will use the same manner to estimate the number of Muslims. The largest groups from countries with a majority of Muslims are: Moroccans (5.970), Algerians (217), Nigerians/ Senegalese (219) and Pakistani (2402), and their total number adds up to 8,808. As in the national case, some of them - particular Nigerians and Senegalese - may not be Muslims, but that makes up for smaller groups from countries like Bosnia, Gambia, Mauritania, Syria, Chechnya and Ghana, that are left out of this addition. According to the answers on our questionnaire the estimated Muslim population of Hospitalet is over 9,000 people on a total of 264,404 inhabitants (2007), so they represents about 3,4% of the total population. The male/ female ration of Moroccans is: 3637 (61%) men, and 2333 women (39%). Among Senegalese, Nigerians and Pakistani's there is probably also an overrepresentation of men, as in other municipals. No data were provided on age, generation or household-family structure.

Moroccans are not as concentrated as the newer immigrant groups, they live spread out trough all northern neighbourhoods, but there are also 900 who live in Santa Eulalia. The largest concentration is in Pubilla Cases and La Florida. Pakistani's live mostly in the Northern neighbourhoods.

There is also no information on the denominational structure of either the Christian nor of the Muslim population. One can guess that most Moroccans and Pakistani's are Sunni's. In Pakistan a minority is from the Ahmadiyya movement. As already said many Latin Americans are either Catholic or a member of one of the Pentecostal churches.

#### 4 Local intercultural policies in general

In this chapter we will first turn in 4.1 to Hospitalets policies towards immigrant integration, which are actually formulated in such a way that they are intercultural policies, and then in 4.2 to its policies towards immigrant organisations and religious associations. In 4.3 we will go on with intercultural and inter religious dialogue by associations, both formal and informal. In 4.4 'relationships between ethnic groups', we will focus on attitudes in the population, and not on associations. In 4.5 we will look at the communication and media.

##### 4.1 Responsibility and general approach to ethnic issues and in the city

The City Council consists of 27 councillors, and the socialists (PSOE) and a left wing Catalan + green coalition (*'Iniciativa per Catalunya i els Verds'*) have a majority with 19 councillor. The opposition exists of 5 conservative PP (*Partido Popular*) councillors and 3 from the a right wing Catalan party (*'Convergència i Unió'* party). Since this left wing coalition is largely the same as in the Catalan government, there are no great difficulties to operate. The third vice mayor Dolores Fernandez (PSC) is politically responsible for the *'Area Benestar'*, the welfare department with 300 employees. With the recent increase of the percentage of immigrants to 25% the issue of immigrants is considered so urgent that the 'Office of the Program of Newcomer Integration Agreement' falls directly under the mayor. Both the mayor and the third vice mayor take active interest in relations to ethnic and religious organisations. There are no elected representatives in the city council from the local ethnic communities, because one needs to become a Spanish national to get voting rights or to run for councillor, and the immigration is only ten years old, so the process of naturalisation and involvement in politics still has to take off. It is expected that it will start in the near future.

Hospitalet has recently started with policies towards immigrants, generally following the lines of the Catalan government, though with specific attention for certain issues. It formulated an *'Action Plan 2005-2007'* to deal with ethnic issues in the city and for the future a *'Local Action Plan 2008-2011'*. Generally the intentions are:

- to promote equal rights and duties for all citizens as democracy, freedom, equality;
- to educate on diversity;
- to involve citizens in a new relational organisation;
- to raise awareness about cultural handicaps and to foster respect, communication and interrelation;
- to train officials on the migration issue and inform them about it;
- and to mediate in the case of conflicts.

The Hospitalet Action Plans fits very well to the 'Citizenship and Migration Plan 2005-2008' of the Catalan Government. The Migration Secretary from the 'Social Action and Citizenship Department' attempts to give an answer with his plan to the three challenges in the current Catalan society: 1) management of migration flows and labour market access; 2) public services adaptation and 3) the promotion of integration into a common public culture.

The 'Office of the Program of Newcomer Integration Agreement' has three main duties:

- 1) The first one is the 'Mediation Service' (12 staff members): this service mediates between citizens in cases where the police was warned that neighbours are quarrelling or after complaints on noise or safety. The office also has specific staff members that deal with migrant associations and migrant churches. Their staffs also visit immigrants to judge whether their housing situation is suitable when they apply for family reunification.
- 2) Work with owner associations of flats (2 staff members): particularly to stimulate owners of apartments to behave responsibly and to take care of necessary repairs and maintenance. Many have rented out their flats, and the immigrant renters don't realise that maintenance is a common task.
- 3) '*Sensibilisation*': that means stimulating all citizens to accept each other and fighting prejudice and negative opinions. According to the head of the Newcomer Office, a general campaign that would for instance stress the good sides of immigration has no chance in the current social setting. That immigrants are good is not the perception in the neighbourhoods, where social problems, noise and incidents are rampant. So this '*sensibilisation*' usually takes place in combination with mediation attempts. In practice this often means coping with the prejudice and irritation of the Catalan and Spanish (former internal immigrant) population.

Beside the three main duties, there are two tasks that are executed together with other institutions.

- 4) The 'Observatory': the quality of the services is evaluated, taking into account that immigrants have to use them; the quality should remain the same even though the number of immigrants increased. Consultants organise this evaluation, and immigrants and autochthonous are now listed separately.
- 5) Language teaching: the municipality pays the largest institution in Catalonia the '*Centre per la Normalizació Lingüística*' for Catalan language teaching. For Spanish language teaching there is currently 'no solution', as the official says, that means it is not offered. The centre works with immigrant associations and in the neighbourhood, but without interference of the local authorities (as is the case in Terrassa). The only influence they had in the past years was that the municipality asked them to adjust the teaching material to the local situation, which has been granted. The material is now about Hospitalet and not about areas where immigrants have never been.

A few more duties are part of the future tasks of the 'New Citizenship Department', but are now prepared but not yet effective:

6) A welcome plan at the municipal population administration office, which includes a 10 minute video about Hospitalet, and more specific advice on where to find particular services;

7) A '*New Citizenship Council*' will be set up, this is a council of officials, NGO's and associations that are linked to immigration matters. It is in the initial phase at the moment of the field visit (Feb 2009). This council is not yet functioning, since it is considered a problem that migrant association do not always have a strong and stable organisation, and that the contact person changes often.

Other work that belongs to the Program of Newcomer Integration Agreement, but that is paid and done by others is:

8) Legal support, this is through an agreement paid by the *Diputació de Barcelona* and executed at the two trade unions, CCOO and UGT, where legal advisors help immigrants with all kinds of problems, particularly work and residence permits. Like in Terrassa and Mataró, there is an office of *Centre d'Informació per a Treballadors i Treballadores Estrangers* (CITE) in Hospitalet (Van Heelsum, 2008a and b). The workers trade Union CCOO has set up this information centre for immigrants in 1995. CITE provides free of charge advice and orientation about immigration law, procedures to acquire a work permit, residence permit, family reunification, citizenship and visa, Catalan language courses and mediation and communication with educational centres around Catalonia. The most common problems encountered, have to do with papers, tough work circumstances (hard work), underpayment and lodging. The people from the poorest home country areas have most problems and often also limited work experience. They work in agriculture, industry, hotel business and in people's homes, so in these sectors the weakest groups are found. For construction a higher level of language proficiency is needed. CITE has 43 offices around Catalonia, in larger offices there are also advisors and jurists. CITE also organises and participates in awareness campaigns against racism, in proposal writing on social integration and in publishing several information guides for immigrants (CITE website <sup>12</sup>).

9) Social work in neighbourhoods, for instance support for homeless, is organised by *Charitas*, with budget from the national Spanish Welfare Ministry. *Charitas* also gets considerable funds from the Catholic Church, since the Church organises campaigns now and then for *Charitas* through the offertory.

So in practice, the work of the New Citizenship Office is highly related to the Mediation Service, that we will describe in more detail in 4.3, and focuses often on the relations with migrant or religious institutions, for instance if they cause trouble in neighbourhoods, for instance the noise made by the Pentecostal Churches. The actual work is based on intervention lines with two aims: a) to establish and maintain contact with the communities behind the associations and provide the support of the local authorities at their disposal and b) to control their premises legally, which are often rented on ground floors of apartment buildings without sound insulation or fire prevention measures. We should note that the policy towards organisations is in a first stage and it is expected to improve in some years into a more specific policy strategy. The situation of religious buildings could also change soon, because the Catalan Parliament is debating an act on the requirements of religious building.

#### *Issues, demands and interests of immigrants*

Hospitalet deals with migration issues relatively recently. In general the City Council avoids treating migration as a problem, even though some problems may appear in isolated cases. In any case, any of the migrant's problems reflect difficulties in society in general, and are considered 'horizontal phenomena' affecting all public management areas. The City Council works to increase the public resources, such as extending the services in education and health.

The major issues as reported in our questionnaire are firstly social needs such as housing, employment and children's education but also violence towards women and social cohesion in neighbourhoods. These issues are considered important for the community as a whole and not just because of third country national's settlement. These issues are part of public debate because the vast majority of the population perceives these issues as the main ones in society. Nevertheless, due to their weak situation migrants are more affected by them. Hence, they face more problems to hire a flat because they face fears of nationals due to their lack of information about "the other". It is true that migrants tend -due to family structure and economical reasons- to live with more people per flat than the Spanish average with inherent problems for neighbours such as noise and different cultural attitudes.

On other issues, for instance employment, a similar approach is chosen. Their employment situation can be a handicap for migrants: they accept lower qualified employment than they are prepared for according to their degree or professional experience. This is particularly the case for Latin-Americans, and usually less so for Africans because they are generally lower educated. Moreover, a significant number of migrants is irregular and this implies frustration, lack of self-esteem, more difficulties to find employment and the possibility of labour exploitation.

For women the choice is difficult between children's education/care versus labour market access or a potential professional career. However, for unmarried migrant women with children this situation becomes even harder than for the rest and the number of Latin-American young single mothers has increased very much in the city, as in the rest of the country. At the same time violence against women, which has always been an issue in Spain, increased since the end of nineties, but violence against Latin-American women has started to increase considerably since 2007.

Another important issue in the relation with immigrants is language learning. With two official languages - Spanish and Catalan, of which Catalan in a weaker position - there is a political debate on how to stimulate the learning of Catalan amongst immigrants as well. Spanish speaking immigrants tend to find it less important. The Hospitalet Action Plan fosters this learning process, but also

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ccoo.cat/cite/index.htm>

the social use of the Catalan language as a way to reinforce and promote cohesion in society. There is an awareness campaign to make parents aware that they have free access to Catalan courses.

From our interviews we conclude that immigrants agree that these issues (reported in the questionnaire) are the major ones, often stressing that their legal situation is most important, and employment, housing, children's education and recently domestic violence are the most important issues. Immigrants ask the municipality to support them with all these issues.

## 4.2 Immigrant associations and immigrant religious associations, and the policies towards them

### *Immigrant associations*

The city administration considers both religious and non-religious associations important. It tries to establish contact with one stable and well functioning organisation for every immigrant community. For instance for Ecuadorians, the '*Associació Balzar*' is the main contact point, it's president is also president of one of the two federations of associations of Ecuadorians in Catalonia, and for Bolivians the '*l'Associació Espiritu de Santa Cruz de la Sierra*' has close contacts. For Moroccans an important non-religious association is '*l'Associació Cultural Arabe de Educació y Enseñanza*', that functions on the ground floor of an apartment where lessons are taking place for children and adults.

The Ecuadorian association '*Associació Balzar*' is busy with welcome to newcomers, social support and legal support, but also with cultural activities (concert of a symphony orchestra from Ecuador). It receives a small subsidy from Hospitalet for their office. The two most relevant issues for Ecuadorians are according to the chairman: 1) the consequences of the economic crisis, unemployment, and housing problems and 2) the problem of youth of 12-18 years old, who have lived for many years in Ecuador with their grandparents, relatively free, and who recently came to Spain, but don't manage in the education system and tend to hang around in the street and form youth gangs.

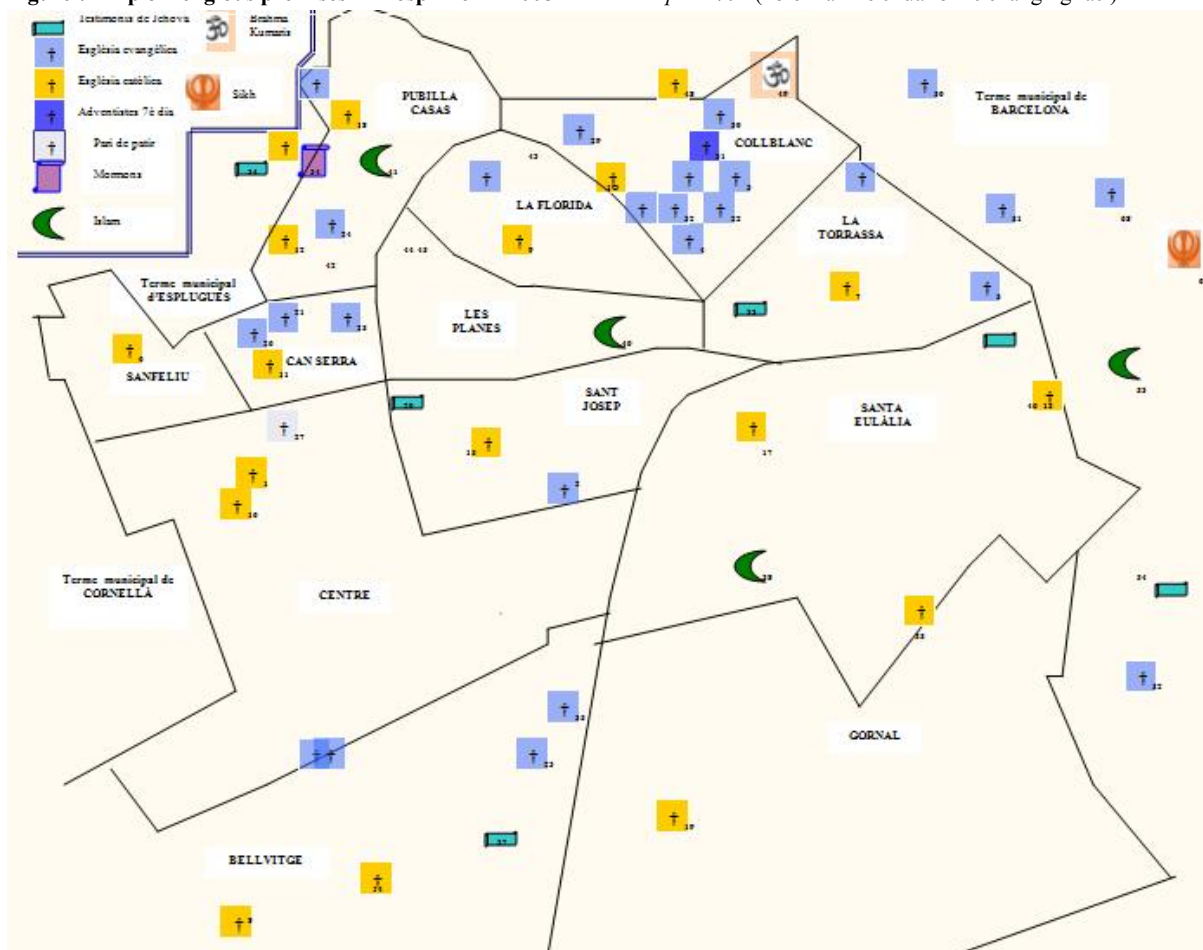
The Bolivian association '*l'Associació Espiritu de Santa Cruz de la Sierra*' is more established and has already a larger variety of activities, including art exchange, Catalan courses, health care and computer classes. The Bolivians pay special attention to the following issues in their community: domestic violence to women caused by alcoholism, violence among women (a few fights took place in the street) and supporting gay boys who have worked in prostitution but who encounter a lot of prejudice. Another activity is to teach Bolivian domestic workers needlework or knitting, since they get very bored in the homes of elderly where they stay permanently. It helps them to have something to do, not to worry too much about their family in Bolivia and the children they left behind. The association can sell the handiwork.

Other organisations mentioned by the Diputació are '*Amics de Diakha Madina*' (Senegalese), '*Associacion Cultural y Deportiva Rodriguez de Mendoza*' (Peru), '*Assicacio Wafae Assicacio*' (Moroccan), '*Associacio Catala Romanesa Tandarei*' (Rumanian), '*Associacio Intercultural Humanista*', '*Espirt de Santa Cruz de la Sierra*' (Bolivia), '*Estudiants I Joves de Guinea Equatorial*' (Equatorial Guinea), '*La Nueva Alianza Centro Oasis*', '*Fundacio Akwaba*', '*Casal La Llumeneta*', '*Associacio Cultura 13*'. The Mediterranean one organises driving license courses with a teacher in the native language. The Guinean one arranges a temporary home in Guinean families for student from Equatorial Guinea who come to study abroad or for a trainee ship. The Senegalese one organises to exchange school material between Barcelonan schools and Senegal. The Moroccan one has arranged a project in schools (called '*Cuentacartas*') to let Moroccan and Spanish students find out more about their background.

### *Religious associations*

Religious associations are also considered important by the municipality. The only research that we could find was the one of Joan Manuel Cabezas Lopez (2008) who counted 69 religious premises in Hospitalet including 15 Catholic ones; he showed that Pentecostal and Adventist churches outnumber the other religious premises. Besides these, he found three Muslim, one Hindu, one Sikh, one Hindu-Buddhist (Brahma Kumaris), one Bahá'i, three Jehovah, and one Mormon organisations. Figure 5 shows the results of Lopez. According to the city council many new organisations have again popped up after his research, which is an ongoing process.

**Figure 7 Map of religious premises in Hospitalet in 2008** *Source: Lopez 2008* (note that the situation is changing fast)



The City Council considers both the Catholic Churches, the Pentecostal Churches and the three mosques relevant for integration of its members. Hospitalet has three mosques, and the contacts of the administration are closest with one of them, 'Mesquita Al Fath'. There are friendly relations between the officials and the board members, and they talk about any problem that may arise in the neighbourhood. The other two mosques are of more conservative and won't let the officials of the municipality in. The main reason why the administration thinks that organisations are important is that organisations' leaders and authorities are well known and respected in their community. Hospitalet thinks that smooth collaboration with them is an interesting new way of creating interrelations between local authorities, their activities and local activities of the native population. As stated in the Action Plan 2005-2007, migrants maintain double needs: to be integrated into the host society and to preserve their habits and cultural rules (and have contact in their own community) and to find their place in this society. In order to canalise the social needs and demands of migrants communities and their respective associations or entities, the City Council has planned meetings with representatives of those communities and the officials who are responsible for the different local services - particularly from the 'participation and living together department', the welfare & family department and the youth and safety departments. Up to 2000, Hospitalet could be considered 'bi-confessional', since actually the only denominations among its citizens were Catholicism and Islam. This was experienced as a stable situation, as none of them caused nuisances for the rest of the population. Since 2004-2005, the number of Latin-Americans started to increase. A majority of Latin-American profess Pentecostal religions and this is experienced as an important challenge in neighbourhoods, taking their rites (music) and the high population density into account. Faced by this situation the specific objectives of the City Council in relation to these organisations is based on intervention lines with two aims: a) to keep contact with those communities and to provide the support of the local authorities at their disposal b) to control their premises legally, which are often rented on ground floors of apartment buildings. Legalising the premises and

When asked which particular migrant organisations the city considers as a most relevant support for the welfare of local migrant communities, the already mentioned 'l'Associació Cultural Arabe de Educació y Enseñanza' was mentioned. This organisation provides Arabic courses for both Moroccans and for anybody else who is interested. It functions as an information centre on Arab language and culture, it gives extra lessons to children after school hours and for grown ups in the evening. It organises activities in the weekend for teenagers; and excursions for parents and children to simulate them to see more than the neighbourhood. Specific work is targeting women: the older ones need to learn reading and writing, are given information, and discuss their relations with men; the younger ones tend to be less traditional and are supported in upbringing and labour market. Effort is put on convincing

families that children should study and improve their lives: the Koran says that educating and developing oneself is an obligation. The objectives of the organisation are broad: a) to create a reference place for new immigrants in the city, b) to support them to achieve better conditions and c) to support children to learn the language of their family and to read and write in Arabic. Besides language lessons it also organises a football competition, with seven teams that play quite well. And they joined in the organisation of a big Moroccan Cultural Festival in the Barcelona Parc Jordi on 23-25 February 2009<sup>13</sup>, initiated by the Spanish and Catalan government.

Because the officials find the activities of this organisation extremely relevant, they are a bit less strict with the rules on for instance the number of people that can come to the building at the same time. The space seems to be small and not in a very good state for the number of children that visit it. As the city representative explains, one has to be flexible sometimes when important initiatives are taken, and then look for better solutions. We consider this positive and flexible attitude of the officials as a good practice.

#### *Funding of migrant and religious associations*

Basically migrant associations are supposed to take care of their own finances and are seen as independent entrepreneurs. A few migrant associations in Hospitalet get limited financial support from the municipality, mainly in terms of rent payment, or use of public buildings for their meetings. There is no systematic policy, but the officials try to be helpful when they see that important initiatives are taken. The local administration has very limited funding, and says it is not able to fulfil all citizens' demands, and cannot apply positive discrimination to certain groups.

On the other hand, there are a lot of things that get paid by either the national Spanish, Catalan, provincial or local authorities. For instance the Diversity Festival (Festa de la Diversitat), football competitions in which the Moroccan teams also play, exhibitions on for instance Bolivia in the Migration Museum in Barcelona.

For religious associations, there are more structural inhibitions, based on the division of church and state. The Spanish Constitution affirms that the State would keep relations with the Catholic Church and the rest of the confessions. But the public debate at national level about the 'Religious Freedom Law', and about possibilities to update it to the current multicultural society has not yet come to a conclusion. Until this will change, there are no possibilities to pay migrant religious organisations. The public strategy is not to provide funding for religious purposes in order to guarantee that no interference takes place in the religious field. Particularly in Hospitalet, the problem is the enormous number of religious organisations, and the bad state of many of their buildings. The officials are worried that there would be seven or eight religious premises to restore every year, which is both economically and politically impossible for the municipality. On the other hand, the authorities are now and then forced to close down an illegal Pentecostal premise, executing the law. In a case in 2008, this was provoked by complaints and hard reactions from the neighbourhood.

#### *Issues connected to the associations*

Concerning the associations, the issues often relate to their building. The representatives ask the officials for a new space, or to arrange the legal status of their organisation and its premise, or for support in improving the conditions of their premise. Bad knowledge of the legal possibilities for organisations, of safety rules and of possibilities to acquire financial assistance, combined with limited organisational capacity within the communities leads to a rather confused overall picture of the state of the organisations. They start new churches without permits in garages, and the municipal representatives again and again take effort to explain the rules and to support them to adjust to legal requirements. Currently 40-50% is not legally established. On the other hand there seems a huge potential in the immigrant communities to establish organisations, though it is still in a developing stage and there is not yet a clear voice that represents them all. The municipality would like to have one single representative organ to talk to, or as a second option one representative organisation per community; it complains that this is not possible with the badly organised groups available. The expectations of the municipality are high: that a few active volunteers which are busy with a specific objective could become the representative body of the complete migrant community is probably not realistic. Though voluntarily run associations can temporary work besides generally elected bodies to give voice to migrant's demands and interests, they can never replace real representative bodies, since there is always a majority of the immigrant population that is not organised.

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<sup>13</sup> More information on the 11 concerts of Moroccan artists and the diverse artisanal and cultural activities, see: <http://www.smapexpo.es/es/20/el-salon-de-marruecos-en-barcelona-es-el-mayor-acontecimiento-social-cultural-y-comercial-marroqui-organizado-hasta-ahora-en-espana>

**Figure 8. One of the Adventist churches, in a ground floor apartment in the Collblanc neighbourhood. (picture Anja van Heelsum)**



There haven't been a lot of examples of demands and proposals raised by ethnic and religious organisations in the city. Islamic slaughtering became an issue that was solved by the mediators at the slaughterhouse. Since the two groups of Muslims had different opinions on how Islamic slaughter should take place, there are now two manners of Islamic slaughter possible. Actually the search for a suitable place for the new mosque is maybe the clearest example of claim making (see section 5). The municipality has reacted positively and is actively supporting the mosque.

### 4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue

We will distinguish two forms of dialogue in this paragraph: inter-cultural dialogue and inter-religious dialogue. Under inter-cultural dialogue we will treat organised cooperation between associations from different cultures. Inter-religious dialogue is not yet formally established in the sense of organised cooperation between associations of different faiths. But we will show that religious organisations initiate informal cooperation between people of different faiths.

#### *Inter-cultural dialogue*

The two most important forms in which the local administration communicates with the associations are through the Mediation Office and in the future through the New Citizenship Council that is on the way to get installed. So these two seem the two most important carriers of intercultural dialogue on an organised level.

1) The *New Citizenship council* will have three phases: first there will be a working group, secondly a debate will be organised amongst the different ethnic groups and thirdly a follow-up commission will be installed to assure that the measures agreed are really carried out and to be able to talk about this work during the phase of implementation. The council cannot yet be considered a good practice, since it is taking much more time than expected to implement it.

2) The *Mediation Service* works for all citizens, not only for Spaniards who have problems with their immigrant neighbours, but this is a considerable part of the job. It is a good practice, on which we will elaborate further.

The most encountered problems that the Mediation Service are:

- a) Neighbour relations: noise, nuisance and different attitudes. Some of the complaints are about the fee that is supposed to be paid for repair of the building to the association of owners of a flat. Other complaints are about Latin Americans, who sometimes give noisy parties that last the whole night, and where a lot of alcohol is consumed. There are also complaints about the Pentecostal churches: more than 50 people gather in a ground floor apartment with loud preaching, singing and drums that can go on the whole day. And there are complaints about domestic violence against women. In some cases the complaints are reported to the police and in some cases directly to Mediation Service. The police decides whether there is a violation of the law or a need of negotiation.

- b) Public space occupation. Usually complaints are again about Latin Americans who drink in the street and gather noisily during the night, particularly on Fridays. In the Latin American bars one can only order a bottle of whiskey at once and not a glass and alcohol abuse is a very serious problem. There are also complaints about the Gypsies in the Bellvitge area. And relatively recently there are complaints about groups of youngsters that hang around, sometimes involved in criminality.
- c) Competition about employment. Quarrels take place between people with the lowest incomes; Spaniards consider it unfair that immigrants work for extremely low wages.
- d) Competition about public services. Competition arises in schools, child care centres, health care centres or when public funding is divided among poor families. For instance a limited number of free nursery places are available for the poorest families. In the recent period these poorest families were nearly always immigrants, and Spaniards complain that this is not fair. The municipality is investigating to what extent it has to increase the number of places, but of course the funds are not endless.

In general the approach is to find compromises, to increase mutual understanding, to make people aware of laws on for instance noise, and to go on negotiating until the conflict is completely solved. This can mean that a negotiation process can go on for more than a year, and if some of the neighbours move, it starts again. One example shows how insistent the mediators have to be: they talked for nine months, often till late in the evening with all inhabitants, but the end result is that everybody now pays for his repairs, there are no parties anymore at the Dominican apartment, and assaults have become rare.

During our interviews, we noticed that there were many other inter cultural initiatives of all kinds, like for instance the House without Borders in Collblanc, the Diversity Festival and exhibitions and cultural initiatives. One could consider all these initiatives forms of intercultural dialogue.

#### *Inter-religious dialogue*

Cabezas Lopez (2008) analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the associations, to see whether an inter-religious council could operate besides the above citizenship council. His conclusion is: "Due to the observed weaknesses of the organisation, there have not been further actions, but improvements are expected in the future. Meetings are planned between the Catholic Church and Muslims, the two best organised groups, to find ways of collaboration and dialogue in the near future (end of 2009)".

Inter-religious dialogue which we understand as cooperation between organisations of religious groups, is not very institutionalised, but this does not mean that there is no cooperation. Our interview with Father Murillo (80), priest of the Catholic Church in the Florida neighbourhood showed how this kind of cooperation can work, and also what the limitations are. The church of Father Murillo was built in 1956 by the electricity company, because its workers needed a church. This was during the construction of the Florida neighbourhood by Franco, who intended to resettle 5000-7000 slum dwellers from the centre of Barcelona. In no time 40,000 inhabitants turned up, most of them poor and from other Spanish regions like Andalusia. Roads were not yet asphalted, there was no metro, and there were no services. There were 40 marriages per week, since the population was young, and the church automatically became a place for worker meetings.

The parish decided to become a welcome place and a centre for social care, and started legal, medical and social support. During the dictatorship there were some problems with the authorities, but with the arrival of democracy opportunities to help people increased and the situation in the neighbourhood started to improve. But in the last 10 years, with the 'new migration', as it is commonly called, social problems are again aggravating. Particularly family questions are more intense: divided families on a very large distance, and more time before families can reunite, create both problems in the country of origin but also in Spain. Latin Americans, who are the majority of their new congregation, but also Muslims are the main groups that ask for their services. The church runs an overbooked community centre in an adjacent street, that is known in the neighbourhood as '*la mesquita*' (the mosque), because so many Moroccans visit it.

Father Murillo is a much respected man among the Muslims in Florida, because of the social work he does and his open attitude. He believes, quoting Pope John XXIII, "that there are more things that unites us than that separates us". Unluckily the two nearby mosques are the most conservative mosques of Hospitalet, which probably makes any more formal cooperation difficult. He also maintains good relations with the Pentecostal churches around him by letting space to them for meetings. Actually quite a lot of inter religious cooperation seems to take place around the Florida parish. But Father Murillo thinks that the relations are something that needs to be build up further.

One should also realise that the Catholic Church is not a single monolithic entity. Within the Catholic network, the position of this parish is special. Firstly because many other churches are empty: the number of people in the services is only 10% of what it was in the past, and this church is full on Sundays. Of the baptised children 92% is foreign and of those who come for first communion 80% is foreign, often from Latin America. Secondly this parish is quite progressive, while some other parishes are more conservative, and had ties with the power structure during the dictatorship. For instance the parish in the next neighbourhood protested against the removal of a memorial for nationalist victims of the civil war.

A second example comes from our interview with the *Nigerian New Covenant Church* in the Collblanc neighbourhood. This church rents a ground floor apartment, which they have made sound proof, but on larger holidays they have a problem with space. The first impression is that this church has only connections in Nigeria, but that turns out to be not true at all. Firstly they are a member of the '*Aliança d'Evangelica de Catalunya*'. In the past this church has cooperated with a local Catholic priest in Barcelona, who gave them the attic of a church in the old city centre of Barcelona even though a superior in the Church hierarchy

did not agree. They met the pastor because he was- like them- a member of the '*Aliança d'Evangelica de Catalunya*', where he represented the charismatic movement in the Catholic Church. Actually the singing and drumming was clearly audible in the church below, but it was tolerated for quite some time until they managed to hire their own premise. Besides these contacts with the charismatic movement of the Catholic Church, they are part of the international *REDIM* movement, which has 254 branches world wide. Actually its members are sent up and down between the organisations in several countries in Europe, if employment or opportunities improve in one of these countries.

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

There are currently some tensions in the relationship between the Spanish population and particularly Latin Americans, as all the examples in 4.2 that the Mediation Service has to deal with, show. Though we know that there are also prejudices about Moroccans, several interviewees state that relations between Spaniards and Moroccans in Hospitalet are good, as one interviewee explains: "They have a longer history in Hospitalet, so we know them better and there is the Moorish history of Spain. But also Moroccans are culturally similar: the family life is similar: a father, mother, children, no parties, no big noise, they behave 'normal'. Where twenty years ago people would say they don't like 'morro's', they now consider them nice people, who don't cause any problems." The social distance to the Latin Americans is perceived as large, common stereotypes include that the women are often single mothers with children of different fathers, and the men are drunkards, who easily become aggressive. Among immigrants, Muslims tend to have contacts among each other. People from Morocco, Pakistan, Senegal and Algeria all visit the three mosques. Secondly the Spanish speaking Latin Americans tend to have contacts among each other, due to their common language, though there seems to exist a prejudice about Argentinians who sometimes consider other Latin Americans as backward. The only mixed organisations that we are aware of that immigrants established themselves is '*La Casa Sense Fronteres*' (House without Borders). It was launched by seven organisations that work for newcomers, namely: *Sayary Urus*, *Maloka*, *Àmbit immigració i Comissió Catalana d'Ajuda al Refugiat*, *Asociación Promotora Nuevo Perú*, *Rumbos*, *Nuevos Colectivos and Mujeres pa'lante*. These groups all work for the rights of immigrants and the integration of newcomers. They have an office of 200m<sup>2</sup> in Collblanc neighbourhood (Calle Llobregat 62) and this will become a meeting point for the members and the organisations will share the space for their cultural activities. At the same time they will maintain their own spaces.

#### 4.5 Public communication

In Hospitalet all local mass media belong to the City Council or the City Council is at least represented in their boards. Since the borders between Hospitalet's domain and Barcelona have become invisible in the last twenty years, the independent newspapers from Barcelona are available everywhere. There are no ethnic media. Because the local media are so closely related to the administration, integration policy strategies can easily be shaped in local media. This is the case for both *Ràdio L'Hospitalet*, (L'Hospitalet Radio), *L'Hospitalet. Diari Informatiu* (L'Hospitalet Newspaper) and *Televisió de L'Hospitalet and Canal-h.net* (L'Hospitalet TV and digital newspaper). All of them aim to promote and diffuse human values of society: freedom, equality and non discrimination, political pluralism, social cohesion and solidarity, which are considered the basis of a welfare state society. Hospitalet TV is well known, and considered a good station according to the journalist from Terrassa whom we interviewed. These media usually involve all kinds of citizens in their programs, including immigrants. Due to their recent arrival, there are not yet a lot of immigrant staff members, though Spanish nationality is not required, since these institutions do not strictly fall under public administration.

The Action Plan 2005-2007 aims to sign a local media agreement, in which is stated that they intend to avoid stigmatisation of third country nationals in an attempt to dissociate migration and marginalisation. Likewise, it is foreseen that training and information programmes are introduced to increase the knowledge in the population about migration phenomena.

#### 4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

In general the Deputation judges the state of affairs in relations between city and ethnic and religious groups as good. With Moroccan representatives, the relations are smooth, whereas with other communities such as Latin Americans it is more informal, due to the fact that it is not yet clear who the speakers are in their communities. All this is based on personal contacts due to the ongoing visits that are paid to the organisations. There is a big potential of activities that can lead to integration. Hospitalet is open to develop activities to engage both immigrants and Spaniards like Arabic classes, exhibitions on the countries of origin, cultural festivals and mixed theatre activities. The expectations focus on the following ideas: that a more permanent interaction will take place, with more debates in the New Citizenship Council and with more meeting points in the communities. That immigrants' civil society will go on with innovative initiatives. And with the current smooth relationships open activities might be initiated and shared by all citizens, for the benefit of the whole society. The risk in the current way of working is that the small Mediation Office cannot cope with all the demands. The Mediation Office urgently needs to increase its staff and to divide duties further, particularly if a welcome program starts to work also. It lacks secretarial assistance, and therefore organisational capacity. Another problem is that the expertise, network and knowledge about the organisations and specific situations, is tied to a few individuals. If one or two staff members would change to another job, the Mediation Team would be left with an enormous gap in knowledge and lose a considerable number of contacts. To put it extremely, if the head of the office would lose his telephone, a huge list of contacts with migrants would already be lost. Just like the immigrant population, this service has also suddenly increased. It seems

necessary to do some internal organisational work, before new duties are added. Currently Mediation gets most attention. Getting to this next phase, it seems wise to arrange sub-departments, that all have a reasonable number of staff members.

## 5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

### 5.1 The associations of Muslims, major issues, demands and interests

#### *Associations of Muslims (i.e. religious associations)*

Hospitalet has three mosques, and the contacts of the administration are closest with one of them, the '*Al Fath Mosque*' (Calle Fortuna in the Santa Eulalia neighbourhood, which gets even 500-1000 visitors on Fridays). The mosque is from the Tabliq school, but clearly states that: 'Muslims are one, we receive all Muslims and are tolerant to other branches of Islam' (Cabezas Lopez. P. 48). There are friendly relations between the officials and the board members, who report to talk about any problem that may arise in the neighbourhood. The other two mosques are of more conservative groupings and won't let the officials of the municipality in. This mosque will probably engage in the near future in a cooperation in the authorities in defining the local integration strategy. The board members are mainly Moroccan, but also Algerian, Pakistani and Indian and the (Moroccan) imam has been in Hospitalet for twenty years. The mosque uses currently a temporary building – not recognisable as a mosque - but has building plans and is looking for a suitable bigger plot to build a two floor real mosque. The current space of 240m<sup>2</sup> is too small, so during the main celebrations *Eid-al-Adha*, the Feast of the Sacrifice, which is celebrated during the Hajj, and *Eid-al-Fitr*, the Feast of Breaking the Fast, at the end of the Ramadan people gather outside. In the new mosque the room for women and children will be bigger. Besides the usual prayer, an 'open door meeting' was organised for the neighbourhood; actually it was not very successful, nearly nobody came. The board members explain that this has to do with the current location: the mosque is situated just at the border between a new part of Santa Eulalia at the industrial area, with no housing nearby. That their presence was never experienced as a problem, is explained by the fact that Moroccans have been around for 20 years. Spanish neighbours think that Moroccans are similar to them, in family structure, male-female relations and norms, compared to Latin Americans who often live in single parent families, are considered more noisy in the neighbourhood and who give big parties. The Pakistani's that come to the mosque are even less of a problem, because they just come and pray, while Moroccans remain to talk and sometimes to quarrel.

A second mosque is the '*Al Huda mosque*' or '*Associacion Social I Cultural Al Huda*' (situated at Avinguda Del Bosc in Pubilla Casa neighbourhood, it attracts about 150-200 visitors on Fridays) and the third one is the '*Alarkkame Mosque*', or '*Associacion Arabe Cultural Islamica*' (situated at Avinguda del Nord, in La Florida neighbourhood, it attracts about 150 visitors). I was not possible to interview representatives during the city visit. The most northern one that doesn't have relations with the municipality, is known to have contacts with the daughter of Sheik Yassin; she has been there for a visit, which confirms the suspicion that they relate to a more conservative movement. The city tried to establish ties and to invite them to the New Citizenship Council, but until recently they are not interested. All three mosques are visited by an ethnically mixed public; the majority is from Morocco and Pakistan, and a minority from Senegal, Gambia, Mauretania, Syria, Chechnya, Bosnia and Ghana.

In Hospitalet there is no alliance or federation of the three Muslim organisations that the city can communicate with. Actually the three mosques are of so different movements, that they don't work together. There is a federation in Catalonia, the '*Islamic Council of Catalonia*'<sup>14</sup>, but the municipality prefers to talk to local associations, since it is easy to communicate for the mediation service directly with the organisation. The Islamic Council of Catalonia can not be considered as representative for all Muslims. Only one of the three mosques in Hospitalet accepts the authority of this council, and not without criticism. According to the city representatives the differences of opinion are about religious issues, like how Islamic slaughter exactly should take place, since that became an issue between two Muslim groups at the local slaughterhouse in the past.

These three associations cannot be considered representative for the Moroccan, Pakistani and other Muslim community either, since all seem to be part of rather specific movements, and not of the national Moroccan or Pakistani schools of Islam. But the municipality considers the activities of the mosques as relevant support for the welfare of the local Muslim for the reasons that we already mentioned.

#### *Issues, demands and interests*

Muslim associations worry about the same general issues that we already mentioned in chapter 4: the labour situation of their members, housing, and the education of children. Compared to other ethnic groups they are better established, because of their longer stay in the country. That means they have organised Arabic lessons for their children at the '*L'Associació Cultural Arabe de Educació y Enseñanza*' (see 4.2), and they have established three mosques. The issue of Islamic slaughter has been solved: is possible.

If we ask the Muslims during the interviews what concerns them, they often say that the situation of the Palestinians is an important issue to them. The interviews took place when Israel had just invaded Gaza and the TV - particularly the most watched channel *Al Jazeera* - showed a constant stream of images of severely wounded Palestinians. The local authorities are not worried about the impact of the Gaza issue on Moroccans. Not all parties are aware that this situation is causing hatred among Muslims against West Europeans. And if they are aware of this, like the officials in Hospitalet, they think this not something a local government should

<sup>14</sup> The *Islamic Council of Catalonia* was created in 2001 and has signed since then several agreements with the Catalan government. In some way, it acts as the Catalan representative of Muslim associations. In addition the Catalan government has promoted this association in detriment of the Catalan counterparts of the Spanish federations (UCIDE and *Junta Islamica*). The Catalan government is funding some activities and takes its leaders as representatives in symbolic celebrations, so this has caused some conflicts among federations.

react upon. (In contrast, the mayor of Amsterdam went in this period to Moroccan associations to talk about this issue, trying to avoid further hatred from developing). Radicalisation is not mentioned as an issue, but we will treat this more elaborately in chapter 6. The only issue that is mentioned is mosque building by the '*Al Fath Mosque*'.

It surprised the researcher that Muslims have not tried to establish an Islamic School. The Opus Dei School in Hospitalet, with its separate buildings for boys and for girls, shows how religious movements are quite free in Spain to establish a school according to their own beliefs. Though the traditional justification for separating boys and girls - to avoid early attention for the other sex - it is nowadays replaced with a reasoning from psychological research on differential learning strategies of boys and girls, the arguments could easily be used to establish a Muslim school.



**Figure 9** The Opus Dei School in Hospitalet – shown is the girls entrance and the girls building, while the boys entrance and building are on the other side (picture Anja van Heelsum)

According to the city representative there are three reasons for this: “Firstly, the Moroccan community lacks entrepreneurial tendencies: there is also not a single Moroccan shop, nor any Moroccan restaurant even not in the bigger area of Barcelona. The only Moroccan bakery was closed within half a year. Secondly, Moroccans feel comfortable in the Spanish school system. The veil is not an issue like in France, and there is no Catholic manipulation in the public schools. Koran teaching and Arab lessons are successfully arranged outside the school. Thirdly, the Muslims are not a homogeneous entity, and the fight about slaughtering shows how difficult it is for them to agree.” Entrepreneurship doesn’t seem the main reason to us. Probably many of them are also not aware of the right to establish a school, or don’t know how to do it.

## 5.2 General approaches and policies improving the relations with Muslim groups

Generally the attitude of the authorities towards Muslim communities is not different from the attitude towards other migrant communities, perhaps maybe that the relations with the '*Al Fath mosque*' and '*l'Associació Cultural Arabe de Educació y Enseñanza*' are actually better than with any of the other organisations. On the other hand there are no contact with the other two mosques. As we explained in 4.3, the *Mediation Service* perceives the relations between Spaniards and Moroccans in Hospitalet as good, and this is also how the representatives of Muslim organisations see things. They stress that they would like to have such good relations also with the other communities, but this depends firstly on the stability of the organisations and secondly on their openness. The strategy that includes mutual knowledge and providing them with the help that they need, will consolidate the organisations, and then a second more ambitious step can be taken, namely to focus on the improvement of intercultural relations amongst groups in the society as a whole. That second step will be taken after the *Council of New Citizenship* is established (see 4.2).

## 5.3 Good practice examples of concrete activities and measures improving the relations with Muslim groups

It is quit clear that the close relations that the officials of the Mediation office maintain with the '*Al Fath mosque*' and '*l'Associació Cultural Arabe de Educació y Enseñanza*' are good practices. The relation is based on a respectful treatment of the officials of both associations by the officer that keeps the contacts. The close and personal relations of the officers add to the understanding of

the Moroccan community, and to their acceptance of his attempts. This personal approach will probably on the long run also work for other immigrant communities, and it is probable that the New Citizenship Council will start to function in the near future. The fact that it is a Mediation Service that establishes the contact may both work positively and negatively. It might work positively because the Mediation Service works on concrete cases and conflicts which need to be solved, and because the Mediation officers are trained in social work and establishing understanding between people. A negative side of the approach through the Mediation Service, is that they are problem oriented, and sometimes even called in by the police. Associations may be suspicious and experience this as an attempt to exercise control over their activities. That the mediation office doesn't manage to establish contact with the two other mosques may be a sign of the mistrust by the other mosques and fear of attempts to control them.

#### **5.4 Public communication**

In the public communication on Muslims the same strategies are used as described in 4.4. It is considered important to avoid stigmatisation, and to promote human values in society, like freedom, equality, non discrimination, political pluralism, social cohesion and solidarity.

#### **5.5 Summary and lessons learnt**

As we already remarked in 5.3 close personal relations between officials and organisation are a necessary condition for a successful cooperation. This is not in any way different for Muslims or other ethnic groups in the case of Hospitalet, where close contact have been established with one non religious Moroccan association and with one of the three mosques. On the other hand no relations have been established with the two conservative mosques, even though there have been several attempts. The conservative mosques are more mistrusting and won't let the officials in. The reason has not become clear. It is worth trying to employ immigrants and Muslims in the Mediation Service, because mistrusting the municipality as a 'white-only- institutions' may diminish.

## 6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

### 6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population

In the whole of Spain, right wing extremism or anti-anti immigrant movements are small. According to our interviews this is due to the quite radical view of the right wing *Partido Popular* (PP). The PP attracts voters that feel uncomfortable with immigrants, but doesn't go to extremes. Two extreme parties on national level are '*Democracia Nacional*' and '*España 2000*', of which it is known that they had relations with criminals (whitewashing of money, etc.), and that they pay skinheads to mob foreigners. Actual mobbing happened very incidentally, like once in Madrid, so the scale is not large. Actually the counter movement of protests is more considerable.

After 2000 a political party with clear anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim views was established in Catalonia, called '*Plata Forma Catalunya*' actually with members from outside Catalonia, but it never reached large numbers of votes in the cities in Catalonia. In Hospitalet *PlataForma* joined the elections in 2003, but the candidate was not elected. There were counter-demonstrations. In Hospitalet there are two small skinhead groups, but as far as the administrators know, it is under control. There are no incidents known by the police. The interviewee explains that other cities encounter more problems with skinheads, like for instance Sabadell. In general the authorities cope with radical tendencies by making very clear that what the common values in Hospitalet are. On the other hand, the police are tough on skinheads in case of incidents.

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

The issue of Muslim radicalisation is something that we can not easily discuss with all parties. To start with the local authorities are not in charge of this issue, and mainly interested in peaceful coexistence in neighbourhoods. It is the national police (*Policia Nacional*) and the *Guardia Civil*, that are responsible for these kinds of issues. The national *Guardia Civil* controls the borders, issues papers for immigrants, is responsible for drugs and the *National Intelligence Service* (CNI) for terrorism, both from ETA and international terrorism. A story that was mentioned in the interviews, when we asked if there is any Muslim radicalisation, was the arrest a Pakistani man in Barcelona by the *Guardia Civil* on 20 January 2008, who was supposed to have paid large sums to jihadi terrorism.<sup>15</sup> The interviewees explained that there are Muslim radicals in the Barcelona region, and that the national police follow them.

Due to the history of Catalonia during Franco, the Spanish police have a rather bad image among Catalans. As an interviewee explains: "they are still associated with Franco's suppression of Catalonia, and their actions are not trusted by all". The Catalan police '*Mossos d'Esquadra*' that has been re-established after the dictatorship ended, has more favourable and reasonable image. This police force has a relatively young staff. It is responsible for delinquencies, while the local police are responsible for small delicts, neighbourhood problems and traffic. We talked to representatives of the Catalan police and of the local police, but their largest problem with immigrants concern the issues described in section 4 with Latin Americans, they don't consider Muslim radicalisation a problem and don't treat them in any other way than other offenders. The close contacts with the *Mediation Service* have led to an easy relationship between police and the '*Al Fath mosque*'.

In Hospitalet there have been two incidents that show that Islamic radicalisation was taking place among individuals in the city. In 2002/2003 a Syrian man was arrested in his house near to the '*Al Fath mosque*'. This was a sudden and to the local police rather surprising action of the *Guardia Civil*. The local police only heard about it on the last moment and arranged the usual assistance. In 2007 another arrest took place of a Pakistani man in cooperation with the American FBI, in the same manner. A newspaper reports on a supposed Pakistani radical group in Barcelona:

*"In January 2008, a group of 14 suspected Pakistani terrorists was dismantled in the Raval district of Barcelona. According to the National Intelligence Centre (CNI) and the Civil Guard, the arrested were preparing a series of bombings in the subway in Barcelona and the bombing of a Catalan mosque [...]. Six of the suspects involved in this case managed to escape. The group, according to sources of research, connect with the leader of Al Qaeda in Pakistan, Amir Baitul Mehsud."*<sup>16</sup>

That a radical individual was arrested in Hospitalet shocked both the authorities, the public and the Muslims. The attitude of the *Al Fath mosque* has become extremely cautious in avoiding that any radical can influence the visitors of the mosque. Though the *Tablighi* movement is known to have a network of travelling imams, they are very careful with travelling imams, that they cannot identify. The board members of the mosque question anybody that turns up new. And they intervene immediately if they think anything they don't like is going on. They also guard their youngsters to keep them on the right track in communication with the parents. An example shows how careful they are. They even called the Mediation Office and the police, when a suspected radical turned up. When the usual imam was on the hajj (yearly pilgrimage to Mecca), a travelling imam turned up from a nearby town in Catalonia, that was known to have an extremist community, with relations with Al Qaida. The *Al Fath mosque* interrogated him and told him he could preach but only if he would just talk about the Koran and leave any reference to international politics out: nothing about the Iraqi's, nothing about the Palestinians. He kept his promise, but the mosque officials managed to get rid of him. As said they even warned the police, to be sure in case something would go wrong.

<sup>15</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7438406.stm>

<sup>16</sup> Quoted from <http://islamineurope.blogspot.com/2009/02/barcelona-financing-pakistani-terrorism.html>

**6.3 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt**

In Hospitalet only two small extreme right wing groups are found, connected to skinheads in other Catalan cities. Radicalisation of Muslims is the responsibility of the national authorities, and the municipal authorities can only support actions initiated by national authorities. The *Al Fath mosque* is very careful not to let radical individuals into its premise, and the cooperation between this mosque and the Mediation Service is so good, that the mosque even warns them, when they suspect that a dangerous person had entered their building. The close cooperation between the Mediation Service and the Police works in a positive manner, since the mosque feels very at ease with the police. This can be considered a good practice that one may not see everywhere. To what extent the other two mosques also trust the police is not known, since we couldn't interview the representatives.

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

In this report we have treated the policies of Hospitalet on inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, with some special attention to Muslims and radicalisation. The report shows that Hospitalet has reacted very fast towards the enormous changes that are taking place in the last 10 years. The general background based on '*convivencia*' i.e. living together, while sharing values, having a common idea about society, having similar ideas about the use of public space, and a kind of public identity, seems a very suitable approach to cope both with the enormous variety of nationalities, but also with the prejudice of the autochthonous who see their neighbourhoods changing very fast. Actually integration policies are all formulated in terms of inter-cultural policy, which seems a very good idea, since it involves all citizens.

It is clear that we are not dealing with an established method of working, but with work in progress in the case of Hospitalet. The welcome policy will be further established this year, and the 'New Citizenship Council' is expected to start functioning somewhere in 2009. The exception is the 'Mediation Service', which is a fully developed service that has become famous throughout Catalonia, and can serve as an example for other cities. The key to the success of the Mediation Service is that its staff members maintain a lot of personal contacts in migrant communities. They take negotiation as problem solving and have learned to understand the viewpoints of people with different cultural backgrounds, and basically operate from the starting point of the Spanish laws. By starting from legal requirements, normative discussions about which cultural habits are acceptable and which ones not are avoided. A general helpful and positive attitude towards immigrants also characterises the staff, and sometimes they make flexible adjustments to support immigrants and immigrant associations. A disadvantage of the current situation may be that the Mediation Service has such close ties with the police, that it may be considered a police organ by outsiders.

A point that needs to be stressed is that the current staff will never be able to take all the duties that are expected from them in the future. The office needs to expand, it needs to split up into departments, and employees from immigrant origin are urgently needed.

The Hospitalet situation is different from for instance Terrassa, since Muslims are not an issue. Dealing with problems of alcoholism in the street, single motherhood, domestic violence and noisy parties among the Latin American groups takes much more attention of both the authorities and the public. The increasing unemployment among immigrants because of the economic crisis deteriorates the situation. Muslim associations are also much less an issue than the enormous amount of (illegal) Pentecostal churches that are mushrooming in the old neighbourhood, accompanied with singing, drumming and large numbers of people around the premises.

Radicalisation of Muslims is not considered the responsibility of the local authorities, but something that the national police take care of. But as we remarked in 6.3, the close relations between the officers of the Mediation Service and the *Al Fath Mosque* have led to good cooperation between the mosque and the police when the mosque became aware of a possibly radical imam. Of course this was completely due to the attentive attitude of mosque authorities and they should get the merits for this initiative. But the extremely cooperative and positive attitude of the authorities and the lack of mistrust towards Muslims is not something that we see often in other European countries. Keeping close and positive relations with mosques and being aware that Muslims themselves are more scared of radicals than most autochthonous, makes it easier to cooperate on this.

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## 9 Interview partners

Please list the persons interviewed: name, organisation, function

1. Jesús Husillos Gutiérrez, responsible official for the 'Pla per la Integració de la Nova Ciutadania'. Received two times at one of the dependance offices in the Sant Josep neighbourhood of Hospitalet.
2. Oliver Postigo, one of the mediators of the team 'l'equip de mediació comunitària' and particularly responsible for the relations with the cultural and religious centres.
3. Three representatives of the mediation office.
4. Alfredo Cedeño, president of the 'Associació Balzar' (Ecuador) and president of one of the two federations of associations of Ecuadorians in Catalonia.
5. Visit to l'Associació Espiritu de Santa Cruz de la Sierra (Bolivia) and meeting with two board members, Jordi Ibanez Nielles and his wife.
6. Visit to 'l'Associació cultural árabe de educación y enseñanza' (Marroc), at the school building while lessons are taking place, meeting with mister Abdeslam, the president of the associations.
7. Visit to the largest mosque of Hospitalet, 'Mesquita Al Fath' (Islamic community of Hospitalet and meeting with three board members, Aziz Sabbani, Said and Mohammed.
8. Visit to the Nigerian New Covenant Church, we talked to two board members: Biodun Fadare and Ramon Olayinka, about the activities of the church.
9. Emili Martínez i Cañaveras, intendant of Catalan Police Mossos d'Esquadra in Hospitalet.
10. Francesc Coll, corporal of Catalan Police, Mossos d'Esquadra in Hospitalet.
11. Juan Camacho Rodriguez, coordinator Convivencia at the local police of the Municipality of Hospitalet.
12. Visit to the Xaloc (Opus Dei) School, talked to an ex-student of the Boys school.
13. Jordi Ibáñez Nielles, priest at the local Catholic Church, 'Espiritu de Santa Cruz de la Sierra', in the Florida district. The church has a social centre which provides a lot of social work for immigrants in the neighbourhood.
14. Adela Collel Blanch, CLIP contact person and official at the Diputació de Barcelona (provincial support for integration policies)
15. Ferran Adelantado, official at the Diputació de Barcelona, Area d 'Igualtat i Ciutadania, Servei de Politique de Diversitat i Ciutadania (Office of the province of Barcelona on integration policies), expert on Reception Acolida Immigrantes'(PRAIM)
16. Maria del Mar Griera, researcher at the Department of Sociology, Facultat de Polítiques i Sociologia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, she finished her PhD on interreligious dialogue and works on an research project on interreligious dialogue in local context commissioned by the Diputació de Barcelona.
17. Joan Manuel Cabezas, researcher (anthropologist) who made a 'religious map' of Hospitalet in 2007. He gave an overview of the situation of religious organisations in Hospitalet and took me to religious associations in the Colblanc neighbourhood, following his map.
18. Blanca Garces Mascarenas, researcher writes a PhD on the Spanish migration and integration policies, University of Amsterdam