



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

**Intercultural Policies and Intergroup Relations
in the city of Turku, Finland**



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Foreword

This report is part of the Eurofound project “Cities for Local Integration Policy” (CLIP), which started in 2006. Turku is one of the by now 30 European cities that cooperate in exchanging information on their Integration Policies. In a first round of city studies housing policies were the special topic (for Turku see Penninx 2007). In a second round Diversity Policy in Employment and Service Provision has been the comparative topic of research (for Turku see Penninx 2008). This third module studies Intercultural Policies and Intergroup Relations in the city of Turku.

The project aims at collecting and analysing innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, supporting the exchange of experience between cities, thereby encouraging a learning process within the network of cities and beyond.

The CLIP network involves also a cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes collect the data for the cities, analyse these and report on their findings: efms in Bamberg, IMES in Amsterdam, ISR in Vienna, FIERI in Turin, IIS in Wroclaw and CMPR in Swansea in this third module.

The Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam is responsible for this report on Turku. Together with the contact persons of the city of Turku, Mikko Lohikoski and Regina Ruohonen, I have collected the data for this report. During my field visit I interviewed many city officials and representatives of civil society in Turku: see the list at the end of this report. Several of them also commented on earlier drafts: see note 1. I want to thank all of them for their time and efforts.

Rinus Penninx

August 30, 2009.

Introduction to the study

As usual within CLIP, this study on intergroup relations and cultural and religious diversity has been prepared by a preliminary study (Heckmann 2009) that outlines what the scientific literature has to offer, defines the basic concepts to be used and proposes an approach for the study. On that basis a questionnaire has been developed for the cities through which the cities supply answers on their policies and deliver detailed data related to the field in general and the policies in particular.

In the case of Turku, however, the gap between the definition of this area of policy by the city and the approach (and questionnaire) proposed by the researchers turned out to be difficult to bridge. The city simply does not have explicit policies on influencing intergroup relations. Furthermore, when it comes to religious diversity in the city as a consequence of immigration, the picture in Turku is one in which – different from many other European cities – Islam is not a prominent factor. Also the radicalisation topic, the third main topic of the questionnaire, did not fit very well in the Turku context. The consequence has been that the city's answers to the questionnaire did not deliver the required information. Also the supplementary material supplied by the city, such as that related to civil society in general, immigrant organisations and specifically religious organisations was limited.

This initial finding obliged the researcher to take a different approach, both in terms of data collection and in terms of reporting. More than in the earlier reports, this report is based on a number of interviews with policymakers and policy practitioners in the city on the field practice of policies on the one hand. On the other hand, systematic data has been collected on relevant topics such as the practice of State-Church relations, civil society in the city, and immigrant and religious organisations by using existing research on these topics and doing a number of interviews with researchers and actors in these fields.

In order to report coherently on these topics the reporting scheme has been adapted. Information on Church-State relations in Finland and their practical consequences have been inserted in chapter 1, paragraph 1.3. The development of official policy in relation to intergroup relations and cultural activities is outlined in chapter 3. The actual practice of such policies and their relations with civil society is the topic in chapter 4. Chapter 5 is devoted to immigrant organisations of different sorts in Turku and their relation to the city. In chapter 6 we will look at interfaith relations in Turku. Chapter

7 gives a brief description of views of radicalisation in intergroup relations. Chapter 7 draws lines together in a conclusion.

1. Background information on the country¹

1.1. History of migration and composition of migrant populations

Finland used to be an emigration country from the 17th century on (Tanner 2004). Between 1860 and 1920 circa 300,000 Finns emigrated to the USA and Canada (Martikainen, 2004, 193). After WWII emigration resumed (Heikkilä & Peltonen 2002). Many Finns left the country, particularly to Sweden in the 1960 and 1970s as workers: some 500,000 of which a significant number have stayed (Martikainen 2004, 118)². From the beginning of the 1980s on, Finland has received more immigrants than emigrants left the country. The percentage of immigrants in the total population was still low in the mid-1980s: only one percent. Since then the number of resident immigrants has grown significantly. In 2008, Finland had the highest immigration figure (29,100) and the highest net immigration (15,450) since its independence. As of January 1, 2009, there were 218,626 residents of Finland or 4,1 percent of the total population of Finland that had been born outside Finland³). In the European context Finland is a relatively recent immigration country.

A significant part of the present cultural, religious and language diversity of Finland has its roots in Finnish history. Its long common history with Sweden until 1809 resulted in the fact that Finland still has a significant Swedish speaking minority and two official national languages: Finnish and Swedish.

After 1809 during the Russian period (when the Grand Duchy of Finland was part of the Russian empire till 1917) also “small Jewish, Catholic and Tatar Muslim communities were founded (..) Jews were mostly retired soldiers, Tatar Muslims tradesmen and Catholics of diverse origin” (Martikainen 2004, 117). The rulers and soldiers of the Russian empire also brought the Russian Orthodox Church into a predominantly Lutheran Finland.

The presence of the Russian Orthodox Church was reinforced later by the immigration of Karelians: Karelia was incorporated into the Grand Duchy of Finland in

¹ I thank Marjolein van Dijk, Hasan Habib, Anja van Heelsum, Mikko Lohikoski, Anna Ludwinek, Tuomas Martikainen, Jarkko Rasinkangas and Regina Ruohonen for their comments on the draft version. Responsibility for the text remains with the author.

² The Government Report (2002, 8) estimates the number of ‘overseas Finns’ at 1,3 million at the turn of the century.

³ This includes Finnish citizens born abroad: 90,516. Including their descendants this population amounts to some 120,000 in 2007. Source: <http://pxweb2.stat.fi>: The Population of Finland. Martikainen estimates the additional category of ‘temporary foreign workers’ with permits shorter than 12 months at 40,000 (personal correspondence, January 2008).

1811. Most Karelians were Finnish speaking. After the Second World War, some 450.000 Karelians had to be resettled in new areas, as Finland lost its most eastern part to the Soviet Union. Among the Karelians were circa 50.000 Russian Orthodox Church members who resettled around Finland (Martikainen 2004, 103-106).

A comparable specific immigration to Finland is that of the Ingrians, the original inhabitants of 'Ingermanland', a region along the southern and eastern shore of the Gulf of Finland, near St. Petersburg (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ingria>). The predominantly Finnish speaking population of this region underwent a strong russification in the late 1920 and 1930s. Many Ingrians were deported to Siberia, the Ural and the Caspian Sea before, during and after WW II. In 1990 the Ingrians were granted the right of 'return' to Finland, which has led to a migration movement of some 25.000 Ingrians from the former Soviet Union as of 2003, with some 22,000 more lining up in Russia and Estonia for entry interviews (Tanner 2004, 3); a movement comparable to the Aussiedler in the FRG (Gulijeva 2003). The Finnishness of many returnees (in terms of identity and knowledge of the Finnish language) is questioned recently⁴.

In the recent immigration movement the return migrants from the former Soviet Union are thus a significant part of the 'supply driven' immigration. Another significant part of such immigration are refugees and asylum seekers. Since 1990 Finland has received Somalis⁵, thousands of Kurds from the Middle East and thousands of refugees fleeing the Balkan conflicts. There are two ways for admission to Finland. The first is that of the refugee quota: these quota vary between 500 and 750 annually. The government typically fills the quota through selecting vulnerable refugees from the region's refugee camps. Chileans benefited from such quota in the 1970s, Vietnamese in the 1980s and people from the Middle East's most conflict torn areas, and Bosnia and Albania in the 1990s.

The second way is through an asylum application. In the period 1990-1999 18,292 applications were received and 6,574 of them were granted some form of residence permit. In the period 2000-2005 these number were 18,920 and 3,762 respectively (www.uvi.fi). The longer term tendency has thus been an increase in applications (towards some 3,000 annually) and a decrease in 'favourable decisions' (towards some 600 annually). The number of applications in recent years varies: 1829 in 2006, 1276 in

⁴ According to some observers the remigration policies of Ingrians has created a vital Russian minority (correspondence with researcher Annika Forsander, August 2007).

⁵ As of January 1, 2007 there were 5,261 persons born in Somalia residing in Finland (www.stat.fi).

2007 and 3418 in 2008 (www.migri.fi)⁶. Countries of origin of applicants are diverse, but Finland received many from the Caucasus area of the former Soviet Union, the Horn of Africa and recently Kosovar Albanians and Roma from Eastern Europe.

Thirdly, immigration for family reasons (family reunion and new marriages) has gained significance in the course of time, nowadays probably being the major entrance title, between 2,000 and 3,000 annually (Government Report 2002, 7). There is, however, no qualitative information aside from the official categories reported (Clarke 2006, 139).

According to Tanner, Finland admitted in recent years also “tens of thousands of labor migrants who have first secured job contracts with Finnish employers⁷. (..) The newest Aliens Law of 2004 maintains the authority of offices of the Ministry of Labor over case-by-case evaluations of candidates’ credentials, and the Ministry’s recommendations depend on the labor market’s needs. The Directorate of Immigration (under the Ministry of the Interior) then makes the ultimate decision.” (..) “Registered students are now subject to a lighter process, and basically need only a temporary residence permit” (Tanner 2004, 3).

From interviews with practitioners and city employees in Helsinki and Turku it transpires that unregistered labour ‘temporary labour’ migration has increased significantly during recent years. Certain sectors, like construction, ship building but also some service sector parts, attract temporary workers – either by sub-contracting to foreign firms or directly – from the Baltic states, particularly Estonia. This is strongly the case for the Helsinki region that is only at a two hours distance by ferry from Tallinn. This labour migration is greatly helped by the EU-entrance of the Baltic states since 2004 and the free circulation of labour that it implied.⁸

The general picture that arises from the data can be summarised as follows:

- Immigration has started primarily as supply driven (such as returnees from Sweden and the former Soviet Union, family related migration, refugees and asylum seekers) but seems to have gained a growing demand driven dimension (expressed in increasing labour migrants and international students); the level of

⁶ In interviews with police officers in Turku on February 12, 2009 it was reported that the number of asylum applications had grown ‘significantly’. Capacities of reception centres were reported to be insufficient and applicants had to be housed elsewhere. It was seen as a new turn in developments in relation to asylum in Finland.

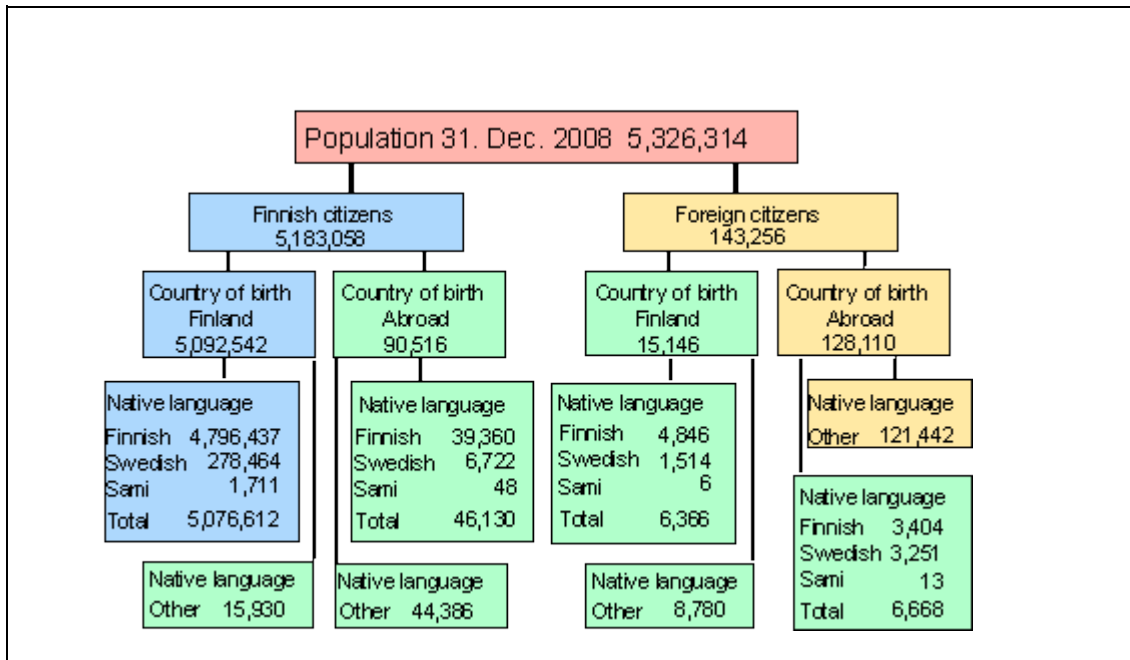
⁷ It is observed that this is a somewhat unqualified statement: most of them are seasonal workers. In recent years, for example, some 15,000 Estonian construction workers come to Finland for the building season. Few of them become permanent settlers (Personal communication of Annika Forsander, August 2007).

⁸ Personal communication with Annika Forsander, coordinator of migrant integration policies of the City of Helsinki in February 2009.

immigration and net immigration in 2008 was the highest since Finnish independence.

- As a consequence of the peculiar history of migration, statistics on the immigrant stock are expressed in varying statistical terms, each having their advantages and disadvantages. Such figures vary significantly: see graph below:

Graph 1. Country of birth, citizenship and mother tongue of the population 31.12.2008



Source: Population Structure 2008. Statistics Finland

If defined by nationality of residents, for example, 143,256 aliens (foreign citizens) were living in Finland on January 1st, 2009: 2,7 %⁹. This is, however, less and less an indicator of immigration: between 1000 and 2000 aliens used to naturalise annually, but that number increased significantly recently: to 4824 in 2007 and 6682 in 2008 (<http://pxweb2.stat.fi>).

If defined as residents with 'immigrant background' - defined as born outside Finland – the number amounted to 218,626 on that same date: 4,1 %. This category, however, also includes children of Finnish emigrants who have been born abroad.

⁹ The largest groups are Russians, Estonians, Swedes, Somalis, Serbians, Chinese and Iraqis.

If we look at the first language of residents¹⁰, the number of non-Finnish speakers (as home language) is 482,267 (9.1 %), of which 289,951 speak Swedish (the second national language) and 192,316 another home language: 3,6 %.¹¹

The new immigration tends to settle in the major cities of Finland, particularly in the Helsinki Region that attracts some 60 percent of all immigrants. Turku is the second city in terms of receiving immigrants.

- Apart from immigrants discussed above, special policies relate to old minority groups, particularly the aboriginal Sámi in Lapland estimated at 6500 persons, and the Finnish Roma stemming from 16th century immigration, estimated at some 10,000. In some respects special provisions for example in language, are made for these groups (Finnish League 2003, 15).

1.2 National integration policy

Although there have been political discussions in Finland about the necessity of having an explicit Immigration Law, among others to regulate the recruitment of workers from abroad (Heikkilä & Peltonen 2002), no such act exists (yet). Immigration matters are primarily handled by two ministries having different tasks¹². The process of admission of labour migrants is prepared by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and implemented administratively by the Directorate of Immigration of the Ministry of the Interior. In matters of asylum it is the Ministry of the Interior that determines policies and takes decisions on applications, while the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs is responsible for asylum reception and post-asylum integration policies. As for refugee quota the same division of tasks applies, be it that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has a significant say in this (Tanner 2004). This division of tasks does not always work smoothly. While the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs primarily looks at labour market interests, reception and integration, the interests of Ministry of the Interior are more dominated by security issues.

¹⁰ Statistics on first language include the Swedish speaking minority in Finland.

¹¹ This last figure includes a few thousand Sami-speakers.

¹² During national elections early in 2007 right wing parties have won and formed a new coalition. The new cabinet appointed a special Minister for Immigration and European Affairs within the Ministry of Interior Affairs, Astrid Thors.

Since the beginning of 2008, the Ministry of the Interior has been made responsible for Finland's migration policy and its administration, and for coordinating integration programmes. Within the Ministry, the Finnish Immigration Service handles matters of entry, residence, refugee status and citizenship. The basic document underlying the policy is the 'Government Migration Policy Programme' (2006) that covers both immigration and integration, the latter one in liberal terms using the concept of multiculturalism. In 2008, the National Advisory Board on Ethnic Relations (ETNO) was installed by the Government to "promote good ethnic relations and ethnic equality" and to "provide expert assistance in the development of immigration policy". The (maximum 29) members are government appointed and represent Employment and Economic Development Centres, State Provincial Offices and the most important municipalities, NGOs, parties in business and industry, immigrants and ethnic minorities (www.intermin.fi).

Since May 1st, 1999 Finland has an explicit Integration Act (493/1999): in full 'Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers'. The objective is to promote the integration, equality and freedom of choice of immigrants through measures which help them to acquire the essential knowledge and skills they need to function in society and to participate in work life, and to ensure the essential livelihood and welfare of asylum seekers by arranging their reception. The object of the law is also that at the same time immigrants could preserve their native language and their ethnic and cultural features (see: Heikkilä & Peltonen 2002, 7).

The act defines the responsibilities of different actors in integration work, immigrants' responsibilities in participating, and gives authorities means to support integration. Key element is that those immigrants (registered at a municipality and less than 3 years in Finland) who are not gainfully employed and receiving social benefits have the right to an 'individual integration plan'. Such a plan may include a basic course in Finnish language, occupational and craft courses and other actions or educative activities that help to integrate them into Finnish society. Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres and local social offices make these plans and monitor them. It is financed by a lump sum of the Ministry. Municipalities are furthermore requested by law to develop a local integration policy. Problems of implementation have been signalled: waiting lists for language courses and insufficient level differentiation of courses, insufficient financial resources and the limitation of facilities to three years.

The Finnish Integration Act focuses thus on recent immigrants who are dependent on welfare benefits. In practice, refugees, accepted asylum seekers and Ingrian returnees are the main target groups. A trajectory to work and financial independence of the state – through several kinds of courses and training – is key in the approach. The Act is much less explicit in other domains like housing, health and culture (Government Report 2002, 43). Local integration programmes, however, involve both labour market policy and the provision of other services. In the minds of policymakers at the local level, e.g. in Turku, national integration policy is seen as aiming primarily for adaptation of immigrants, while at the local level one is more open-minded.

1.3. State-Church relations and their consequences for immigrants¹³

The Finnish system recognizes (since the 1922 Law) two National Churches, namely the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church of Finland. The preferential status of the National Church has quite substantial implications both for (believers of) other churches and congregations, but also for State-Church relations itself.

Two features of this privileged status stand out for their consequences for other churches and particularly immigrant churches and congregations. The first is that the National Churches have the right to collect Church tax for inhabitants of Finland that are registered as members¹⁴. Inhabitants that are registered as members of one of the National Churches pay a Church tax, the size of which is decided by the parishes. The average church tax percent was 1,32 percent of taxable income in 2005 (www.evl.fi).¹⁵

The comparatively high percentage of membership of the National Churches and particularly the Lutheran Church relates to a second feature: these churches are mandated by the State to handle the registration of their individual members for the State. This tradition dates back to times, when church registrations were the only existing ones. In practice it means that most inhabitants go to the Church Offices of the Lutheran or Orthodox Church to register themselves and their newborn children. Marriages done by

¹³ This paragraph is strongly based on Dassetto *et al.* 2007 and Martikainen 2004, 2007, 2008.

¹⁴ At the end of the year 2006 a total of 4,384,442 people residing in Finland were members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (82.4 % of the population, a year earlier it was 83.1 %). The church tax (ecclesiastical tax) rate varies between 1 and 2¼ percent depending on the parish. The total revenue amounted to 872 million euros (in 2006), of which 763 million was paid by parishioners and 109 million was assigned by the state to the Lutheran church from corporate revenues. The biggest expense for congregations is child and youth work: 252 million Euros in 2005 (Source: www.evl.fi).

¹⁵ Tuomas Martikainen told me in a personal conversation that “recently a separate budget was made for ‘other recognised religious organisations’” than the two national churches. However, I could not find specifics of this new development.

the clergy are recognised by the State. Also official documents like birth certificates can be applied for at these offices¹⁶. The alternative for inhabitants that do not want to register at the Church offices is to register through the magistrate office.¹⁷

These two particular features do have consequences: on the one hand the Lutheran Church is through its tax-income a powerful actor in civil society (we have seen in the first report on housing that the Lutheran Church owns a significant part of rent houses in Turku: Penninx 2007). On the other hand it also has a strong position in religion-related issues that also have a public function. Nearly all graveyards, for example, are owned and managed by the Lutheran Church, which makes that church a relevant partner for new religious groups that want to have their own provisions in such fields.¹⁸

For other religious communities than the National Churches, there are two regimes: the first is to register as “Religious Associations” under the Freedom of Religions Act (1922, 2003). In this case associations are required to have a registration of their members and they can apply for certain rights, such as to perform legally sanctioned marriage and to teach its religion within the official school curriculum (Martikainen 2008). The first Islamic congregation (Finlandiya Islam Cemaati) was founded by the Tatar community in 1925, thereby giving Islam an official status in the country (Dassetto *et al.* 2007: 107).

The second is to register under the Associations Act (1989). This is easier, but gives fewer rights. Of course, organisations may choose not to register at all, but in order to handle collective finances, to rent a meeting space as well as in negotiations with local

¹⁶ The website of the Lutheran Church (www.evl.fi) formulates this as follows: “Membership records have been meticulously kept in the parishes for many generations, since the church has traditionally taken care of the official census registry for its members. Now this task is performed by the state civil registry office, but the church acts as an administrative body, recording and having access to national census registration information.”

¹⁷ The website of the national Population Register Centre explains the recent changes as follows: “Until the end of 1970, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church compiled data on their own members. Between 1919 and 1970 a Civil Register was kept on persons who did not belong to any church. The Population Register Centre, tasked with directing and supervising population registration as well as responsibility for the central register of population (the present Population Information System), was set up in 1969. The computer-based register was introduced in 1971.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Orthodox Church managed population registration in cooperation with the local register offices until 1999 when their task became to keep a register of their members, while maintenance of the Population Information System remained with the local register offices.” (www.vaestorekisterikeskus.fi).

¹⁸ “There are Tatar Islamic cemeteries in Helsinki, Turku and Tampere. According to the 2002 Cemeteries Act, Evangelical Lutheran parishes and parish federations are ultimately responsible for the maintenance of public cemeteries. This also applies to the maintenance of non-religious burial areas which are intended as a religiously neutral option for those who, for religious or ideological reasons, do not wish to be buried in an Evangelical Lutheran cemetery. Some Lutheran parishes have separated a special burial ground for Muslim communities” (Dassetto *et al.* 2007: 107-108; see also Maréchal *et al.* 2003: 81).

and national authorities some form of formal organization is required. According to Martikainen, Muslim organizations in Finland follow a pattern of organisation that is very similar to that of the Protestant Free Churches. Their number of registered organizations is given in table 1.

Table 1: Registered Muslim associations and Islamic religious community organisations from 1925 to June 2007 (AssociationsNet 2007).

	1925- 1989	1990- 1994	1995- 1999	2000- 2004	2005- 2007	Total
Registered (Muslim) associations	1	7	14	15	12	49
Registered (Islamic) religious community organisations	3	2	11	4	5	25
Total	4	9	25	19	17	74

Source: Martikainen 2008.

Apart from these structural aspects of Church-State relations, some observations can be made about actual policies of the Finnish state towards religious organisations and Islam especially that are important for a comparative European analysis. Martikainen's (2007) analysis of 'the governance of Islam in Finland' is the most comprehensive source for this.

The first observation is that Islam as a religion is not new in Finnish society. It was introduced by the Tatar Muslims in Finland in the late nineteenth century. The small Tatar group has promoted the institutionalisation of Islam and its religious practices in Finland early and accommodated Muslims in a way that did not lead to major problems or hostility from the surrounding society (2007, 114). The new immigration of Muslims during the last three decades in Finland could profit from that institutionalisation (without the Tatar Muslims themselves playing a significant direct role for the newcomers). As part of the total population of Finland and even as part of the immigrant population, Muslims are still a small category, estimated at 40.000 in Finland by 2006. The combination of this particular history and the relative small size of the group seems to have contributed to the fact that international events such as 9/11 and the attacks in Madrid and London have had less of a negative influence on the position of Muslims in Finland and attitudes to and relations with them than elsewhere (which does not prevent that "even Islam as a religion is considered with more suspicion than most other religions" (Martikainen 2007, 115, citing Kääriäinen et al. 2005, 79)).

The second observation is that state policies towards religions seem to be based on the recognition of the importance of civil society, including religious organisations for society in general and social cohesion in particular. "Voluntary associations have been the backbone of Finnish civil society for over a century, and they are commonly understood as an important element of representative democracy". In the aftermath of

increased international migration, immigrants have organised themselves in at least 700 associations during the last 15 years, including many religious ones (Martikainen 2007, 117). While Christians have mainly been able to join existing congregations in the Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and other Protestant Churches, the Muslims have not had that opportunity. Thus a large number of Muslim organisations have been founded during the last decade. (..) It is also evident that the local authorities have been active in supporting much of this new organisational development; in other words, the authorities have not been mere bystanders but have participated actively in the process". Funding and help in finding premises for activities is common (Martikainen 2007, 117-119).

So national level authorities follow a strategy of recognition and dialogue, as witnessed by a statement of the State Secretary Risto Volanen (2008): "Good dialogue is essential at all levels [of society]. It is good that the Muslim population has its representatives. [...] Then they can bring forth their views in a representative way." (Martikainen 2007: 116). Such a statement is backed up by acts: the state has clearly promoted the formation of the Islamic Council of Finland (in 2006) and after its establishment the Prime Minister's Office arranged the financing of this Council, because "the state needed a body that was sufficiently representative so that general questions regarding Muslim integration could be jointly discussed and agreed upon." (Martikainen 2007: 122).

2. Background information on the city and its integration policy

2.1. Structural data of the city

Turku is an old city, going back as far as the 13th century. Situated in the South-West of the present Finland, at the shore of the Baltic Sea where the river Aura (Aurajoki) goes inland, it developed as a trade town (Nordstat 1999). It was the capital of the province of Finland, i.e. the residence of the Governor, under the Swedish rule until 1809 under the Swedish name of Åbo. After Russia annexed Finland in 1809 Tsar Alexander moved the capital of the new 'Grand Duchy' of Finland to Helsinki in 1812. Traces of the Swedish and Russian reign are still to be found in the city.

Industrialisation in Turku began in the 18th century during the Swedish rule, particularly the ship building industry and during the 19th century, many new industries

sprung up in the city, such as the brewing industry. The rapid industrialisation resulted in the first significant relocations from rural areas to Turku. Around 1900 Turku had about 42,000 inhabitants.

The city's profile has changed significantly in recent decades. Its population has grown to 175,286 inhabitants as of January 1st, 2008. Spatially, the city has expanded by building residential areas around the old city, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s. Economically there was also a profile shift: although the harbour and ship building are still important economic activities, there has been a major shift from manufacturing (a decrease from more than 25,000 work places in 1987 to less than 15,000 in 2004) to services (an increase from 26,000 in 1987 to 34,000 in 2004). Turku has specifically become an internationally renowned centre for bio-technical research and business. Most of the biotechnology companies in Finland are located in the Turku region.

Turku is also the centre of a Finnish Maritime Cluster, at the heart of which are the Aker shipyards¹⁹ in Turku, where the biggest luxury cruise ships in the world are built. Aker Yards and its subcontractors in and around Turku presently employ thousands of foreigners. Their exact number is not known: many of them come from new EU member countries on work contracts for shorter periods with foreign subcontractors. In these cases they are not registered officially in Turku.

Furthermore, Turku is an important university city: its universities (University of Turku, the Turku University of Applied Sciences, Åbo Akademi University and the Turku School of Economics) together have some 35,000 students and attract also significant numbers of foreign students. The annual average unemployment figure for Turku for 2007 was at a level of 9.4 percent²⁰, i.e. on the decrease and the economic labour market prospects were deemed positive in the beginning of 2008 (Turku Annual Report 2007, 6). However, the global financial crisis of 2008 and the expected economic recession, however, have made such expectations uncertain.

The present physical structure of the inner city is strongly determined by the great city fire of 1827 that destroyed the predominantly wooden buildings of the old city almost completely. The city was rebuilt according to a grid pattern of rectangular blocs in which the relatively broad streets should prevent raging fires. The rebuilt wooden houses have been replaced nowadays - within the grid - by buildings and blocs of stone and concrete.

¹⁹ The Aker shipyards are recently taken over and renamed as 'XTC Europe AS'.

²⁰ The percentage for native Turku residents was 8 %, while that for immigrants amounted to 26 % (City of Turku 2008).

This 'old town' is the commercial centre of Turku and houses a mixed population of all classes, including many students. The wealthiest residents are to be found in the city centre and on the islands to the south where many new high-quality residential areas are located. The less well-off population lives in the areas east and west of the city grid. The poorest areas are located close to the municipal borders, some 5-7 kilometres from the centre. The western side of the city has a large shipyard. The Turku harbour (cargo and passenger ferry traffic) is located adjacent to the centre (southwest). To the north of the old town centre, there are vast areas of fields and forest. Turku Airport is located north of the city.

The City of Turku is part of several larger units in Finland. First of all, the city is the centre of the Turku Region, a strip of urban areas running parallel to the coastline. The city of Turku is located vertically in the middle of this strip. The length of the city area from north-south is approximately 40 kilometres, while the widest part of the city (east-west) measures only 10 kilometres. The seven neighbouring municipalities of the Turku Region are small (2,000 - 24,000 residents). They are very dependent on the jobs and services available in the city of Turku.

The percentage of immigrants in neighbouring municipalities is much lower than in Turku, although these neighbouring municipalities have grown more in recent decades than Turku itself.

The next level is that of the County in which 28 municipalities of the South-West region of Finland are brought together. The Regional Council of the County is momentarily relevant, because it makes development plans, including immigration planning for the region. The city is a prominent partner in the latter respect, since it houses 68 % of all immigrants in the region.

Graph 2: foreign language speaking population



2.2. *History of municipal migration and composition of migrant populations*

The number of immigrants in Turku was not significant until the early 1990s, but increased afterwards. The table below indicates the numbers of immigrants for which the Immigrants' Office of the city had direct responsibility: refugees and Ingrian returnees. Within the refugee population of Turku Iraqis and Kosovar Albanians are somewhat over represented (compared to the national picture), while there are less African refugees.

Not all of the 6,118 refugees and returnees in table 2 have stayed in Turku. On the other hand there are other categories of newcomers in Turku, such as foreign workers (in the shipyards and recently also in the booming construction industry), highly skilled workers (in the bio-technical industry for example) and foreign students. No exact figures for these categories are available, but several informants report that their numbers have been growing recently. A figure of some 1800 foreign workers employed in some major industrial enterprises is mentioned, but such a figure excludes the seasonal construction workers, mostly from Estonia. Nevertheless, the dominant picture is that a majority of the immigrant population in Turku has some refugees/returnee background. It is also that part of the immigrant population that clearly dominates the policy field of integration and its facilities in Turku.

Table 2. Refugees and Ingrian Returnees received by the Immigrants' Office in Turku: 1987-2006.

	Refugees	Family	Others	Ingrians	Total
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	(direct)	Reunion	(indirect)		
1987	50				50
1988	64				64
1989	46				46
1990	133	22			155
1991	104	4			108
1992	169	23	16		208
1993	114	38	37		189
1994	73	41	24	127	265
1995	85	36	70	129	320
1996	80	29	39	143	291
1997	103	28	116	175	422
1998 ²¹	127	40	272	149	594
1999	115	17	95	82	309
2000	61	13	163	122	359
2001	134	45	185	86	533
2002	81	49	185	63	378
2003	25	22	230	38	315
2004	56	18	121	34	229
2005	36	48	199	40	323
2006	40	47	220	38	345
2007	46	90	97	51	311
2008	55	60	107	46	294
Total	1797	670	2132	1323	6118

Data provided by the City of Turku.

As stipulated by the Integration Act the municipality has special responsibilities for admitted refugees and Ingrians. Such migrants arrive by decision of the Directorate of Immigration. The Immigrants' Office of the city makes personal 'integration plans' in cooperation with the local labour office (the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centre). The Ministry of Labour (the Regional Employment and Economic Development Centres) pays the city a lump sum for the reception services. The immigrant work (work, education, housing, health, etc.) within in Turku is coordinated by the immigration co-ordinator. The coordinator has been relocated recently from the Immigrants' Office of the Social Welfare Office that implements the reception services for the immigrants, to the central department of Strategy and Communication (which is one of the four central departments that report directly to the Mayor).

As in the case of Finland as a whole, the immigrant population can statistically be described in several ways. If we take the criterion of nationality 4.4 % of the Turku population is 'alien' as of January 1st, 2008.

²¹ As of 1998 the total also includes births to immigrants in these categories.

Table 3:

Population in Turku 31.12.2007	by Nationality
Total	175.286
Finnish	167.500
Russian	1.121
Estonian	779
Iran	581
Iraq	483
Serbia-Montenegro	420
Total Non-Finnish	7.786
Total Non-Finnish: percentage	4,4 %

Data provided by the City of Turku.

When using 'Immigrant Background' (based on country of birth outside Finland) the percentage rises to 6.7 %. This means that Turku as a city has twice as much immigrants as the national average. (Turku has the second largest proportion of immigrants in Finnish cities, after the Helsinki Metropolitan area).

Table 4:

Population in Turku 31.12.2007	by Language
Total	175.286
Finnish	154.984
Swedish	9137
Russian	2368
Arabic	1226
Kurdish	989
Albanian	957
Estonian	691
Somali	549
Vietnamese	477
English	453
Total Non-Finnish-non-Swedish	11.161
As percentage	6.4 %

Data provided by the City of Turku.

If the criterion of first or home language is used, 6.4 % of all inhabitants of Turku have another language than Finnish or Swedish as their mother-tongue. Swedish home language speakers comprise 5.2 % in Turku (Data from the Turku Annual Report 2007, 3).

When it comes to religion – as registered according to the Finnish rules described in par. 1.3. - the strong dominance of the Lutheran National Church transpires from table 5: nearly four out of five inhabitants of Turku is registered as Lutheran. Nearly one in five did register as not being a member of any religious community. A small percentage of 2.3 % of all inhabitants of Turku have registered as member of one of many small religious congregations. Only 127 are registered as members of a Muslim congregation. The data are as per 1-1-2005²² and may have changed somewhat recently as a consequence of new efforts of Muslim associations to organise the registration of their members (see later).

²² Asked for more recent data the statistical office of Turku replied: “We do not collect figures on religion regularly; I am afraid that the data given is the freshest we have”.

Table 5: The population in Turku by religion as per January 1st, 2005

	Abs.	%
Other	47	0,03
Other Lutheran churches	44	0,03
Methodist churches	79	0,05
Jewish congregations	86	0,05
Islamic congregations	127	0,07
Baptist congregations	129	0,07
Church of J. Chr. of Latter-day Saints	214	0,12
Adventist churches	224	0,13
Free Church in Finland	469	0,27
Roman catholic church in Finland	657	0,38
Jehovah's Witnesses	737	0,42
Greek Orthodox Church in Finland	1172	0,67
Others total	3985	2,28
Persons not members of any religious community	33212	19,00
Lutheran National Church	137627	78,72
Total	174824	

2.3 Municipal migration and integration history and policy development

Although Turku received refugees from 1987 on and Ingrians since 1994 (see table 2), the first policy document, the City of Turku immigrant integration programme, was approved by the City Council only on 19 November 2001. Since this programme (required by the national Integration Act) did not include concrete measures, the council nominated four working groups on a) Immigrant children and youth; b) Training and employment; c) Collecting information, and d) Housing. The reports, delivered in 2003, included measures that had to be implemented by the various departments of the city that carried responsibility for that particular topic²³.

The various departments of the city have reported annually to the City Council on the development of the measures proposed by the four working groups in 2003. The immigrant integration programme of the city was evaluated by the City Council on January 12, 2007, as part of an evaluative exercise that is planned every five years. The evaluation has led to a new policy document for the coming period: the "City of Turku Immigrant Integration Programme 2007-2011, dated August 15, 2008 (City of Turku

²³ In the first CLIP-report on Turku the housing policy of the city has been described and analysed: see Penninx 2007.

2008). The programme includes the integration services for various immigrants groups and sections of them (children, youngsters, working age immigrants, women and elderly immigrants) and the cooperation with the various authorities and immigrant associations.

More specifically four key themes or aspects are formulated for integration policy in the period till 2011:

- key and critical age groups in terms of integration: young children and youngsters particularly;
- critical components of services and solving the problems encountered in them;
- development of initial immigrant integration procedures;
- influencing the residential concentrations of immigrants.

The integration programme outlined the following activities – mentioning what department was responsible for its implementation – as key activities:

1. Development of Finnish language instruction and other instructions: by the School Service Centre;
2. Supporting the integration of disenfranchised youths through vocational instruction;
3. Initial integration, by the Social Services Department;
4. Supporting the integration of small children by the Municipal Health Department and counselling clinics;
5. Co-operation with immigrant organisations by the Turku City Office (where the coordination of integration policies was relocated);
6. Influencing the residential concentrations of immigrants by the Deputy Mayor of Environmental Affairs

Integration is seen as part of normal administrative committee service operations. It requires co-operation between administrative committees and other actors, clearly defined appointments of responsible parties and, above all, municipal-level co-ordination. The relocation of the coordination function in the department of Strategy and Communication within the City Office, directly under the Mayor should reinforce cooperation and coordination. Furthermore, the City Board decided to institute centralised municipal integration funding (in 2007 EUR 160,000) within the central administration. A budget for its allocation is made every year and approved by the City Board. Integration funding is allocated to initial integration procedures (Finnish instruction, guidance) for immigrants in the integration phase.

The City Council also decided to use an integration index in order to monitor the

successfulness of the integration measures. This index includes three main standards of measurement: the secondary education level of the immigrant youngsters, the (un)employment of immigrants and their level of income.

Finally, the policy document expressed explicitly that immigrant and multicultural organisations will be given a more central role in policies.

On the regional level, the regional immigration plan of Southwest Finland, ”Monikulttuurinen Varsinais-Suomi”, was approved in autumn 2007. The Employment and Economic Development Centre for Southwest Finland, the Regional Council of Southwest Finland, the Southwest Finland Centre of Expertise on Social Welfare, Finland Future Research Centre of Turku School of Economics, the cities of Turku and Salo and other stakeholders have participated in the preparation of the plan. The objective is to promote work-related immigration, to strengthen the participation of the immigrants and to develop services needed by the immigrants.

2.4 Responsibility: elected representatives and officials

Within the city of Turku the institutional setting of the administration has been reformed over the past 15 years. The old administration was based on strong public power, whereas the new administration is built on the idea of a consolidated municipality according to the market economy ideal. The new system is quite complicated, the basic structure being as follows.

The political authority rests with the City Council, consisting of 67 members that are elected every four years²⁴. In the most recent elections one member of (Somali) immigrant background was chosen as councillor (for the Green Party)²⁵.

The Council meets every three weeks. The City Council in its turn elects from its members – after local elections – the City Executive Board, consisting of 13 members and representing all major parties. This Board meets every week; only the chairperson is working full time on this job; other members work part time. The City Executive Board has eleven specific Boards that steer the work of specific fields: Board of Health,

²⁴ In the present Council nine political parties are represented. The Coalition Party is the largest (20 seats), followed by the Social-Democrats (15), the Green Party (11) and the left Union (10). The True Finn Party won 2 seats in the last elections, but one of the elected councillors left the party. The Blue and Whites of Finnish People has one seat in the Council (www.turku.fi).

²⁵ Several other parties had candidates with immigrant background on their lists, but only one actually made it. Some others, however, do participate in committees for city policies.

Municipal Social Welfare Board, Educational Board, etc. The most important person in the executive part of the organisation is the mayor: he/she is nominated by the City Council, not from its members, and for a period of time that is longer than four years²⁶. The mayor is supposed to be and act above parties. He heads the 'City Office' in which some 300 officials work under the generic headings of 1) Administration, 2) Finances, 3) Human Resources, and 4) Strategy and Communication. The mayor prepares all plans and presents them to the Executive Board.

One step further down to execution of policies are three major sectors, each headed by a deputy mayor (who are full time, professional executives), also nominated by the City Council, not from the City Council itself. Each of them is responsible for a sector that comprises several departments:

- 1) the Sector for Services (including Health, Social Welfare, Cultural Affairs, Sports, and Youth Affairs);
- 2) the Sector for Competences and Business Development (including Education, Vocational Education and the Turku University of Applied Sciences);
- 3) the Sector for Environmental Affairs (including Real Estate, Technical Services, Environmental Protection and City Planning, Harbour and Waterworks).

Each of the deputy mayors has a number of 'Boards' for specific fields. The administrative units operate to a great extent independently (accountability). This has intensified an inward-orientation. This had consequences for integration policies. These policies were until recently coordinated by the Immigrants' Office, located within the Department for Services within the Social Welfare section. That implied, as we have seen in the earlier reports on housing and on diversity, a long administrative route towards other relevant departments and their relevant sections. In 2008, in connection with the new Integration Programme till 2011, the City Executive Board decided that immigrant affairs and policy coordination would be placed under the City Office, led by the Mayor, under Strategy and Communication.

3. The city's approach to intergroup relations and cultural and religious diversity

²⁶ The present mayor of Turku, Mikko Pukkinen, is in office since January 1st, 2006, nominated for a period of seven years. He is not from Turku, but has substantial political experience in the Coalition Party.

The Integration Act (493/1999) of 1999 and the national policy of reception of immigrants that follows the Act sets the most important institutional given for policy development in Turku: the requirement to receive (specific categories of) new immigrants, with a budget, and an obligation to develop an integration programme (see par. 1.2.). That policy, however, is in its conception and implementation rather a reception policy for vulnerable immigrants to ease their first entrance into society than a comprehensive, long term integration policy. The main aim is to guarantee access to the welfare state and to its main institutional domains: housing, education, labour and health.

Although city policies of Turku are broader in practice and show a higher sensitivity for cultural, ethnic and religious factors in the integration process than national policies do, the basics of national policies are also the ones that structure local policies in Turku. The specific topic of intergroup relations has not been explicit on the agenda in any of the four working groups²⁷ that have worked on the development of policy in Turku, or in the recent documents on integration policy in Turku²⁸. Nor is there an explicit vision on the role of civil society in a framework of intercultural policies (although there is some attention for the (inter-)cultural factor in the practice of policies in the domains of education (particular facilities for home languages) and health. When it comes to religion (in whatever form) policy documents have been silent. It is obviously not seen as a relevant policy concern.

What has been brought up much more explicit in the recent documents is the question of the city's relations with immigrant organizations. The following quotation from (the summary of) the City of Turku Immigrant Integration Programme 2007-2011 of August 2008 is a key statement:

“Immigrant and multicultural organisations play their own role in the familiarisation of Finnish society and culture, maintaining mother tongues and cultural traditions and in advisory services. There are numerous immigrant organisations operating in Turku, some 20-30 of which are active. In 2006 SONDIP - the Union of Multicultural Associations in South-West Finland was formed in Turku. SONDIP supports member organisations, promotes co-operation between organisations and authorities, and promotes multiculturalism and equality.” (City of Turku 2008).

The statement can be read as recognition of the importance of immigrant organizations in at least three aspects: a) in maintaining language and cultural traditions of immigrants

²⁷ Except in the topic of housing perhaps, where it turned up primarily as an issue of how to combat and avoid tensions between groups in residential areas.

²⁸ Also in the political sphere in Turku the topic has not received attention. In the Annual Reports 2006 and 2007 of the city the topic of immigration and integration are marginal anyway.

themselves; b) promoting familiarization with Finnish society, and c) in cooperating with and advising authorities.

This general picture of policy framing in this area is reflected in the answers the city gave to the questionnaire. When it comes to ethnic and religious organisations, the city responses make it clear that the city builds on the general tradition of Finland to welcome and recognise their existence; that this is done according to existing rules for support and cooperation, but that this has not resulted yet in a coherent and consistent strategy of cooperation. The religious aspect of immigrant organisations remains implicit in policy, very much like it seems to be the case for native religious organisations.

Some basic key questions and answers on Immigrant Organisations from the questionnaire:

Q.3-1: What is the city's general attitude towards ethnic or migrant organisations?

A.: *The city's general attitude is positive to the ethnic and religious organisations. This reflects the general policy of promoting civil society organisations and NGO's and viewing them as important partners in the development of society.*

Q. 3-3: Which local ethnic organisations and local religious organisations do you regard as important in the context of integration and intergroup relations in your city?

A.: *Most of the ethnic associations do provide their members with the different cultural and language activities. Some interethnic/multiethnic organisations (such as SONDIP, Daisy Ladies, Together Association) also cooperate with relevant authorities (the labour office, the city authorities). The local religious groups cooperate mostly with the National Lutheran congregation (Turun ja Kaarinan seurakuntayhtymä). The city authorities have very little contact with religious groups, except when they have some special needs.*

Q. 3-4: What are the objectives of your city's policy towards the organisations named?

A.: *The "Integration Programme of the City of Turku" and also "The programme plan of Equality" include the goal of developing cooperation with ethnic organisations. The forms and contents of the cooperation are varying, depending on the organisational and economic situation of different ethnic organisations.*

Q.3-11: Is there a specific position or policy of the city towards demands of ethnic and religious groups in your city?

A.: *The city has the same practices for the ethnic organisations as the majority population in the socio-cultural issues and social needs. The city has specific support measures including language learning of the children (Finnish and the minority language).*

Q.3-12: Does the city have any formal or informal regular and institutional contact with ethnic and religious organisations?

A.: *The city has formed a special group ("Ulkomaalaisten palvelun johtoryhmä" or "Coordination Group for service to foreigners") to coordinate and follow the immigrant work in the city. A representative of the ethnic association SONDIP participates in its meetings. The immigrant coordinator of the city has regular contacts with these associations.*

Q.3-15: Does the city have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations?

A.: *The city does not yet have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations.*

Key questions on policies in relation to intergroup relations with faith-based communities received also answers that signal a hesitancy to explicitly recognise the religious factor in

policy. Such matters are referred to civil society in general and the religious part of it in particular. The city is a benevolent outsider rather than an active participant in intergroup relations with and between faith-based groups.

Some basic key questions and answers on Intergroup Relations with faith-based Communities from the questionnaire:

Q.4-1: From the perspective of local integration policies, what migrant or minority religion is important?

A.: *Islam, because many Muslims are among the disadvantaged in the city.*

Q. 4.2: What is the relative and absolute size of the population adhering to that religion?

A. *Exact number is not known, but estimated at 4000-5000 people.*

Q.4.11: What is the position of the city regarding the issues and interests (of both majority and minority population)?

A.: *The city has no clearly stated policy on these issues.*

Q.4.12: Does the city have an explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations with religious groups?

A: *No.*

Q.4.13: Does the city have any formal or informal regular and institutionalised contact to these minority religion organisations?

A.: *Representatives of the Social Services have been since 1996 meeting once a year with representatives of religious groups, visiting also mosques and various religious organisations, discussing various issues like the position of women. During these years, an informal network of contact persons has emerged, helping regular information.*

Q.4-18: Does the city give support to the group (e.g. financial support, moral support, other resources, public space for religious symbols)?

A.: *The city has no direct cooperation with religious groups, except that is stated above. However, in issues linked to Islamic graveyards, permissions for building religious institutions, the city's relevant authorities are consulted as required. Ethnic organisations can get the financial support from the different administrative departments (sports, youth work, culture) and also from the central administration of the city for their activities and to cover costs of meeting spaces.*

The official answers to the questionnaire, as illustrated somewhat elaborately above, signal a few important preliminary conclusions. On the issue of immigrant organisations, there is in general a positive attitude of the city, but no coherent policies, and so also no specific implementation structures (but generic policies towards civil society are open to immigrants). On the matter of religion in general and of religious organisations in particular, it is clear that official policies recognise individual rights and demands of any religious believer, but do not (or cannot) recognise collective actors in the religious sphere as relevant for city policies.

These first preliminary conclusions led me to decide to change the research strategy in this module for Turku. In order to get a picture of the relevant factors for (potential) policies of the City in relation to intergroup relations, I decided to collect additional

material through interviews and available sources from research. Two main groups of informants were interviewed: firstly, city civil servants involved in (special projects that inevitably lead to) contacts with immigrant groups and organisations to find out what relations exist between civil servants and immigrant organisations, religious or not. The idea was to get a better idea of the practice of relations with immigrant organisations (which according to my earlier experience elsewhere may deviate significantly from formal policy). Secondly, I wanted to get an impression of civil society in Turku in general, and religious and immigrant organisations within civil society in particular and get a sense of how they see the city government and its policies, and what initiatives in the field of intergroup relations are taken by civil society actors. Here the interviews with representatives of immigrant organisations, and with leaders and activists of religious organisations should provide insights into the actual practice of relations and policies.

4. City policy practices and civil society

City's direct support for (immigrant) organisations

As said before, the city of Turku takes a positive attitude towards engaging civil society and its organisations in policy implementation. A general system has developed in the course of time in which each department may give subsidies to civil society organisations for specific projects. Sectors of sports, youth, women and education seem to be the most important.

Immigrant organisations may – as any other organisation – apply for subsidies related to activities that fit into the general policies of departments. Also religious organisations may apply and get funded for certain activities. From interviews with immigrant organisations it has become clear that they apply and get funds (see later), but it is not clear to what extent they do so and whether they are as successful as other organisations are. There is no central registration of such departmental subsidies, also not with the coordinator of integration policies.

Another way of direct support for immigrant organisations is that the city allocates a rent subsidy to immigrant organisations to cover part of the costs of their housing, or give them rent reduction when they rent a municipal place. This form of

support was mentioned by nearly all of the (seven) immigrant organisations that I interviewed, including religious ones.

In 2007, the City Board decided to institute a centralised municipal integration funding system (in 2007 and 2008 having EUR 160,000 available) within the central administration. A budget for its allocation is made every year and approved by the City Board. Integration funding is allocated to initial integration procedures (Finnish instruction, guidance) for immigrants in the integration phase (City of Turku (2008: 6). It is reported that some “7000 – 10000 EUR from that budget is available for services of migrant organisations”. In 2007 and 2009 the Together Association and SONDIP have received support from this fund.

Indirect support: the International Meeting Point

The positive attitude of the city towards immigrant organisations, but also its somewhat uncoordinated policy can be illustrated with the story of the International Meeting Point (IMP). IMP was part of the Cultural Centre (Kulttuurikeskus) of the city of Turku (www.turku.fi; Martikainen 2004, 245). It was established very early, in 1989, initially led by a very entrepreneurial woman of immigrant background, Hüllya (Hissu) Kytö²⁹. Her work was taken over in 1995 by an anthropologist, Sari Kanervo. The philosophy of IMP was that, if immigrants wanted things to be done, they have to establish their organisations. So IMP gave courses and advice on how to handle the registration of associations and acted as a facility centre for new organisations and initiatives. Organisations could use space in the centre for meetings and activities. The IMP also “reacted to the needs of immigrants” by initiating service provision: legal services (in cooperation with the universities), a project for addicts, but also language courses in Finnish, Arabic, etc. Even Koran courses were given in the building and there was a prayer room made available. All this was actually done for a long time with only one permanent staff member, assisted by a number of interns. Later the IMP got a permanent secretary and teachers for Somali, Persian and Russian language. The IMP developed into a cradle for immigrant organisations of all kinds, which was resonated in the interviews with immigrant organisations.

In view of this history it is remarkable that the IMP was abolished unexpectedly in March 2008, as a consequence of a ‘reorganisation’ of the Cultural Centre by the

²⁹ According to an observer of the Åbo University, she also established the first immigrant women organisation Daisy Ladies. “She really made things happen. She was very good in getting funds and she had very good contacts in conservative political circles”. Recently, she is reported to be active in organising elderly people of immigrant background.

Department of Cultural Affairs. Obviously, the IMP, although it had developed into an important institution for integration in practice, was not part of a coordinated integration policy³⁰.

During the interviews I came across another interesting form of indirect support for immigrant organisations: a key person in the organisational field of immigrants in Turku, Hasan Habib, combines a number of functions and activities: he is an active member of a political party that has nominated him member of one of the City's Boards. He is also chair of the umbrella organisation SONDIP and one of the leaders of the Together Association. But he is also a full time civil servant of the city. His department has recently decided to allow him to work half time for the first three functions.

Contacts of civil servants with organisations

From the paragraphs above, it follows that many civil servants of the municipal organisation do have regular or incidental contacts with immigrant organisations: the ones in the departments of sports, youth, employment, education, health and culture particularly, because these are the domains in which many of the concrete projects are funded. Such contacts, however, seem to be quite isolated: departments are not mutually informed, and even the coordinator of immigrant policies in Turku has limited knowledge of all these contacts.

Within the Immigrant Office, located within the Social Welfare Department, there is an effort to institutionalise contacts with immigrant groups, although still in an informal way: "the workers of Koto-toiminta (Community Social Work) in the Immigrant Office meet regularly with representatives of ethnic groups (once a month). The religious groups have participated little in these meetings, because they take place during day time. Therefore, the workers of Koto-toiminta go out to meet the religious groups (for example in the mosques) and discuss about different things (e.g. problems of the women)".

Representation

Although there are many informal contacts between civil servants and immigrant organisations, as shown above, there is little formal representation of immigrants, individually or collectively. On the formal political level of the City Council, there is one elected councillor with an immigrant background. In some of the specific Boards people with immigrant background are nominated, such as the vice-chairman of the Youth

³⁰ The functions of the IMP are now being taken over partly by the Together Association and by SONDIP, at least according to its spokesman.

Board. Obviously, some political parties do promote participation of individuals with immigrant background from their rank and file in this way.

On the level of administration it should be mentioned that in the recently established Foreigner Service Management Group – consisting mainly of department directors responsible for various aspects of integration and charged with monitoring and auditing the integration programme - a representative of SONDIP (umbrella organisation of some 12 migrant and multi-ethnic organisations) is participating.

Since three years, the city of Turku assigns annually two awards: the year's New Citizen of Turku and the year's Multicultural Actor. The first award was recently assigned to Ahmed el Chibib, an Iraqi entrepreneur in Turku who is also active in a number Boards and Committees. The local journal, *Turkuposti* (nr. 1, 2009), devoted a whole page to his election. The second was assigned to a teacher, Ismo Laine at Turku Vocational Institute. Last year the Mayor of the City, Mr. Mikko Pukkinen, handed out the awards ceremonially to Mr. Selim Selimi (of the Albanian Cultural Association) and Ms. Päivi Talvinen at the Turku Castle on 9th February 2008 (www.turku.fi).

5. Immigrant organisations

5.1. Outline of the field of immigrant organisations and their development

Notwithstanding the relative short history of immigration, there is a significant number of immigrant organisations. The website of the City (www.turku.fi) lists 55 `registered multicultural and immigrant organisations'³¹. Comments from participants indicate that not all of them are active (between 30 and 40) and that the number of individuals carrying these associations and doing their representation in the city community is relatively low. Most of these organisations are ethnic organisations, referring to a specific country of origin and defining themselves as cultural organisations (no political or religious reference in their names): e.g. the Albanian, Iranian, Afghanistan or Vietnamese Cultural Associations.

There are eight religious immigrant organisations (explicitly mentioning religion in their name): five of these are Islamic organisations, one is Buddhist, one Vietnamese-Catholic and one Orthodox. The five Islamic organisations represent different stream of

³¹ The website's last update of the list dates from January 22, 2007.

Islam: The Turku Islamic Centre (since 1994) is by far the largest (700 members³²) and represents mainstream Sunni Islam across nationalities. The Turku Shia Islamic Centre (since 1993) represent mainly Shia Muslims from Iran and Iraq (200 members). The other three represent small specific streams: one Shia, one Tabligh and (very recently) a Kurdish/Sunni one. All five have prayer rooms, none of them a representative mosque.

There are also a number of organisations that the city calls 'multicultural organisations'. These are associations in which individuals of different backgrounds, including Finnish, work together on integration and living together. The Together Association is one of them and Daisy Ladies (particularly working for immigrant women) is another.

In 2006, an umbrella organisation was founded: SONDIP. It has presently twelve member organisations, including a number of Cultural Associations (among others a Russian, Albanian, Iraqi, Afghan and Iranian one), some 'multicultural associations' and some student organisations. This umbrella organisation has its own building, the city paying half of the rent for it. It has gradually built up cooperation with the city by doing information work for the city³³ and other projects; it works together with the city and the regional Employment Service on informing immigrants about work projects, and is regular asked as expert on topics such as Integration and Equality plans of the city. A SONDIP representative also participates in Foreigner Service Management Group (see chapter 4).

5.2. Demands, perspectives and activities of immigrant organisations

During the fieldwork in Turku I had the opportunity to speak with a number of leaders of immigrant organisations: one from the Albanian Cultural Association, one represented both the Vietnamese Cultural Association and the Buddhist Association, the chairman of the Umbrella organisation SONDIP who happens to be active also in the Together Association, and one from the Islamic Centre. The following brief descriptions of three of them - a cultural association, a multicultural association and the Islamic Centre - give an impression of their demands and activities and their relation to the city.

³² The member figures here are estimates by Heikki Kauhanen from the daily newspaper Turun Sanomat. What the figures mean exactly (regular visitors, registered members) is not clear.

³³ SONDIP made brochures about the city's services in eight different languages. The city had tendered this task publicly and chosen SONDIP among the applicants.

*The Albanian Cultural Association*³⁴

This association was established in 1998, by a simple and cheap registration procedure: only 60 euro. The association profiles itself very explicitly as a cultural organisation, distancing itself from both politics and religion (although religious feast days are celebrated). They organise festivals, language courses in Albanian for children after school time (for which they receive support)³⁵ and many other activities.

In implementing their activities the association has built up relations with several partners, among which the city. One of the main activities is their cooperation with the Employment Office, but the association also has sport activities, it does inform and supply services and advice to individual Albanians (through SONDIP) and is consulted by the City on the new Integration Plan. It receives funding for some of these projects. Asked for their perception of the city's policies, the chairman states that he appreciates the city's plans for integration, but critically signals a lack of implementation. The cooperation with the city through (funded) projects is again appreciated, but the complaint is that projects (and its funding) are always temporary. This is a problem for weak immigrant organisations. Continuity is a problem for many of them.

The Together Association

The Together Association started in 1998, actually as an EU-funded project of the Social Department of the city. After the project had finished a number of individuals of various backgrounds felt that they should continue the cooperation in this Together Association. They were able to raise new funding, amongst others from the National Lottery and the Regional Employment Office (for which the association does significant work). The activities of the association are defined as 'basic': language courses in Finnish, courses for women, etc.

The Together Association has grown in the course of time: it has its own building, in which there are two office rooms and five rooms for activities. These activity rooms are also made available according to a schedule to immigrant organisations that do not have their own facilities³⁶. The Association claims to be an organisation in which nine different communities work together. It has now 5 full time workers employed: 3 Finnish

³⁴ The chairman interviewed, Selim Selimi, received the New Citizen's Award 2008 from the city of Turku.

³⁵ The chairman explains that there is a Finnish Law that stipulates that if there are four children of a certain language background, there is a right to teach them that language and receive support for that.

³⁶ The spokeswoman of the (Vietnamese) Buddhist Association confirmed in an interview that their association uses a room in the building of Together once a week for three hours and once a month for a whole day.

and 2 of immigrant background. The city of Turku funds 100 % of the rent for the building and pays one of the five workers. The other workers have to be financed by project work and funds from the National Lottery. This is becoming more and more problematic: the chairman expects that the association will have to reduce its staff in the near future.

The Islamic Centre

The Islamic Centre was established in 1994, as a mainstream Sunni mosque. The mosque wants to bring together all Muslims, irrespective of the national background: Bosnians, Somali's, Iraqi, etc. Arabic, Finnish and English are used as languages in the association. The leader, Mohamed Ahmedane, is an immigrant from Egypt who is also an entrepreneur in the Pizzeria-business in Turku. Religiously he is a selfmade man without formal education. He is well known in Turku, but became also an important figure in organising Islam in Finland at the national level (The Islamic Council).

The association (and the mosque) is presently the largest one of the five Islamic associations (mosques) in the city. It is housed in an old theatre of the city. The place itself is in the centre of the city, but hardly announced and visible from outside. The place itself is spacy, with a relatively large hall used as prayer room and a number of other smaller rooms for activities. There is a small 'office' too.

The association organises first of all religious activities: there is a full (printed) calendar of religious services, including the 5 prayers a day, timed at the minute. The Friday noon prayer is reported to be the best attended: some 200 people pray then. The place is too small for such occasions and for the big feasts: "We have to find a bigger place; we cannot fit in people". Apart from religious services, there are religious courses for children ("to learn to read and cite the Koran and to learn Islamic manners"). There are also 'discussion groups' for adults. All activities are done by volunteers. Even the imam is not salaried: "He is one of us, locally chosen. We want to have a professional one, but that is not yet realised. During the Ramadan we invite an imam from Egypt".

Apart from the strictly religious ones, there are a lot of other activities: there is a special Youth Group that organises sports training and events; a Media Group that organises seminars (open for everyone, but in practice mostly for members; topics such as the Cartoon Crisis are discussed), and a group of volunteers that keeps the premisses clean and does other practical jobs.

When it comes to relations with the city, a number of aspects should be mentioned. First of all, the old theatre is rented from the city: originally, the association paid only half of the rent (the city thus subsidising the other half), but now it pays only 2 months rent per year. According to the spokesman of the association, this is based on a general (not for religious organisations only) regulation of the city. Apart from this, the association receives financial support for some activities of the Youth Group. Furthermore, the association gets financial assistance “for computers”: “within the Central Administration of the city there is a general regulation to which any immigrant organisation can apply for this. A condition is that the association is registered”.

Notwithstanding these forms of financial support of the city, the association feels the lack of finances as aching. It hampers its ambitions. One of the clearest examples of that is the failed attempt to build an official mosque. Such an initiative was taken some ten years ago. From the part of the city, there was no problem: the authorities dealt with the permission as with all other comparable cases. There was some local mobilisation though against the mosque and questions were asked³⁷. However, the project was stopped for quite different reasons: the envisaged Saudi financiers of the mosque decided that they better invest their money in building a mosque in Oslo, instead of Turku. Obviously, the association was not able to collect sufficient funds among its members. Presently, the idea of building a mosque “is still in the back of our minds, but we have to find funding from elsewhere”.

At the local level the Turku Islamic Centre has little contact and cooperation with the other four Islamic organisations, except with the Sunni one. Nor is there significant cooperation of the Turku Islamic Centre with (non-religious) immigrant organisations: the Centre is not a member of SONDIP, for example. Obviously, the religious cleavages within Islam are, in the practice of the functioning of organisations, more important than national origin of believers. The larger two Islamic organisations do both have members across national origins, but clearly within a separate religious stream. Significantly, on the level of the city of Turku there has not been a stimulus for cooperation as there has been on the national level: there the Islamic Council of Finland has been able to get the various Islamic streams involved in a representative organ to represent common Islamic interests with the State. The Turku Islamic Centre is a member of this Islamic Council of Finland. We will report on the Centre’s engagement in interfaith activities in the next section.

³⁷ Reported also by Pekka Ruola, former chair of the City Council of Turku.

6. Inter-faith relations in Turku

As we have seen, the city keeps formally at a distance when it comes to religion. This is also confirmed in an interview with the former Chairman of the City Council. The structurally strong position of the Lutheran Church in Finnish society is something that obviously nobody wants to change. It is accepted widely in politics, but at the same time not talked about³⁸. The Church is supposed to take the lead in religious matters, within civil society and without interference of the State or City. This may lead to curious situations, as the one in the 1990s when the question of Islamic burial had to be solved. In principle, the Lutheran Church is responsible by law to provide space in the cemeteries for non-Lutherans. In this case, as the former Chairman of the Council expressed it, “the city had to find a way to steer Lutheran business towards a practical solution. And that was obviously not a problem”.

Thus, new religions brought by immigrants do not appear in formal policies of the city, but they are also not visible in public space. All of the eight religious organisations have some form of facility for praying and religious service, but none of the non-Christian ones have an own, publicly visible building. This is not a consequence of obstruction from the side of the city administration, but rather a reflection of the financial weak position of the religious organisations. This is illustrated by two failed initiatives in Turku. Apart from the Mosque initiative of the Turku Islamic Centre, reported in chapter 5, there has also been an initiative of a Vietnamese immigrant to try and build an official Pagoda in Turku. However, this has failed, because the initiator died. The Buddhist Association agrees that the plan was actually too big for the small Buddhist community. They hold their services in the Together building now.

The Lutheran Evangelical Church

The Lutheran Church itself is very active in the field of social work in general: the Diaconal Centre of the Lutheran church is a comprehensive social work organisation for all kinds of special groups, also for migrants. They have special workers for migrants. One of them works especially with Muslim groups, “but some of these Muslim groups

³⁸ One of the interviewees of immigrant background, but himself not a religious person, expressed his view on this as follows: “Finnish people and policy is a little far away from religion. The State has taken the place of God”.

are difficult to work with”. Vietnamese Buddhists do not come to the diaconal Centre: they have developed their own facilities, according to the spokeswoman of the Centre.

My informant is especially working for the Russian speaking immigrants. She is herself an immigrant from Russia arrived in 1990. Her efforts are not only invested in teaching Russian and developing all kinds of facilitating services (clubs, activities for children, information and advice, food provision), but also to organise ‘confirmation schools’. The basic idea behind these schools is that many of the ‘returnees’ have lost their knowledge of Lutheranism and these courses want to teach these immigrants the particular rituals and services of Lutheranism. “Part of the Russian immigrants and returnees, however, wanted to keep their (Russian Orthodox) belief and that is why some 6 years ago a chapel was created within the Russian Consulate in Turku”.

As for interfaith work, a number of activities are listed: the Church has organised an ecumenical manifestation near the Cathedral, in 2006 they organised a festival of cultures of immigrants in the same place and they organised a ‘week against racism’. And there is also an interfaith forum. “We have visited all mosques in Turku, we had a joint conference on service provision and we participated in an anti-Islamphobia campaign”.

About contacts and cooperation with the city the answer is very brief: there is very little. In care for elderly people, the city pays a number of activities that the diaconal Centre does, but in many other sectors of work such funding is not needed. The city “has to do its own work”.

Muslim organisations and interfaith contacts

The representative of the Turku Islamic Centre reports that there are meetings with representatives of other religions in Turku, some 4 to 5 times per year. In principle, these meetings are for all religious groups, but in practice it is mostly between Lutherans and Muslims. Also the Shia association is involved. Initiatives to host meetings are taken in turn and the topic of discussion vary. “I feel that it is mostly on the discussion level. There are some common projects, but actually I do not remember any concrete one. It would be excellent to have more action and less talk”.

Heikki Kauhanen, a journalist of the daily *Turun Sanomat* – the main newspaper of the region – is specialised in immigration and religious matters and is able to report more elaborately and in detail about interfaith contacts and dialogue in Turku. According to him, regular meetings between the leader of the Turku Islamic Centre, Mohamed Ahmedane, and representatives of the Lutheran Church started already some ten years

ago: monthly meetings on themes from the Koran and the Bible. Ahmedane, coming from Egypt, was a strong leader of the Sunni mosque in Turku at that time who opposed strongly fundamentalist tendencies. Later he became also one of the Islamic leaders at the national level in Finland (in the Islamic Council of Finland).

The differences in reporting on these contacts and meetings suggests that mainly leaders are involved, and much less the rank and file of religious organisations, both from the part of the Lutheran church and islamic organisations.

7. Radicalisation

The questionnaire for the city also included a bloc of questions on Intergroup Relations and Radicalisation. However, also here many questions were obviously difficult to answer, as is shown by the following answers:

Some basic key questions and answers on Intergroup Relations and Radicalisation from the questionnaire:

Q.5.1: In the eyes of the city, are there any relevant forms of radicalisation in the local population that resent religious and/or ethnic minorities?

A.: There are no groups which to our knowledge promote violence towards ethnic or religious minorities and this would also be a criminal offence. However, there are political groups which agitate against immigrants and use this as a means of mobilisation for political purposes. Often this happens on the internet and in such a way that it borders on open hatred. Some of these persons have been or are under investigation by the police. As internet is not bound to local environment, often people who participate in Turku's internal debate may well be living elsewhere in Finland.

Q.5.2: Is it mainly attitudes without being organised? Does it exist as informal networks, as political parties or formal organisations?

A: It is mostly attitudes, but there are also clearly some networks and a local political group, Suomen Kansan Sinivalkoiset (The BlueWhites of Finnish People), reflecting the Finnish flag. It has a certain support and got one member into the City Council. Another party, True Finns (Perussuomalaiset), led by a charismatic national leader, has been gaining support lately, and can boost a support of 6-7 per cent of the population. It was a clear winner in the last local elections, getting two seats in the City Council of Turku and many more in other big cities. This party is in itself not openly anti-immigrant – as openly as anti-EU – but uses often immigrants as scapegoats, and some of its members have been labelled as anti-immigrant.

Q. 5.14: Are there organisations and groups in the resident civil society that are active against anti-immigrant and/or anti-minority groups?

A.: Churches, political parties, sport organisations (e.g. football clubs are very active against racism), all kinds of NGOs are active in the work against racism and intolerance.

Q. 5.16: Does the city cooperate with the groups that address issues raised by xenophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Semitic tendencies?

A.: The city cooperates with a wide range of groups, including such which work on these issues, but has no specific policy to work especially with them.

Q. 5.23: In the eyes of the city, are there any relevant radical or extremist tendencies among the migrant or minority populations?

A.: *No.*

The radicalisation issue (or concept) turns out not to be a meaningful one for Turku's policy makers and a policy of the city is absent. Signs of anti-immigrant mobilisation within Turku are reported, but not perceived under the heading of radicalisation. Radicalisation within immigrant and Muslim groups is reported to be absent.

Among the interviewees, there is a broad consensus that relations between groups in Turku are relatively harmonious. Not only the official answers to the questionnaire in chapter 4 suggest this, it also resonated in the appreciation of the former chairman of the Council: "The general climate is that immigrants are welcome. I am happy to note that there are relatively few problems." The journalist of the *Turun Sanomat* can be quoted with comparable statements: "In Turku there is no real politicisation of the immigrant and Muslim issue; in Helsinki it is much stronger. The local police has developed good relations with Islamic groups, particularly the Somali's. Somali youth used to have a bad reputation. Now there is active cooperation between the police and the mosque. There has not been any discussion on the hijab or any other issues related to the practice of Islam." An interview with the local police officers confirmed this: they see their task in Turku as easy (with again an implicit comparison with Helsinki). "There are no organised internal conflicts within the immigrant groups. Two years ago, there was something of a formation of a gang of immigrant youngsters (which had nothing to do with religion, but with their marginalised position). But that is over. There have been incidents of native Finns against immigrants, but that was not of an organised character."

So, radicalisation seems not a relevant topic in Turku, but on the other hand the questions led to another issue that is somewhat worrying for most informants: a mobilisation of nationalism, sometimes combined with anti-immigrant sentiments within politics. Nearly everyone hastens to say: all this is within the rules of democracy. There was first a local political party, the BlueWhites of Finnish People, that had (and still has) one representative in the Council. Furthermore, during the recent elections The True Finns Party, a local branch of a national party, gained two seats (but one of the elected ones left the party soon after being elected). The views on what these parties actually represent and what their stances on immigrants entail, differ. But it is also clear that the local established political parties are cooperating in opposing and isolating these new parties. For policies in the field of migration and integration these new parties do not have repercussions (yet) in the eyes of politicians and policy stakeholders.

8. Conclusions

Immigration in Finland and in Turku is relatively new. It has been predominantly supply driven (refugees, returnees and family related migration) and is now gradually changing to more demand driven migration. Policy reactions – both at the national and local level – have been partial and targeted mainly at the first mentioned category of immigrants. In international comparative perspective migration and integration policies are in an early phase, primarily reacting to specific vulnerable categories of immigrants. The specific policies relating to reception of refugees and returnees have been initiated at the national level primarily, inducing and obliging local authorities to develop integration programmes for them.

The positive side of this newness of immigration and its relative low level is that it has not led to a politicisation of the topic of immigration and integration, compared to other European countries: there is obviously a commitment to receive refugees and returnees from abroad and give them access to national and local welfare systems during the process of their (initial) settlement, a task that is implemented in a clear and dedicated way.

There are also challenges attached to that same situation. Immigration and integration are in the present policies narrowed down to specific groups and their immediate problems. Although there are signs that also other categories of (often demand driven) immigrants increase significantly, this has not (yet) become significant in the minds of policy makers³⁹: long term, comprehensive policies for immigration and integration and concomitant institutions in these fields are thus lacking.

Policies for immigrants in Turku should be situated within this general framework. The city has not developed an integration policy for newcomers in general, but rather a reception policy for refugees, Ingrian returnees and their family members. That policy guarantees housing and access to facilities of the welfare state as a starting point, and furthermore entails activities that should promote access to the educational system and the labour market by procuring mediation and improving the (language) skills of the immigrants. In this conceptualisation and practice the city follows predominantly national categorisations and related facilities and obligations (Integration Act and its implementation). The recent policy documents have witnessed two significant changes:

³⁹ It is remarked by some informants that on the national level trade unions have become more vocal on the topic of immigrants during recent years, but this was hardly noticeable in Turku.

the first one is that there is clearly a stronger awareness of the importance of immigrant organisations in mobilising forces towards integration (policies); the second one is that the coordination of integration policies should be located more centrally and anchored more strongly within the administration of the city in order to make it work (transversally).

Intergroup relations, intercultural policies and interreligious dialogue are not explicitly part of the integration concept at the level of the city of Turku. The absence of such concepts in policy documents, however, does not mean that practices related to it do not exist. On the contrary, quite a number of activities can be observed that can be classified as implicitly fitting such concepts. For one thing, the city of Turku has developed not only an extensive knowledge and interest in immigrant organisations, it has also a practice of supporting them and call upon them to promote integration of their members. This aspect has also gained a place in the recent policy documents. In doing so, the city has an eye for the multiple functions that such organisations may have (and religious organisations do not seem to raise the suspicions that they raise elsewhere).

When it comes to religion and religious organisations in a more strict sense, the situation in Finland and Turku cannot be understood without knowledge of the specific legacy and history of the country in this respect. Historically, religion has always had an important place in Finnish society and the development of State-Church relations is very specific. For one, such relations are still structurally existent, expressed in the specific position of the two National Churches: the Evangelical-Lutheran and the Finnish Orthodox Church. At the same time, that special position (and the ensuing strong position of these churches in civil society) is played down in politics, made invisible as it were, as if the principle of separation of Church and State forbids it to make relations explicit. On the other hand, there was also an early recognition and institutionalisation of Islam that has certainly eased the difficult position that this 'new religion' had to face in many other European countries.

The result of this specific legacy and history seems to be that, on the one hand, there is more of a general acceptance of the religious factor in civil society, but on the other hand the state and the city of Turku handle this by formally keeping at a distance. This is particularly the case, when it comes to religious activities in the strict sense, but also when it comes to activities of religious organisations in general. Inter-religious dialogue and activities is left to the initiative of civil society and the stakeholders

themselves. And actually, there are indications that such dialogue exists, be it out of sight of the city itself.

As far as they exist, worries about intergroup relations tend to focus more on possible mobilisation against immigrants coming from nationalistic elements of the native population rather than on radicalisation among immigrants. In Turku, this plays a role recently in politics through reactions of established parties on new parties that are perceived as potentially dangerous for relations with immigrants. It did not (yet) touch policy making in the area of integration policies in a significant way.

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