

Intercultural Policies

Case Study

CLIP: Cities for Local Integration Policies

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Foreword

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

The project aims to collect and analyse innovative policies and their successful implementation at the local level, support the exchange of experiences between cities and encourage a learning process within the network of cities. The project addresses the role of social partners, NGOs, companies and voluntary associations in supporting successful integration policies; provides objective assessment of current practice and initiatives and discusses their transferability; and communicates good practices to other cities in Europe and develops guidelines to help cities cope more effectively with the challenge of integrating migrants. The CLIP project supports the further development of a European integration policy by communicating the policy relevant experiences and output of the network to European organisations of cities and local regional authorities, the European and national organisations of social partners, the Council of Europe and various institutions of the European Union.

The CLIP network is also a cooperation between cities and research institutes. Six research institutes in Bamberg, Amsterdam, Vienna, Turin, Wroclaw and Swansea are producing publications of the CLIP project. Researchers from the Forum for International and European Studies on Immigration (FIERI) of Turin are responsible for this report on Valencia. Together with the contact person from the Municipality of Valencia—Pere Climent Bolinches of the Centre for Support to Immigration (CAI, Centro de Apoyo a la Inmigración)—an enormous effort has been undertaken to find all necessary data on Valencia for this report. Many officials and other parties involved with integration and welcome policy, statistics and support of immigrants have been interviewed, as the list at the end of the report shows. They have provided us with reports, statistics and comments on the concept version of this report. Secondly the representatives of the Islamic Cultural Centre, the Islamic Community, the Islamic Council of Valencia, Caritas, the Urban Mission of the Evangelic Church and the Orthodox Church have all been willing to provide us with information. And finally researchers from the University of Valencia have provided us with data and useful comments. I am grateful to all those who have cooperated in giving information, and in particular to Pere Climent, for coordinating the field visit and answering my – continuous – requests for data and documents.

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1 Introduction

This module of the CLIP project deals with "intercultural and interreligious dialogue." Its purpose is to provide an overview of both the policies carried out by the Municipality of Valencia on this matter, and the standpoints of the different concerned actors in city, i.e., immigrants and religious minorities in the first place, but also autochthonous NGOs, academic experts, journalists etc.

A questionnaire was developed, composed of three parts: A) local intercultural policies in general, B) local policies towards Muslim communities and C) intergroup relations and radicalisation. This questionnaire was sent to our contact person in Valencia. After receiving the completed questionnaire, the city visit was arranged with the contact person. Interviews took place with officials of the administration, and representatives of immigrant and religious associations, as well as of autochthonous NGOs, of the main local newspapers, and two researchers from the University of Valencia. In section 9 the full list of interviewees is presented.

The case of Valencia can be considered as an interesting example of interculturality from below. The Municipality, in the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013, its main document in the immigrant policy domain, emphasises the necessity of fostering immigrant associations' participation in all the existing consultative and participative institutions already operating at a municipal and district level. Presently, this has resulted in the inclusion of immigrant associations in the so called *Mesas de la Solidaridad*, the Solidarity Platforms established in the districts in order to implement the Municipality social policy. This is not just symbolic participation, since through the *Mesas* immigrant associations have been able to obtain funds in order to implement their projects. Yet, at least as far as Muslim organisations are concerned, very different situations emerge: if participation and collaboration with neighbours' associations appear to be well established in some areas of the city, in other contexts they seem to encounter more difficulties.

The civil society is another key actor in Valencia, not just in providing assistance and help to newly arrived immigrants, but also in designing more elaborated integration measures. Inter-religious dialogue is a case in point: no official policy of the Municipality has been started on this issue, yet Catholic organisations have mobilised to provide platforms of dialogue that now represent reference points for the local administration.

In this report I will provide an account of the state of affairs of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in Valencia and the main actors mobilised on these issues. In the following section (§ 2), I will provide background information on immigrant policy and state-religion relations in Spain.¹ In the third section (§ 3), I will focus on the city context and provide data on the composition of the immigrant population as well of the Muslim minority. Particular attention will also be devoted to immigrant organisations. In the fourth section (§ 4), I will describe local intercultural policies, considering both official initiatives on the part of the local administration and bottom-up mobilisation on the part of civil society organisations. The fifth section is devoted to intercultural policies towards Muslim groups (§ 5), while in the sixth and last section (§ 6) I shall account for the city approach to issues of radicalisation within both the majority and minority population.

¹ I want to thank Anja Van Heelsum from IMES who has written the section on history of migration and characteristics of immigrants in Spain in the framework of other case-studies for Spanish cities. I added a specific part on the policies of the Autonomous Community of Valencia, i.e., of regional-level policy.

2 Background information on the country

2.1 History of migration and composition of the migrant populations

2.1.1 Spain

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

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

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

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

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

Economic growth increased further when Spain became a member of the European Union in 1986. The Spanish economy boomed from 1986 to 1990, averaging 5% annual growth. After a

Europe-wide recession in the early 1990s, the Spanish economy resumed moderate growth again starting in 1994. Immigration accelerated after this, and Spain changed from an emigration country to an immigration country.

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

Table 1. Spanish nationals and the largest immigrant groups to Spain by nationality and country of birth on the 1st of January 2008

	Number	%	Born in Spain	Born Abroad	Pct 2 nd generation
Total population of Spain	46.257.822	100	40.113.294	6.044.528	
Foreign nationals	5.268.762	11	261.897	5.006.865	5%
Spanish nationals	40.889.060	89	39.851.397	1.037.663	
<i>EU countries (in 2006)</i>					
United Kingdom	352.957	1	9.941	343.016	3%
Germany	181.174	0	7.927	173.247	4%
Italy	157.789	0	7.431	150.358	5%
<i>Rest of Europe</i>					
Romania	731.806	2	28.89	702.916	4%
Bulgaria	153.974	0	4.969	149.004	3%
Ukraine	79.096	0	3.062	76.034	4%
Poland	78.560	0	4.419	74.141	6%

<i>Non-Western Countries</i>					
Morocco	652.695	1	77.453	575.242	12%
Ecuador	427.718	1	13.53	414.188	3%
Colombia	284.581	1	5.517	279.064	2%
Bolivia	242.496	1	6.989	235.507	3%
Argentina	147.382	0	2.477	144.905	2%
China	125.914	0	13.93	111.984	11%
Peru	121.932	0	2.228	119.704	2%
Total South Americans	1.784.890	4	30.734	1.624.126	2%

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

Spain itself is predominantly Catholic. Immigrants from Latin America are generally Christians, though not all Catholic. There are no data on religious denomination, so we can only make estimates of the numbers of non-Christians. We estimate roughly the number of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, because these appear to be the major categories. To estimate the number of Muslims, we took an overview of immigrant groups from the National Statistics Institute, and selected the countries with a large or majority Muslim population with substantial immigration to Spain. These are: Morocco, Mauretania, Algeria, Nigeria, Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Iran, Pakistan, Turkey and Bosnia. Thus we are sure to have included the largest Muslim populations. We assume that the exaggeration (because one also finds a minority of non-Muslims in these countries) and the underrepresentation (because a lot of smaller populations from other countries are missing in this list) will counterbalance each other.² We reach an estimated number of 832,976 Muslims in Spain, as of 31 December 2007. The four largest groups come from Morocco (648,741), Algeria (45,845), Pakistan (36,388) and Senegal (33,227).

² For example, in Senegal 5,7% of the population is Christian; in Iran 1% is Christian and 1% is Baha'i.

2.2 National policy context

2.2.1 Immigration policies

Spain did not have an immigration policy until the 1980s. When it joined the European Union, the country was under pressure to restrict non-EU citizen immigration. The immigration policy of 1985—“Ley de Extranjería”—approached most immigration as a temporary phenomenon; immigrants were conceptualised as workers who required regulation by the Ministry of Labour (Ortega Pérez 2003). After Amnesty International criticised the toughness of the “Foreigners Law” in 1989, the first attempt to draft an integration law took place in 1990 (Borkert et al. 2007). This led to the establishment of the Dirección General de Migraciones (General Directorate for Migration). Initiated by left-wing politicians, a large regularisation of illegal immigrants took place in 1991. This ultimately had little impact, since three years later 50% of the immigrants who had legalised their status with a one-year work permit, had in 1991 fallen back to the illegal status. To compensate for ineffective and restrictive admission policies, regularisation programs have taken place in 1994 (on grounds of family reunification), in 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2005. The municipalities have their own registration of citizens, the *Padrón*,³ which includes the irregulars. If a worker obtains a one-year contract he or she can ask the for a work and stay permit and regularise, but, as we already noted, the regularisation office is slow. Recently, the system has tended to legalise people gradually throughout whole year, avoiding the large-scale regularisations that were criticised by the EU.

Besides Spain's work-permit system, the country has experimented with a labour quota system to respond to the long- and short-term shortages in the labour market. While it was intended to regulate the immigration flow, the system was seen by many illegal immigrants as a way to gain a legal status and most applications came from undocumented immigrants already in Spain. The system was transformed in 2002 so that applications can only come from abroad, based on bilateral agreements with Ecuador, Colombia, Morocco, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Poland and Romania.

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

2.2.2 Integration policies

Besides measures to control immigration, programmes for immigrants' social integration were undertaken at this time. In 1994 an 'Inter-ministerial Plan for the Integration of Immigrants' was presented, with the intention of granting immigrants the same civil and social rights and responsibilities as Spanish citizens. The concept integration was in this manner directly linked with citizenship and the philosophy was based on the principle of equal rights and freedoms for every person. In line with the institutional rights of its autonomous regions, Spain tends to promote and

³ On the *Padrón* see also: Gsir 2008: 13.

recognise the cultural autonomy of migrants (Borkert et al. 2007: 29). The policy was not directed at specific groups, but at granting equal rights, e.g., for immigrant children at schools.

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

When Partido Popular got to power in 1996, this centre right-wing government led by Prime Minister Aznar was interested in economic liberalisation and in privatisation. A new agency was established—the “Delegación del Gobierno para la Extranjería y la Inmigración”—within the Ministry of Interior Affairs, which meant a shift of power away from the Ministry of Social Affairs which had predominated during the Socialist times. In 2000 the so-called ‘Plan Greco’ was presented, which emphasised migrant adaptation. According to Ortega Pérez, Plan Greco addresses four key areas:

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

In Plan Greco the autonomous communities play an important role in implementing immigrant integration.

The current left-wing (PSOE) government, led by Zapatero that took over in 2004 tends to focus more on improving social provisions and work situation for immigrants. In 2006 an agreement was signed in which all the political forces of the Spanish state agreed on how to develop integration policies—the Civic Responsibility Pact. On 19 February 2007 the ‘First Strategic Plan on Immigration and Citizenship’ proposed 2 billion Euros for three-year integration measures.

At the regional level, first interventions of the Autonomous Community of Valencia on immigrant integration were essentially concerned with access to health care, which is one of the main responsibilities of the autonomous communities in Spain. In 2002 the Autonomous Community Council established the Interdepartmental Commission on Immigration (Decree n. 33/2002) and the Valencian Forum for Immigration (Foro Valenciano de la Inmigración, Decree n. 34/2002). Following these decisions, the autonomous government of the region has developed two plans on Immigration, the first one for the period 2004–2007 and the second for 2008–2010 (Plan Valenciano de la Inmigración 2004–2007 and 2008–2010). Immigrant associations’ participation is top priority in both plans, and the strategic role of the Forum is stressed. The Forum is a platform for participation through which immigrant associations have the opportunity to express and to channel their point of view and provide advice on immigrants’ integration policies and initiatives to the Immigration and Citizenship Department. Together with immigrant associations (12 of 21

participants), autochthonous NGOs working on immigrants integration are also represented⁴ (9 organisations).

According to our interviews with academic experts and immigrant associations in Valencia,⁵ however, the Valencian Forum for Immigration does not seem to be very effective in channelling immigrants' requests and views. First of all, immigrant associations in the Forum have been appointed by the Autonomous Community, and are not considered to be representative of the foreign population in the region. Secondly, the Forum meetings are very infrequent (usually twice a year), which is regarded as an indicator of its scarce influence on policy-making processes.

As a reaction to the marginal role played by the Forum, a Foro Alternativo por la Defensa y los Derechos de la Integración Social de la Inmigración was established by a group of immigrant associations excluded by the official one. It is an informal but highly contentious platform, composed of 30 immigrant associations, which has the goal of advocating for immigrant's rights and putting the Autonomous Community and local administrations in general under pressure on immigrants' integration-related issues. As an alternative platform, constituted in order to overtly criticize the PPE government of the Autonomous Community and its appointed-from-above Valencian Forum for Immigration, the Foro Alternativo does not seek official recognition. On the contrary is concerned with keeping its independence and distance from the regional government and from the PPE, which is also in power at the city level as we shall see below. Because of this critical stance and closeness to left-wing social movements, the Foro Alternativo is not regarded by either the regional or Valencian city authorities as a possible partner in policy-making.

The government of the Valencian Community (Generalitat Valenciana) approved, in December 2008, a new Law on Immigrants' Integration: Law n. 15/2008, *Integración de las Personas Inmigrantes en la Comunitat Valenciana*. The main feature characterising this law is the introduction of the "integration contract" (*compromiso de integración*), with an explicit reference to similar instruments adopted in the main Central and Northern European immigration countries.⁶ According to the law, immigrants' incorporation should be based on an agreement establishing rights and duties of both parts. However, the integration contract is conceived as an opportunity, i.e., a voluntary programme, and not as a compulsory one. It is supposed to offer a basic knowledge of the values, democratic rules, political structure, cultures and official languages of the Valencian region. However, as emerged in the field visit interviews, the new law does not specify how the integration contract will be actually implemented. In general, the involvement of local NGOs, the Valencian Forum for Integration, local intercultural spaces etc. is foreseen. This might lead to the conclusion that civil society organisations will somehow be involved in the integration programmes, but there is still uncertainty as to how.

⁴ See: http://www.cic.gva.es/index.php?Itemid=68&id=1131&option=com_content&task=view (visited 5 May 2009).

⁵ See the list of interviewed people.

⁶ See the Preamble of the *Ley 15/2008, de 5 de diciembre, de la Generalitat, Integración de las Personas Inmigrantes en la Comunitat Valenciana*, p. 90325.

2.2.3 Policies on the separation of church and state

The separation of church and state is a highly politicized issue in Spain. Attempts by the left to abolish strong interrelations between church and state meet with strong resistance from the right. Article 16 of the Spanish constitution is the article “Libertad ideológica y religiosa”—freedom of ideology and religion. This is relevant for the separation of church and state. In article 16.2, the Constitution states that “no one could be obliged to be afraid because of reasons of ideology, religion or belief,” while article 16.3 states “the state is not tied to any religion, but has since 1977 a special agreement with the Vatican, recognising that Spain’s population is in majority Catholic.” Historically strong relations between state and particularly the more conservative elements of the Catholic Church (Opus Dei and Legionarios de Cristo) are associated with the Franco times. Zapatero intends to make the relations more neutral and open, removing some of the Church’s influence, privileges and control left over from Franco’s time, particularly its influence on the educational system. He has suggested reducing the symbolic presence of religion in general, for instance crosses in city halls and schools, and swearing on the bible during inaugurations of ministers (secular ministers say “I promise” instead of “I swear”). But this has not been received enthusiastically by the conservative Partido Popular nor with the Conferencia Episcopal, the meeting of bishops and cardinals. While this Conference is slowly losing the enormous power they had earlier, they still own TV and radio stations and newspapers and can therefore influence people.

The Ministry of Justice keeps a database on religious associations. Associations need to register with the Ministry of Justice in Madrid to acquire an official and legal status, and they thus end up in the database of religious and ideological associations.⁷ This registration makes it possible for associations to respond to calls for proposals from the Ministry of Justice, and to obtain funding from the *Fundación Pluralismo y Convivencia*.⁸ This foundation concerns only social activities, never religious ones.

As for the organisation of Islam in Spain, there are two national federations of Muslims—UCIDE (full Islamic) and FERRI (Christians converted to Islam) —who come together in the *Comisión Islámica de España* (CIE). CIE is the legitimate representative group which gives voice to Muslims, and which communicates on legislative initiatives, and with the Main Directorate of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice. The CIE constitution was encouraged by the then-Socialist government in 1992 in order to take a Cooperation Agreement between the State and Islam’s official representatives (Mantecon 2004: 215). According to the Organic Law on Freedom of Religion of 1980, cooperation agreements can be considered special laws regulating relations between the State and officially recognised religions.⁹ The agreement with CIE deals with “the status of Islamic Religious Leaders and Imams, determining the specific rights deriving from the

⁷ The database is available at: <http://dgraj.mju.es/entidadesreligiosas>.

⁸ This is a public foundation created by the Spanish government in October 2004 with the purpose of promoting social integration, training and cultural programmes for the minority religions that have an agreement with the state. See: http://www.pluralismoyconvivencia.es/quienes_somos (visited in June 2009).

⁹ The Spanish government has concluded agreements with the Catholic Church (as early as 1978), and with Protestants, Jews and Muslims (all in 1992).

practise of their religious office, their personal status in areas of such importance as Social Security and ways of complying with their military duties, legal protection for their mosques, civil validity of marriage ceremonies held pursuant to Muslim rites, religious services in public centres or establishments, Muslim religious education in schools, the tax benefits applicable to certain property pertaining to the Federations that constitute the Islamic Commission of Spain, commemoration of Muslim religious holidays and finally, co-operation between the State and such Commission for the conservation and furthering of Islamic Historic and Artistic Heritage.”¹⁰

On the basis of the 1992 Agreement, CIE and its communities are entitled to the tax benefits and exemptions allowed for non-profit companies and private charities, but unlike to the Roman Catholic Church they do not enjoy any special budget and tax allocation.

According to Mantecon (2004: 216), the Agreement is not applied and complied with in many respects because of disputes between the two organisations that form CIE—UCIDE and FERRI— which undermine CIE capacity to work efficiently in the implementation of the Law. However, for its part, CIE accuses the government of a lack of political will. A clear case in point is represented by marriage: art. 7 of the Agreement recognises the civil effects of marriages celebrated in accordance with the religious form established by Islamic law, yet registration is not automatic and may take quite a lot of time. A certificate must be requested to the Register of Births, Marriages and Deaths, that checks the capacity of the spouses in accordance with the Civil Code (to avoid polygamy for instance).

Another interesting issue is that of Islamic religious education (Mantecon 2004: 227). The Agreement states that “Muslim pupils, their parents and the head teachers of school establishments so requesting are guaranteed the right of the former to receive Islamic religious education in public educational establishments and private establishments under contract provided that, in the latter case, the exercise of this right does not conflict with the character of the centre“ (art. 10). However, courses may not interfere with normal school activities, while no specification is given in the Agreement about the legal status of the teachers. In March 1996 another Agreement was ratified by CIE representatives and the Justice and Education Minister concerning the appointment and remuneration of Islamic religious education teachers. Nevertheless, lack of agreement between the two federations has prevented the application of the specific terms of this second Agreement (see: Mantecon 2004: 228).

3 Background information on the city

3.1 Brief description of the city

The city of Valencia¹¹ has a total population of 810,064 inhabitants and is the centre of an extensive metropolitan area which reaches a million and a half residents. This represents 16% of

¹⁰ See the official translation provided by Spain's Ministry of Justice regarding Law 26 of 10 November 1992 available at: <http://www.euro-islam.info/country-profiles/spain/> (visited in June 2009).

¹¹ For socio-demographic and economic information on the city see: Ajuntament de València – Àrea de Economia i gans projectes, 2008. Data refer to 1st January 2008.

the population of the Valencian region and is, in terms of population, the third largest city in Spain after Madrid and Barcelona. It is also the third largest city in terms of registered immigrants. Immigrants as Spaniards have to register in the municipal census (*Padrón*). The city population has risen throughout the 20th century and was stable during the 1990s. At the beginning of the 21st century, new migration flows together with an increase of the birth rate have been provoking a new dynamic increase in the population. The population of the city is relatively young (19% aged from 15 to 29 and 33% aged from 30 to 49).

From an economic point of view, Valencia has above all developed its services sector (final demand activities, wholesale and retail, of specialized services for businesses and professional activities). Almost 73% of the active population is employed in this sector. Nevertheless, the industry sector is still important with 11% of the population working in industries such as the paper and graphic arts sectors, wood and furniture, metallic products and footwear and clothing. Finally, around 8% of the population work in construction. The agricultural sector (1.2%) is relatively minor and it concerns mostly horticultural cultivation. Unemployment is lower than the Spanish average.

The dynamism of the city as an economic and touristic centre and as a place of reference for a multiplicity of economic activities is emphasised by the strength of institutions such as the Valencia Trade Fair, the Autonomous Port, the Stock Exchange, the Palace of Congress and four Universities. Valencia's port is the largest in Spain handling 20% of Spain's exports. Valencia also has a number of important cultural institutions that are becoming increasingly relevant in the development of the city: the IVAM (Valencia Institute of Modern Art), the Palace of Music and the City of Arts and Sciences contribute an undeniable added value to the city and to its metropolitan surroundings as a centre of culture and leisure.

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

In January 2008, among a population of 810.064 persons, foreigners living in Valencia and registered at the Municipality (*Padrón*) numbered 116.453, or 14,4% of the total resident population (Ajuntament de València 2008: 7). In 1991, foreign immigrants represented just 0,7% of the Valencia population, and ten years later, in 2001, 3%. A more relevant increase was registered in 2004, when the foreign population reached 9,1%, tripling in just three years.

Table 2 shows the 10 main national groups of immigrants living in the city in 2008 and gives an idea of their evolution over the last three years. New EU member countries, i.e., Romania and Bulgaria, show the most relevant increases in 2008, while Latin American nationalities show a more regular trend, with the exception of Bolivia. Morocco and Nigeria also register contained increases, as does China, in contrast to Pakistan which seems to decrease.

Tab. 2 - First 10 immigrant nationalities¹² in 2008 (compared with 2007 and 2006). Variation 2008/2007

	2008	2007	2006	% variation 2008/'07
Ecuador	16.214	16.315	18.540	-0,6
Bolivia	15.849	12.818	8.197	23,6
Colombia	10.218	9.590	10.336	6,5
Romania	9.708	6.582	6.027	47,5
Argentina	4.001	3.840	4.547	4,2
China	3.805	3.464	3.717	9,8
Bulgaria	3.439	2.752	2.938	25,0
Pakistan	3.396	3.722	4.009	-8,8
Morocco	3.172	2.984	3.326	6,3
Nigeria	2.884	2.609	2.648	10,5
TOTAL	116.453	102.166	99.820	14,0

Source: Ajuntament de València 2008.

The overall gender ratio of the foreign population living in Valencia is moderately unbalanced in favour of the male component: 53,5% versus 46,1% foreign women. However, whereas Eastern European and Latin American nationalities are relatively balanced, males prevail among Africans: Mali (97,8%), Senegal (93,4%), Ghana (89,1%), Algeria (76,4%), Cameroon (70,4%), Nigeria (65,7%), Guinea Conakry (65,4%) and Morocco (63,1%). The same situation can be found among both recently arrived Asian nationalities such as Pakistan (93%) and India (86,4%), and more

¹² The table only considers countries characterised by a high migration pressure and does not take into account people originating from developed EU and non-EU countries. However, among the former, Italy is the only case that would range among the first 10, with 5,312 residents in 2008. According to CAI officials there might be a non negligible number of Argentinians with Italian passports. However, no data are available to confirm this hypothesis.

established ones such as Syrians (63,8%). The gender ratio is reversed for immigrants from the Philippines, among whom women prevail (68,7%), which is the case also for Honduras (70,1%), Paraguay (62,5%), Equatorial Guinea (63,5%) and Hungary (59,3%). In general, immigrants, both men and women, are concentrated in the central age cohorts, i.e., between 20 and 44 (66,9% of the total foreign population living in the city in 2008).

According to a study carried out in 2006 on immigrants' main sectors of employment (Ajuntament de València 2006), a clear prevalence of the service and tertiary sector can be noted, employing 69,51% of the total employed immigrant population in the city, followed by the building sector (22,87%), fishing and agriculture (5,16%) and industry (2,4%). Compared to the rest of the Valencian region, in the city, employment in the service sector prevails, especially in commercial activities (Ajuntament de València and Invie 2006: 159).

In 2008 foreign immigrants represented 14,4% of the city resident population (Ajuntament de València and Invie 2008: 37), though some districts show an incidence above 20%: this is the case for El Calvari (23,3%), La Roqueta (20,9%), Tres Forques (20,8%), La Font Santa (21,3%), Natzarret (21,5%), L'Amistad (21,5%), Orriols (29,6%) and Ciutat Fallera (21,5%).

In principle, the Municipality regards every legal organisation that has the capacity to aggregate the immigrant population as relevant in fostering inter-group relations and immigrants' integration in the city. In more concrete terms, and with reference to the experience of the social workers and officials of the Centre for Immigration Support (Centro de Apoyo a la Inmigración—CAI), who have specific competence in the matter as will be pointed out below, a particular relevance is assigned to sector-based/functional associations which aggregate people around specific demands or goals regardless of their cultural background. However, CAI officials are also aware that different types of associations may be better suited to address the changing needs that individuals experience in the integration process.

In such a perspective, ethnic, national and religious associations, depicted as providing automatic solidarity, are considered particularly relevant in the initial phases of the integration process, since these are more suited to cope with the material and psychological needs of those who have recently arrived and may perceive the new context as hostile. However, as time passes and integration proceeds, CAI officials expect that ethnic and national associations will lose their centrality, and functional associations, characterised by a more heterogeneous composition—i.e., including both immigrants of different origins and autochthonous people—will prevail. These associations, considered to channel natural solidarity, aggregate people on cultural, social, leisure or neighbourhood networking ends, and can better satisfy the needs of individuals who are more integrated into the receiving society.

To sum up, both types of associations are regarded as relevant by CAI in the context of city intercultural and inter-group relations, notwithstanding a preference for the second kind. Such a preference is based on the expectation that immigrants participating in these latter associations can play a crucial bridging role between their groups and the receiving society. However, given the very recent start of migration flows towards the city, such organisations are still lacking in Valencia, the only case being that of a multiethnic women association (Asociación de Mujeres

Inmigrantes). Likewise, those associations which by definition have the ambition of gathering together different nationalities, such as immigrants from Latin American or Eastern Europe for instance, actually have a far more restricted membership, corresponding usually with one specific nationality.

As for national/ethnic associations, according to the official list provided by CAI there are 22, representing different nationalities from different areas of origin:

- Africa: Algerians (Casa Argelia), Moroccans (Al Amal, Asociación de Inmigrantes Marroquíes and Asociación de Mujeres Saharauis en España), Senegalese (Asociación de Inmigrantes Senegaleses), Ghanaian (ASINAV, Asociación de Integración de los Negros Africanos en Valencia).
- Eastern Europe: Lithuanians (Asociación de Lituanos en Valencia y Castellon), Ukrainians (Asociación de Ucrainos Ukraina), Romanians (AROVA, Asociación Rumana Valencia and AVAPE, Asociación Valenciana Ayuda Países del Este).
- South America: Argentineans (Asociación de Argentinos en Valencia), Cuban (ACUE, Asociación de Cubanos en Valencia), Peruvians (ARI-Perú and Asociación de Peruanos), Bolivians (ASBOLES, Asociación de Bolivianos), Colombians (ACOLVAL, Asociación de Colombianos en Valencia), Chilean (Casa de Chile en Valencia), Ecuadorians (AVALE, Asociación Valenciana de Ecuatorianos Progreso Iberoamericano and RUMIÑAHUI, Asociación de Inmigrantes Ecuatorianos y Latinoamericanos), Uruguayans (ASURVAL, Asociación de Uruguayos en la Comunidad Valenciana and Casa Uruguay), and Venezuelans (VENENVAL Asociación de Venezolanos en Valencia).
- Asia: Philippines (Asociación 3K)

Yet, according to CAI, many of these organisations seem to exist just on the paper: most of them are extremely weak from a structural point of view, often being the expression of an isolated leadership, without any real relation to the majority of the fellow-nationals living in the city. Just a few of the groups organise regular activities, relying upon extended membership and participation, and are thus regarded as relevant by the municipal administration for their contribution to immigrants' integration and inter-group relations. These are: the Association of Ecuadorian and Latin American Immigrants (RUMIÑAHUI, Asociación de Inmigrantes Ecuatorianos y Latinoamericanos), the Association of Bolivians (ASBOLES, Asociación de Bolivianos), the Association of Colombians in Valencia (ALCOLCVL, Asociación de Colombianos en Valencia), the Association of Romanians in Valencia (AROVA, Asociación Rumana de Valencia), the Association of Moroccan Immigrants (Al Amal, Asociación de Inmigrantes Marroquíes), the Association of Senegalese Immigrants (Asociación de Inmigrantes Senegaleses) and the Association of Ukrainians (UKRAINA, Asociación de Ucrainos). As for religious associations, the Islamic Cultural Centre (Centro Cultural Islámico), the Islamic Council of Valencia (Centro Cultural Islámico) and the Orthodox Church of Valencia (Iglesia Ortodoxa de Valencia) are regarded as particularly relevant for the scope of their activities and their membership.

The Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 is the official document approved by the Municipal Council of Valencia (see below § 4.1), that sets the main goals of the city immigrants' integration policy.¹³ Two sections deal with immigrant associations: "Intercultural activities" and "Participation and associationism" (*Área de Interculturalidad* and *Área de participación y Asociacionismo*) and specify policy purposes in this respect. These are:

- to enhance the organisational and participative capacity of immigrant associations through the inclusion of these latter in all the existing participative institutions;
- to favour immigrants' integration in cultural, leisure and other kinds of functional associations present in the city, i.e., not just in immigrant associations or in those providing help to immigrants;
- to promote and enhance membership in immigrant associations as a form of social participation;
- to support the participation of immigrants, and especially women, in those spaces which can favour the establishing of relations with the autochthonous population: neighbourhood associations, school-based associations of mothers and fathers, unions etc.;
- to promote networking between the local administration and organisations of civil society in order to strengthen the civic participation of the immigrant population;
- to stimulate the involvement of the immigrant population in the management of municipal services through their participation in all existing participative bodies: commissions, councils, district consultative committees etc.

As is clear, the Municipality aims to promote an intercultural associative movement acting as a link between immigrants and the autochthonous population. In this sense, the administration regards as particularly relevant those immigrant associations which work on issues such as interculturality, anti-racism and inter-religious dialogue.

As for the immigrants' welfare, immigrant communities are considered too weak and poorly structured to offer proper welfare services. From this point of view, much more relevant appear to be autochthonous third-sector organisation and NGOs such as Caritas, the Red Cross and Valencia Acoje. These organisations have been the first to mobilise in order to offer first accommodation services to immigrants in a context of continuously changing and rapidly increasing flows. As a consequence, they can rely upon their consolidated experience in delivering assistance and welfare services to immigrants. At the moment, Caritas and the Red Cross have a contract with CAI for the delivery of social assistance services to immigrants.

¹³ The Plan Norte-Sur is composed of three parts: 1) Immigration; 2) International cooperation and development; and 3) Co-development.

3.3 The city's Muslim population and its characteristics

According to the Observatorio Andalusí, an autonomous body of the Union of the Islamic Communities in Spain (Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España, UCIDE), in 2006 there were 113,595 Muslims living in the Community of Valencia; that is, 10,5% of the total 1.080.478 Muslims living in Spain that same year (Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007, 137).

At the municipal level, however, no official data are available. The census in Valencia does not register information on the religious affiliation of the population. As a consequence, official data on the Muslim population in the city are not available. An indirect measure of the size of this group can be obtained by considering official data on those ethnic and national groups that come from countries where Islam is the main religion. This has to be intended however as an unreliable measure, since it is based on the simplistic assumption that all the people coming from a certain country are affiliated with Islam, which is not necessarily the case; and, on the other hand, it does not take into account Muslims of a Spanish origin and Spanish citizens converted to Islam (which according to the CAI, are non-negligible number in the city).

In terms of ethnic and national origin, the main groups that comprise the Muslim population in the city of Valencia are Moroccans, Algerians, Senegalese, Nigerians (even though in this group a protestant minority is also present), Malians, Georgians, Pakistanis and Syrians, to which a very small number of Palestinians and Serbians have to be added.

On the basis of the Municipality's official statistics (Ajuntament de València 2008), in 2008 the presumably Muslim-affiliated population amounted to 14.254 people, the 12,2% of the immigrant population registered at the Municipality of Valencia and 1,7% of the overall Valencian population. In terms of denominational structure, the Valencian Muslim community is predominantly Sunni and reflects the various Koran doctrinal traditions present in the Arab world and in Europe (Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007: 138). Islamic brotherhoods such as *Sufi* and *Murid* are also present, even though these are far less well organised than the rest of the Muslim community (Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007: 137).

As regards the social and economic situation, the Muslim population appears to be extremely differentiated. Three components can be singled out: 1) the early arrived Middle Eastern students; 2) the male Maghrebian workers of the 1990s; 3) the newly arrived groups; i.e., sub-Saharan and Pakistanis.

As for the first segment, this is composed essentially of Syrians, Palestinians and a few Egyptians who arrived in the country and in the city of Valencia in the late 1970s as university students. Their level of education is thus particularly high and they are often self-employed. Mixed marriages are very common, and most of these immigrants have been living in the country for more than 20 years.

The second group is numerically more relevant and is composed of male Maghrebians (especially Moroccans and Algerians) workers who arrived in the city during the second half of the 1990s. Family reunions have already taken place, and a growing trend towards stabilisation of the

existing immigrant population is evident in the emerging of a second generation. The gender ratio, however, is still unbalanced, as women account for just 36,9% of the total Moroccan resident population, and for 23,6% of the Algerian one (Ajuntament de València 2008: 16).

The third segment is the most recent and less known by the Municipality. Pakistanis, as well as Nigerians and other sub-Saharanans, have become a relevant group in the official statistics only starting from 2005,. As newly arrived groups, women still account for a very low percentage of these immigrants (7% for Pakistanis, 6,6% for Senegalese, 2,2% for Malians; the only exception being the Nigerians with 34.3% women).

According to CAI officials, the most important Muslim religious organisations in the city are:

- The Islamic Council of Valencia (Consejo Islámico de Valencia), whose headquarters are in the Gran Mezquita (Great Mosque) of Valencia, which was inaugurated in 1992 and is today the most-attended Islamic worship centre in the city;
- The Islamic Cultural Centre (Centro Cultural Islámico), born as the cultural association of the Gran Mezquita, from which it departed in 2004 to settle in new and distinct premises;
- The Islamic Community (Comunidad Islámica), founded in 1966 by a small group of Middle East university students and legally recognised since 1989; and
- The worship room of Ruzafa (Asociación *Al-Fatah*).

Some of these organisations adhere to national and regional-level alliances and federations. In particular, the Islamic Community is among the founders of UCIDE, the Union of the Islamic Communities in Spain, one of the two national-level federations represented in the Islamic Commission of Spain (see above 2.2.3), while the Islamic Cultural Centre adheres to the Superior Islamic Council of the Valencian Region, a regional-level federation of 25 Muslim organisations. However, there are no city level federations the city administration can communicate with. Also, relations between associations are few and usually informal. A certain degree of rivalry also seems to be present, in particular between the Islamic Council of Valencia and the Islamic Cultural Centre, which in 2004 left the Gran Mezquita to establish its own independent headquarters.¹⁴

The associations mentioned above are first and foremost worship centres that attract a Muslim population which is highly dispersed in the city. At the same time, they provide basic social assistance for those in need (i.e., material support such as food and first shelter, as well as psychological and moral support), and organise cultural and leisure activities such as Arabic courses for children and adults, summer camps for youngsters, Spanish language courses etc.

From the point of view of the Municipal administration, and in particular of CAI, these associations play a crucial role in supporting the welfare of their communities not only by providing the social

¹⁴ According to CAI officials and other people interviewed, disputes started because of the expansion of Islamic Cultural Centre activities.

assistance services mentioned above, but most of all by taking part in projects and events at a district level that allow for the building of positive relations with other neighbourhood associations. This is the case of the cultural week organised every year in the Orriols district, in which the Islamic Cultural Centre takes part by opening its mosque to the neighbourhood. Also in the Nazaret district there is a close collaboration between the Islamic Community and the neighbourhood associations: these latter ensure legal counselling services for immigrants by paying a lawyer who regularly meets people in the Islamic Community headquarters. An “open mosque” programme is also carried out for the district’s schools, to offer students an opportunity to learn more about Muslim religious precepts and practices.

4 Local intercultural policies in general

4.1 General approach and responsibility for relations to ethnic and religious organisations in the city

As a complex organisation, the Municipality of Valencia is composed of different departments, roles and levels of decision-making, which makes it complicated to identify a unique and consistent attitude towards immigrant associations. Nevertheless, according to CAI officials, who are in the front-line in immigrant integration policy, a favourable attitude prevails, as pointed out by a number of initiatives of the Municipality.

First, in 2003 the First Plan for the Integration of Immigrants¹⁵ (*Primero Plan Municipal para la Integración de la Inmigración*) was approved, on the basis of which CAI was constituted in 2004. This was a decision of the then-PPE mayor, highlighting her special interest on immigrants’ integration. Specific tasks were assigned to CAI in relation to immigrant associations, such as providing information on how to establish an association and to obtain legal recognition, facilitating access to various data and documents, providing opportunities for participation in specific projects etc.

Secondly, and as pointed out above (§3.2), the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013, which is the main official document of the Municipality dealing with immigrants’ integration policy, the section devoted to Participation and Associationism (*Participación y Asociacionismo*) envisages specific goals and means of fostering the participation of immigrants and their associations. The Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 was prepared by a Technical Office (*Oficina Técnica del Plan*) and discussed extensively with the social partners, i.e., the unions and employers’ organisations, and various concerned local NGOs, although no special involvement of immigrant associations seems to have been pursued (see § 4.6). Civil society organisations could propose amendments through August 2008, and some of these were taken into account in the final version of the Plan that has been approved by the Municipal Council. In the Plan, participation in associations is regarded as crucial for immigrants’ integration, since it is supposed to enhance immigrants’ involvement and responsibility in the managing of municipal services. Such a greater involvement should be pursued through the incorporation of immigrant associations into all the existing participatory

¹⁵ According to Enrique Mota, of the University of Valencia, this was the first programme on immigration launched by any municipality in Spain (field visit interview).

institutions (i.e., commissions, local councils, districts committees etc.) and through networking (“trabajo en red”).

Thirdly, immigrant associations participate in the Solidarity Platforms (Mesas de Solidaridad) established in the 11 city districts to monitor living conditions in the neighbourhoods and to promote projects of social assistance. This represents an opportunity for immigrants to be involved in the implementation of local integration policy, as will be pointed out below.

Last but not least, the positive attitude of the local administration towards immigrant associations is also indicated by the participation of Aldermen and CAI officials in the cultural activities, celebrations and other public events that immigrant associations organise.

Given the role played by CAI in supporting immigrant organisations, this is the municipal office actually in charge of dealing with immigrant associations. From an institutional point of view, authority over immigration issues, relations with immigrant associations included, has been assigned by the current PPE (Popular Party) mayor, Ms. Rita Barberá Nolla, to the Social Policy and Integration Alderman, Ms. Marta Torrado de Castro. Often, associations report directly to the Social Policy and Integration Alderman but, depending on the demands, they may also report to other Aldermen tasked with more specific issues such as education.

According to the Social Policy and Integration Alderman, relations with immigrant associations in the city are positive and fruitful, as indicated by their participation in various initiatives of the Municipality such as “Pasa la Bola” (Pass the Ball). This is a programme of cultural and leisure activities that started in May 2009 and that will take place in the 11 city districts through the end of November. The project is a clear example of the intercultural integration strategy pursued by the local government: the organising committee is composed of four associations, two of which are immigrant associations. Moreover, immigrant associations participate in the neighbourhood platforms are tasked with defining the activities to be carried out in each district. According to Ms. Torrado, their participation is crucial, since immigrant associations represent a new group that enriches the local community and offer an opportunity for mutual learning and appreciation.¹⁶

The Social Policy Alderman actively takes part at immigrant association initiatives, such as celebrations or other events. In case she cannot be present in person, CAI officials representing the local government guarantee their participation.

The Municipal Council (Pleno Municipal), composed of 32 councillors, is the collegial body where strategic policies are debated and adopted. In November 2008 the Municipal Council¹⁷ approved at majority vote the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013, with the abstention of the PSOE representatives (12 councillors). At the moment, in the Municipal Council there are no representatives from local ethnic communities. Since, as pointed out above, immigration flows towards the city are very recent, immigrants do not have the formal prerequisite to be elected to the Municipal Council, i.e., they are not yet Spanish citizens.

¹⁶ Interview with Ms. Torrado de Castro carried out during the field visit.

¹⁷ The current Municipal Council was elected in 2007. The PPE received an absolute majority of councillors (20). The only opposition group is represented by the PSOE (12 councillors).

4.2 Issues, demands and interests

According to CAI officials, the major issues in relation to immigrant groups are: socio-cultural issues (e.g., festivals, art, film, theatre, literature, minority language), social needs (e.g., housing, employment, health), development aid, education (including host-country language learning) and sports.

As for socio-cultural issues, these are linked mainly to community celebrations and other cultural initiatives of immigrant associations. In this respect, the main demands of the ethnic and religious organisations present in the city concern essentially the availability of spaces for their activities, i.e., spaces for the celebration of national festivities and public premises for the associations' regular activities. As for the first demand, CAI ensures collaboration by identifying possible premises or outdoor public spaces, as in the case for instance of the Colombian association that celebrates its national day every July in the main park of the city. On the other hand, the request for regular premises cannot be satisfied, since the use of the Municipal real estate is not the responsibility of CAI. According to the CAI officials, providing a public premises to a private association is very rare and just a few Spanish NGOs enjoy such a privilege, the only exception being in 1990 the provision of a piece of land to the Islamic community where the Great Mosque (Gran Mezquita) was built (see above § 3.3).

In general, cultural demands are dealt with in the Cultural Mediation area of CAI which currently has the goal of promoting projects for the diffusion of cultural diversity, as well as of giving support to cultural initiatives organised by immigrant associations.

Religious groups have also from time to time expressed their demand for appropriate premises for the practise of their worship. These demands cannot be dealt with by the CAI, which nevertheless confirmed in the field visit interview the scarcity of public premises available and the impossibility of obtaining such a premise on a regular basis.

Social demands and issues arise in relation to the need encountered especially by newly arrived immigrants, as well as those who live in precarious conditions. Employment is a major issue, especially in the current context of economic crisis. According to staff of the NGOs interviewed in the field visit, the number of poor immigrant families asking for basic help (food, second-hand clothing etc.) is increasing. Housing is another issue, because of the high rents and the discrimination that some groups such as Moroccans and black Africans in general have to face.

In general, socio-economic demands are treated by the administration according to the principle of "normalisation": that there are no specific social services for immigrants who nevertheless are supposed to receive first support and attention from general social centres (*centros de servicios sociales*) operating at the neighbourhood level.¹⁸ An exception to this rule is the First Accommodation Service offered by CAI, which deals with the most vulnerable immigrant populations in the city such as first-arrived people and non-resident immigrants with no means of

¹⁸ See the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 of the Concejalía de Bienestar Social e Integración, p. 17.

subsistence. The purpose of the service is to prevent social exclusion by providing basic assistance such as night shelter and food.

Education is another important issue since the knowledge of the Spanish language is crucial for integration into the labour market and in the receiving society in general. At the same time, immigrant children's education is another sensitive point, especially as far as the language and culture of origin are concerned. However, education is not the responsibility of the municipalities in Spain, but of the autonomous communities, even though municipalities may undertake initiatives to answer to specific demands. The Municipality of Valencia guarantees to the district's schools a number of activities aimed at supporting intercultural curricula and learning (see the project *Carpeta de la Solidaridad* examined below). Moreover, various third-sector organisations offer language courses for children both in Spanish and Valencian, which are the two official languages of the region, and some of these are actually financed by the Municipality.

Health care issues are also particularly relevant, especially as far as foreign women are concerned. Once again, this is not a municipal responsibility but a regional one. Nevertheless, CAI is involved in a regional project on the prevention of unwanted pregnancy and on the transmission of sexual diseases among Latin American youth.

As far as the use of sports facilities, a specific request has been advanced recently by the Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia concerning the reservation of a special timetable for Muslim women in the public swimming pool. Such a demand has not been satisfied by the Sports Department since restrictions on access to public utilities on the basis of a particular group's needs cannot be allowed.¹⁹ In general, immigrant associations may have access to public sport premises not only for sports needs, but also for recreational and leisure-time initiatives. For this reason throughout 2009 CAI intends to promote socio-educative projects that use sports as an integration strategy (see for instance the project "Pasa la Bola" mentioned above).

Last but not least, development and co-development are central issues in the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013, that envisages support on the part of the Municipality for programmes of sustainable development in the main areas of origin of the immigrant population resident in Valencia.

4.3 Forms of relations and dialogue

At the moment, there are no regular contacts between the Municipality and ethnic or religious associations. Usually, contacts occur following specific requests on the part of the associations, such as those mentioned above (public spaces for the celebration of a party etc.). Nonetheless, the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 actually proposes the establishment of more regular contacts with ethnic and religious organisations, and to this end it envisages a number of measures:

- to foster the co-responsibility of immigrant population in the running of municipal services through its incorporation into all existing participatory institutions: commissions, councils, districts' boards, etc.

¹⁹ According to CAI officials these would be also economically unfeasible, since the costs of such a special dedicated time would be too high.

- to support activities and projects based on networking between a greater number of organisations, on the basis of their real strength and/or numeric relevance;
- to establish a Commission for Immigration within the Municipal Council for Social Action;
- to foster the participation of immigrant associations in the Solidarity Platforms (see above § 4.1) as well as in the future City Social Council (Consejo Social de la Ciudad).

Currently, most of these measures are yet to be implemented. Such is the case of the City Social Council, an institution aimed at fostering citizens' participation in local government introduced by a national law approved in December 2003,²⁰ but which the city of Valencia has not yet implemented. Likewise, the Immigrant Commission, formally introduced by the Norte-Sur Plan, is still to be constituted.

As for participation at a neighbourhood level, this seems to vary significantly according to the relevance of the immigrant presence in the different city districts. However, some immigrant associations have benefited from projects promoted by neighbourhood Solidarity Platforms. This is the case of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia, which actively takes part in the Solidarity Platform established by neighbourhood associations in the Orriol district.

In other words, the Municipality, and the CAI in particular, has not institutionalised formal contacts with ethnic and religious organisations, but these groups are encouraged to take part in the channels of participative democracy already existing in the city. The Commission for Immigration would represent the first attempt at an institutionalised, formal contact with immigrant associations. This would be a specific commission representing a special social category, along with those already existing within the Municipal Council for Social Action, which represent groups such as the retired, the disabled etc. Nevertheless, according to Director of the Plan Technical Office, the Social Policy Alderman does not seem too keen on the proliferation of such "special" commissions. Participation of immigrant associations into existing participative institutions is regarded as the key to integration. As a consequence, the Commission for Immigration does not appear to represent a priority for the Municipality.

On religious issues, the only initiative of the Municipality to undertake regular contact with religious groups in the city has been carried out in the context of the Centre for Strategies and Development of Valencia (Centro de Estrategias y Desarrollo de Valencia – CeyD), a mixed public-private agency established in 2004 by the Municipality, which chairs it, and by the local

²⁰ According to the 2003 law, the City Social Councils will be comprised of the representatives of the most relevant economic, social, professional and neighbourhood organisations. The main function of this body is that of producing studies, information and proposals on issues of local development, strategic planning and urban projects realisation.

actors²¹ interested in taking part in the designing of the city's future strategies for economic and social development. In 2006 the CeyD established a strategic group (*grupo de anticipación*) called the Polyedric City (*Ciudad Poliédrica*), chaired by the then Alderman on Human Progress, and composed of the representatives of the main religious groups present in Valencia, the two universities, the Education Council and other public agencies. The main goal was to act as a permanent platform for 1) the identification and strengthening of the city's common cultural values, and 2) the prevention of urban conflicts by tackling their social and economic causes and preventing ethnic or religious opposition (Equipo técnico del CeyD 2006: 20-21). However, according to the interviewed actors,²² the strategic group met just twice and did not coalesce as a regular municipal platform for religious dialogue. At the moment, it does not appear to be active.

Municipal grants to associations can be of two distinct types: 1) the subvention (*subvención*), which is based on regular – usually annual – calls for projects; and 2) the convention (*convenio*), directly agreed upon by the administration and the association for the delivery of specific services. Whereas the first type of funding is strictly linked to the implementation of projects selected on the basis of criteria specified in the call, the second is conceived as a more general agreement between the parties for a two-year minimum duration, and with fewer requirements for the association.²³

Immigrant associations have access to both kinds of funding. For the subventions, the Municipality runs annual calls for projects on specific social needs on the one hand, and anti-poverty and social exclusion on the other. Immigrant, religious and autochthonous ethnic (Gypsy) minorities' associations may be involved in the running of projects aimed at fostering the integration of their communities of reference, especially on issues such as access to employment, teaching of the language of origin to the second generation, renovation of the association's headquarters etc.

On the other hand, as for conventions, at the moment only one immigrant association enjoys such a kind of agreement with the Municipality for running first-accommodation services such as night shelters. In general, such a permanent relation is more common with Spanish NGOs. In the area of social services for immigrants, CAI has agreements with the Spanish Red Cross and Caritas.

The Municipality does not have specific measures aimed at preventing social exclusion. The Social Services Programme for Social Inclusion 2006–2009, acknowledges the necessity of

²¹ More than 300 private and public entities are represented in the CeyD Council. The executive committee is comprised of 15 such entities, among including the Municipality, the Valencian Farmers Association, the Metropolitan Agency for Hydraulic Services, the Province of Valencia (Deputación de Valencia), the Economic Department of the Autonomous Community, the University of Valencia and the Polytechnic University of Valencia, the Chamber of Commerce of Valencia, the Port Authority, the Employers' Confederation and the Valencia Fair Agency (see: www.ceyd.org/dos_minutos/2_min.htm, consulted 30 April 2009).

²² The representatives of Caritas, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Valencia and the Urban Mission of the Evangelic Churches all expressed a positive assessment, but also regret over the abandonment of such efforts on the part of the Municipality.

²³ In administrative terms, associations that have such contracts with the Municipality are not obligated to justify each expense; however, they must do so in the case of the subvention.

combatting discrimination, exclusion or inferiorisation against specific groups in the population, immigrants included. The Department of Human Resources of the Municipality carries out regular training programmes for Municipality officials and for the local police which have two purposes: providing knowledge on immigration phenomena, and sensitising personnel about immigrants' social situation and living conditions.

As mentioned above (see § 3.2), the city's main document on intercultural relations, defining its policy objectives and main measures, is the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013. In terms of its general framework, the Plan is centred on the principle of enhancing living together with an intercultural perspective. This implies that municipal immigrant policy should be aimed at strengthening among autochthonous citizens favourable attitudes towards intercultural relations and cohabitation in diverse social contexts, as well as the values of freedom, justice, equality and solidarity, which are regarded as crucial in order to legitimize immigrants' presence and participation in Valencian society. The general goal of such a policy is to achieve integration through the fostering of dialogue and relations between the receiving society and immigrant communities, as well as among these latter disparate groups.

The more specific goals identified by the Plan Norte-Sur are as follows:

- to reinforce the values of tolerance and respect for human rights in all Municipal services;
- to deal with conflict between the autochthonous and immigrant populations, in order to prevent degeneration and to take advantage of its positive potential;
- to sensitise the Valencian population to immigration as a positive and enriching phenomenon;
- to transmit the values of the receiving society to the immigrant population;
- to foster intercultural contacts in order to favour a mutual and bi-directional integration;
- to foster the organisational and participative capacity of immigrant associations.
- to favour immigrants' integration into cultural, leisure-time or other associations in the city, not just community associations or autochthonous organisations working on migration.

If the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 establishes the general framework, more specific guidelines can be found in the programme of the Cultural Mediation area of CAI denominated "Valencia Cultural Mosaic" (Valencia Mosaico de Culturas). Three strategic areas of intervention are singled out: 1) intercultural education; 2) interculturality; and 3) participation and associations.

In the area of intercultural education, the Municipality promotes projects aimed at developing support activities for the educational community to bring about multicultural cohabitation through the transmission of core common values; cooperation and support of those organisations that already carry out activities in the city's schools aimed at favouring positive attitudes of respect for cultural differences and of refusal of discrimination; supporting new activities for the the youngest

on intercultural cohabitation; developing activities with other administrations, organisations and associations already mobilised on these issues in the city, as well as in collaborating with other departments of the Municipality.

As for the initiatives on interculturality, these are directed at “gradually incorporating the immigrant population into the different cultural contexts of the city. Municipal spaces must adapt to the new reality and encourage interculturality as a means of building positive attitudes towards diversity and as a resource for the strengthening of the cultural development and advancement of our city” (Common Reporting Scheme).

Last but not least, as for the third area of intervention—participation and associationism—the Valencia Cultural Mosaic programme as well as CAI officials acknowledge the crucial role of associations as instruments of participation in the receiving society. As a consequence, the promotion of activities aimed at encouraging the participation of different immigrant groups and of lines of funding directed at strengthening their structures is regarded as essential.

Despite their recent history in the city, there are some events organised by immigrant groups that typically receive support from the Municipality in the sense that public spaces or premises are provided for free. This is the case of the Colombian national celebration which takes place the 20th of July and of the Ecuadorian Summer Celebration, the 15th of July. Since also the city of Valencia celebrates this same day in a similar festivity, the two merged last year in a unique city event. Other celebrations and events are also organised at the district level (such as the Ukrainian Independence Day and the cultural week of the Islamic Cultural Centre in the Orriol district).

As mentioned above, associations are generally constituted on an ethnic or national basis. Even when they refer to broader groups in their denomination such as African, Latin American etc., in practice they are the expression of one national group. The only inter-ethnic organisation can be considered the Alternative Forum for Immigration (see § 2.2.2), with which the Municipality has informal relations. The Forum generally invites CAI to its initiatives and sends out information on its activities. Yet, this organisation is highly politicised and contentious, so relations cannot be of an official or regular kind. The Municipality also has informal relations with the two platforms on inter-religious dialogue established respectively by the University of Valencia and by the CeiMigra Foundation, which will be described below (§ 4.4)

According to CAI officials, good practices aimed at supporting intercultural dialogue are based on the assumption that diversity is a resource of the city. This is especially the case for a number of projects promoted in the field of education. The first one is “Carpeta Educativa: Todos a Una por Diversidad,” which was started 2004 with the purpose of establishing regular intercultural spaces and practices in all the schools of the city, and not just those with a relevant presence of pupils with a foreign background. Immigrant associations and seven autochthonous NGOs have been involved in designing specific intercultural activities for teachers’, children’s, mothers’ and fathers’ associations.

In particular, for teaching staff, a regular programme of seminars on interculturality and conflict mediation, as well as on the prevention of racism and xenophobia, is offered. Moreover, an

orientation service is also available on demand, providing to individual teachers or small groups advice and support on specific issues. As for students, specific programmes are differentiated according to their age and level of education, such as basic courses on interculturality for primary school pupils or more elaborated seminars on racism, prejudice and xenophobia for youngsters attending secondary school. Extra-curricular recreational activities such as theatre and video production are also offered. Support activities for parents associations are aimed at sensitising on immigration flows and intercultural relations, as well as at providing specific services of information and translation for foreign parents, to favour their participation in school activities.

The main innovative point stressed by CAI is networking and collaboration between different organisations in order to put various and specific activities already carried out in some pioneering schools into an integrated project offered to the whole city which answers the specific needs of the various actors involved in the educational process.

The second project is “Diversinema: Cine para la convivencia intercultural,” promoted in the context of the 2008 European Year for Intercultural Dialogue with the purpose of sensitising youngsters on interculturality through various audiovisual instruments. The initiative took place in the week between the 17th and 21st November 2008 with the screening of two movies, a music laboratory and two expositions, the first one on toys from all around the world (*Juegos del mundo*) and the other one on drums (*El tambor nos une*), the latter gathering instruments from all over the world in order to show the universality and interculturality of drum music. Specific didactic materials were also produced to support discussion and work in the classrooms. Organised and totally funded by the Social Policy and Integration Department through CAI, the project was also supported by the Education Dept, the Youth Department and the University of Valencia.

The third project cited by CAI as a good practice is the “Jornadas Formación Universidad Popular de Valencia—Inmigración y Diversidad: Claves para la Convivencia.” The Universidad Popular is an institution of the Department of Education of the Municipality which organises cultural events inviting professors and experts on specific themes.²⁴ In July 2008, three days were dedicated to training conferences and seminars for the professors of the Universidad Popular on the issues of immigration, cultural diversity, racism and xenophobia. Their active and numerous participation indicated a success for the Education Department.

Despite these positive experiences, a number of problems in the implementation of the municipal integration and participation policies have been cited during the interviews, especially as far as the First Plan for Immigrants Integration was concerned, depicted by CAI officials as “too ambitious.” According to the 2001–2004 Plan, CAI had a mandate to set up an observatory on the city immigrant population, but this has not yet been realised.²⁵ Also, as mentioned above, the Commission on immigration has not yet been implemented. Problems of coordination between the various Municipality departments concerned with immigration have also been noted: the perception of CAI as a branch of the Social Services Department appears to have been

²⁴ Although it is called University (Universidad), actually it does not deliver any degree or certificate.

²⁵ This goal has been reiterated by the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013.

detrimental to its ambition of implementing a coordinated municipal programme of action. In theory, the other municipal departments (i.e., Education, Youth etc.) are supposed to collaborate with CAI and to provide financial resources for the implementation of common activities. In practice, such a collaboration cannot be assumed and depends on the willingness of the other departments to collaborate.

Difficulties in cooperation with immigrant associations were experienced in a particularly critical situation: in 2004, a group of around 100 illegal sub-Saharan immigrants started camping during the night under one of the Rio Turia bridges.²⁶ Spontaneous groups of Catholic volunteers were the first to provide help to these people, together with NGOs like Centro Arrupe, Caritas Diocesana, Intermón-Oxfam and Médicos del Mundo. The Foro Alternativo (see § 2.2.2) led vocal demonstrations against national and local authorities, the Municipality included, advocating in particular for the regularisation of these immigrants. The illegal status of the people concerned was a major point of dispute and opposition between civil society organisations and public authorities, especially national, not willing to concede any special amnesty. As a consequence, Municipal authorities could not intervene directly, since it would have been against the law. Nevertheless, CAI organised various meetings with all the engaged organisations to look for suitable solutions. In the end, it took three years to find an agreement: the national government allowed the regularisation of these immigrants and a new Municipal First Accommodation Centre was set up to host them.

4.4 Relationship between different ethnic groups in the city

In general, majority/immigrant minority relations in the city are described as positive, both by the administration—i.e., CAI officials, the Alderman Marta Torrado—and by the other actors interviewed in Valencia (see the list at the end of the report). The immigrant population is dispersed in the city, even though there are a few neighbourhoods characterised by higher concentrations. As pointed out above (see § 3.1), in the Orriols district immigrants represent 29,6% of the total population, while in eight more neighbourhoods the ratios are slightly above 20%.

These concentrations are regarded with a certain concern by the Municipality, as potentially hostile contexts, where foreigners and the less-advantaged Spanish population are somehow forced to live together because the poorer quality of housing keeps rents affordable. Yet, no studies are available on Valencian people's attitudes towards immigration, which are described by CAI as "peaceful but distant" (see the Common Reporting Scheme).

At the same time, in some neighbourhoods there have also been positive consolidating experiences of collaboration between autochthonous organisations and immigrant ones, especially around the Solidarity Platforms. As already mentioned, the Solidarity Platforms gather together at a district level all the organisations working on social welfare in order to assess emerging needs in the neighbourhoods and to prepare projects and action plans that could be financed by the Municipality. Every year the Department of Social Policy and Integration launches

²⁶ Actually the Rio Turia is just a riverbed, since the river itself was deviated after the floods of 1957. At the moment, the riverbed hosts the main city park and the modern area of the Arts and Science City Hall.

a call for projects in the area of “Poverty and Social Exclusion” which targets the associations represented in the Solidarity Platforms. According to CAI official data, in 2008, 59,771 Euros were spent for programmes directed at immigrants and/or refugees’ integration of a total budget of 530,000 Euros.²⁷ Grants were awarded to 13 projects presented by the immigrant associations participating in the 11 districts’ Solidarity Platforms.

In the city there are also some relevant examples of various forms of collaboration between different ethnic and religious organisations. The Foro Alternativo por la Defensa y los Derechos de la Integración Social de la Inmigración, mentioned above in 2.2.2, is a common platform for immigrant and autochthonous associations which has the goal of debating, analysing and advocating for the integration process of foreign immigrants in Valencia. As noted above in the crisis of the Rio Turia (see § 4.3), the Foro Alternativo is particularly vocal and demanding on issues of equality, respect for cultural difference and anti-racism. Also the Unions, and in particular the CC.OO. Comisiones Obreras, have close collaborations with various immigrant associations especially on issues of access to the labour market and employment²⁸.

The associations that participate in the Alternative Forum have established various forms of informal collaboration, such as the sharing of their headquarters, in order to reduce their expenses. Is this the case of the Moroccan association Al-Amal and the Association of Bolivians in Valencia.

As far as collaboration between different religious organisations is concerned, two platforms exist: the Three Religions Chair (*Cátedra de las Tres Religiones*) of the University of Valencia and the CeiMigra inter-religious space. The *Cátedra de las Tres Religiones* was established in 2000 after the signing of an agreement between the University of Valencia, the Centro Ecuménico Padre Congar, the Federación de Comunidades Israelitas de España and the Union de Comunidades Islámicas de España (UCIDE), with the purpose of offering courses on the three founding religions of the *Cátedra* at different levels (post-graduate, master courses etc.) and under different perspectives²⁹ (philosophical, psychological, sociological etc.). Moreover, the *Cátedra* organises regularly seminars and conferences on inter-religious dialogue and is opened also to the contribution of other religious confessions.³⁰ The Orthodox Church of Valencia, as well as Valencian Muslim organisations, and in particular the Islamic Cultural Centre and the Islamic Community, collaborate with the *Cátedra*.

²⁷ In 2008, “immigrants and refugees” represented the third priority in terms of spending, after “childhood and youth” (276,156 Euros) and “residents in general” (64,516 Euros).

²⁸ Interview with Ventura Montalbán Gamez, Secretario de Migraciones, CC.OO. Sindicato Comisiones Obreras. Telephone and e-mail contacts with the UGT were also undertaken, but these were not successful.

²⁹ On the history of the *Cátedra*, see Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007: 274–275.

³⁰ Recently a seminar on Baha’i religion was organised. Regarding this seminar, the representatives of the Evangelic Church interviewed during the field visit cast doubts upon such an opening on the part of the *Cátedra* which, according to their point of view, may lose its original purpose of fostering dialogue among the three monotheistic religions.

CeiMigra, Centro de Estudios para la Integración Social y Formación de Inmigrantes (Research Centre for the Social Integration and the Education of Immigrants), is an institution founded in 2001 by the Compañía de Jesús and hosted in the ancient Colegio San José. Since its beginning CeiMigra received the support of the Government of the Autonomous Community (Generalitat Valenciana), and in particular by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship³¹ (Consellería de Inmigración y Ciudadanía). While essentially concerned with the promotion of research studies on immigration, as pointed out by the work of the Observatorio Valenciano de las Migraciones (Valencian Observatory on Migration), the centre actually carries out various different activities, such as training, first assistance and orientation, legal consultancy³² etc. In the context of inter-religious dialogue, CeiMigra has promoted various seminars and conferences to which the different religious organisations which are active in the city have been invited. Moreover, CeiMigra offers support to immigrant communities for the celebration of their traditional festivities such as for instance the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Novena and the Russian Orthodox festivities.

A similar function is also carried out by the Evangelic Church and in particular by the Urban Mission of Valencia (Misión Urbana de València), which offers spaces to protestant immigrant groups (such as Nigerians) for their Sunday celebration. Also Caritas, in the context of its pastoral function, encourages local parishes to host the traditional ceremonies of Catholic immigrant groups.

Along with these official platforms, relations of informal collaboration between different associations are also frequent.

4.5 Public communication

The Municipality has no official public communication strategy in relation to ethnic and religious groups, although the participation of the Alderman in the celebrations and events organised by the various immigrant associations can be considered part of a more general friendly image that the Municipality is willing to communicate to the citizenry.

According to María Jesús Grande, Communications Officer of the Department of Social Policy and Integration, the main issue for the Municipality is how to communicate in an effective manner its integration policy. Immigration is a sensitive issue, which can be easily politicised. A low-profile strategy is regarded as preferable, in order not give the impression of favouring immigrants over the local population. In the context of economic crisis, the risk of creating rivalry and competition over scarce resources cannot be overlooked. Communication about integration policies should not serve the visibility interests of politicians: it should be neutral and balanced in its tone to give the correct information about what the Municipality is currently doing.³³

³¹ CeiMigra is also funded by the Fundación Bancaixa.

³² See: http://www.ceimigra.net/images/stories/pfds/Presentacion_Institucional_CeiMigra.pdf.

³³ According to María Jesús Grande, an example of a bad communication strategy on immigration is the highly media-wise style adopted by the Aldermen on Integration and Citizenship of the Valencian Autonomous Community, Rafaél Blasco, who “is always in the news.” Recently, complaints have been published in the newspapers asking Mr. Blasco to take into account the problems of Spanish people, and not just those of immigrants.

A study carried out in 2003 on practices in reporting on immigration (Siurana Aparisi and Garcia Calandín 2004) of nine daily newspapers,³⁴ revealed that journalists usually refer to institutional sources and rarely to immigrants and their organisations.³⁵ Immigrant associations are considered only in relation to protests, and much less in their everyday activities. The content analysis of the news published in the period September–December 2003 pointed out that immigration is often associated with negative words such as “problem” and “problematic,” “illegal” and “avalanche.” Some words even convey open prejudice, as is the case with *moros*, an offensive word for “Arabs.”³⁶ Only one newspaper, among the eight analysed, has a once-a-week page devoted to immigration-related issues.

The same study reveals that local newspapers as well as the rest of the major local media have no personnel of an immigrant or ethnic minority background, nor are there journalists who specialise in immigration. Since immigration is not regarded as an area of specialisation, there is no training on interculturality in the media. Interviews with local media specialists carried out during the field visit confirm this situation.

The local radio can be considered to a certain extent an exception: there are a few broadcasts on immigration chaired by immigrants, and some of whom are professional journalists. In general these kinds of broadcasts are aimed at dealing with immigrants’ problems, especially with legal issues, and usually a lawyer is invited to take phone calls.

Ethnic media in Valencia and in Spain more generally appear to consist essentially of free press journals. Most of these newspapers are based in Madrid and Barcelona but have a Valencian edition, as for instance *Sí se puede* or *Raíz*. *Toda la Información* and *Latino* are produced and published in Valencia. The last addresses Latin American immigrants, who are seen as a particularly interesting market by advertising agencies. *Toda la Información*, on the other hand, is a free monthly journal funded by the Municipality, the autonomous community and the Fundación Bancaixa (a private funding agency linked to a local bank), and deals with immigration at large. Special attention is devoted to the activities of immigrant associations and to international development initiatives. A legal counselling column is also present.

Raíz has editions in Romanian, Bulgarian, Ukraine and Arabic. Yet, according to the people interviewed, Arab immigrants are not such great consumers as Latin Americans, which explains the relatively minor interest in this audience on the part of the free press.

³⁴ These were: Levante, Las Provincias, Diario de València, El País, El Mundo, ABC, Información, La Verdad and Mediterráneo.

³⁵ The study was based on both a content analysis of the news and interviews with journalists. At the moment of the field visit in Valencia I was informed that a new study on local press practices on migration would be published soon. Unfortunately, it is not yet available.

³⁶ Although it was used only eight times in the four months analysed, any use of this clearly prejudicial word is remarkable.

4.6 Summary and lessons learnt

Immigrant integration policy in Valencia is very recent, since the First Plan for the Integration of Immigrants only dates back to 2003. For the time being, the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 is the document that defines the strategy of the Municipality of Valencia in relation to ethnic and religious groups. Participation is the keyword: intercultural dialogue is expected to stem from the participation of immigrant associations in the mainstream consultative and participative institutions. Ad hoc commissions and bodies are regarded less favourably, since immigrants are expected contribute to the city's general well being and development.

As is clear, participation is not intended as a means of expression and recognition of differences, but rather as an engagement in the local polity structures and institutions. Differences are a resource insofar as they enrich these structures and institutions, leading the receiving society to change and learn from cultural diversity as well.

The positive experience of the Mesas de la Solidaridad—i.e., the solidarity platforms established at the district level—appears to be the main result of such a strategy. As has been pointed out, immigrant associations have been actively involved, especially in those areas such as Orriols or Natzaret, where important concentrations of foreign residents are consolidating. Through the solidarity platforms, 13 projects for immigrants' and refugees' integration have been financed and immigrant associations have been involved in their implementation.

Yet, not all of the participative institutions formally foreseen in the 2003 First Plan for the Integration of Immigrants and mentioned also in the more recent Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 have been implemented. Currently, immigrant associations appear to have been poorly involved in defining participation, despite the emphasis of the First Plan on this concept. According to CAI officials, this lack of participation is a consequence of pitfalls in the implementation of the First Plan. The Plan Norte-Sur should at once aim to overcome immigrant associations' isolation and fostering their inclusion in local policy-making institutions.

However, it is not clear on what basis immigrant associations will be selected and admitted to these participative institutions. Systematic data on immigrant associations participation in the districts' solidarity platforms are lacking. As far as Muslim groups are concerned, though, from the field visit positive experiences of collaboration emerged as well as more contradictory ones (see below).

Participation without recognition risks casting doubts on the real level of equality between the parties involved. The other forms of inter-religious dialogue mentioned in the report, such as the Cátedra de las Tres Religiones or the CeiMigra Centre, while interesting and valuable, still see a certain asymmetry insofar as the Catholic Church plays a crucial role. Participation does not seem to imply equality, but rather involvement and responsibility for some common project and/or goal.

In this context, the role of ethnic and religious organisations depends on whether these groups agree to take part in existing institutions and contribute to supposedly common goals. The Alternative Forum for the Integration of Immigrants clearly represents a challenge in this respect.

Its highly politicised attitude and recourse to protest are regarded by the Municipality as an impediment to collaboration. Yet, the very existence of the Alternative Forum, gathering together 32 immigrant associations, clearly points out that cultural difference is not just accidental but may be a resource of political mobilisation which does not conform to the expectations of the Municipality and to its idea of intercultural dialogue.

However, it must be noted that at an informal level relations between CAI and the various ethnic and religious organisations present in the city, as well as with members of the Alternative Forum, are well established, although not regular. Despite an official approach that, as mentioned above, seems aimed at downplaying differences, CAI officials appear to be aware of the demands and needs of different immigrant groups. Yet, the marginal role of the office in the bureaucratic machine is regarded as a major impediment for the pursuit of a more consistent strategy towards immigrant associations. In relation to the demand for regular premises where the associations' headquarters may be set up, for instance, CAI, while acknowledging the legitimacy of such requests, does not have the means to intervene since this is the competence of the real estate department.

Networking both within and outside the administration is regarded by CAI as an added value for an efficient integration policy, as pointed out by the projects mentioned as instances of best practices. The participation of immigrant associations in these projects does not seem to be crucial though.

5 Local intercultural policies towards Muslim communities

5.1 Major issues, demands and interests

Since the migratory history of Valencia is very recent as pointed out above, immigrant groups are still very concerned with basic needs (such as night shelters, work, regularisation etc—see the social issues highlighted in § 4.2), while specific demands based on ethnic or religious identity seem to lag behind. However, according to CAI officials, with respect to Muslim organisations, the main issues in city are those related to food menus, especially as far as school canteens are concerned; to gender roles; and to the teaching of Islam and Arabic language at school. In relation to food precepts, demands have been raised for the adaptation of school canteens' menus. In general, public schools have accommodated with these requests, providing menus free of pork for Muslim pupils.

Issues related to gender roles essentially deal with access to health centres. This may be particularly difficult for women who have been abused. The presence in most health centres of bilingual women acting as linguistic and cultural mediators is aimed at facilitating access on the part of Muslim women. Another example of a demand related to gender roles is the one related to the use of the swimming pool on the part of Muslim women which, as mentioned above (§ 4.2), has been rejected by the Municipality. However, in the interviews carried out during the field visit with Muslim associations, demands related to gender roles did not emerge as central issues. In terms of health, much more emphasis was put on children's circumcision, which is not covered by the public health service and thus implies a cost for Muslim families.

A controversial issue appear to be that of the teaching of the Arab language to children. According to one of the staff members interviewed at the association, despite the Cooperation Agreement between the Spanish state and the Islamic religion (see § 2.2.3), which provides for the teaching of Muslim religion at school, there are problems with implementation in some schools of the city. Apart from the Islamic Cultural Centre, which has succeeded in obtaining the opportunity to have Arabic classes for children on Saturday mornings at a school of the Orriol district,³⁷ the other associations complain that their requests have not been considered. For example, the Islamic Council of Valencia claimed that a school in the district hosts Chinese language classes,³⁸ but, despite their continuous requests, no one agreed to host Arab classes. In one case, despite the willingness of the school director, the schools council (composed of the pupils' fathers) rejected the proposal³⁹. At the moment, more than 400 children attend courses in the Mosque's building, which, however, does not have enough space. Courses are held even in the basements, with serious safety risks. As a consequence, the Islamic Council of Valencia asked permission of the Municipality to enlarge the Mosque's premises in an area just adjacent to the main building (previously a garden). The Municipality agreed and granted permission. The Autonomous Community has contributed financially to the new building (which is still under construction).

There are no public opinion surveys available on attitudes towards Islam and Muslim communities in Valencia. Nevertheless, the two opposite reactions experienced by the Islamic Community in the Orriol district and the Islamic Council of Valencia in the Xúquer district highlight the presence of different and contradictory attitudes in the majority population. According to CAI, because of the controversial historical relationship between Spain and the Muslim world, Arabs are more likely than other groups to be victims of negative stereotypes and prejudice. Yet, rather than being a phenomenon specific to Valencia, this discriminatory attitude is regarded as characterising Spanish people in general.

For its part, the municipal administration seems to have a quite open attitude to the requests of Muslim groups, as indicated by the permission to build and the financial support granted to the Islamic Council of Valencia; the reservation of a specific space for ritual slaughtering in the municipal slaughterhouse; as well as a space for Islamic burial ritual in the cemetery.⁴⁰ An exception is represented by the swimming pool case mentioned above. The expectation is that neighbourhood associations and other organisations working on the territory will collaborate to answer such questions.

A study on Muslim groups in Valencia has been carried out by CeiMigra, in the context of a broader research on minority religions in the Valencian region, i.e.: *Minorías de lo mayor. Minorías religiosas en la Comunidad Valenciana* (see the references). The research is explorative and descriptive, aimed at mapping Muslim associations in the region and accounting for their historical

³⁷ Neighbourhood associations actively supported the Islamic Cultural Centre request.

³⁸ CAI officials have no information about Chinese classes for children, and do not know which association has organised such an activity.

³⁹ Such a refusal seems a bit paradoxical if one considers that public schools in the district regularly organise visits to the Mezquita in the contexts of their intercultural programmes, as mentioned above.

⁴⁰ However, the Municipality does not allow burial without the use of a coffin.

development, organisational structure and main activities.⁴¹ A directory of legally constituted religious groups in the region is also provided, as well as a glossary with definitions of the main concepts used in the book. As for Muslim organisations in Valencia, the study provides detailed accounts of the Islamic Community and of the Islamic Cultural Centre. Details on affiliations with national and regional federations are also provided.

5.2 General approaches and policies improving relations with Muslim groups

The Municipality of Valencia has no explicit policy aimed at improving intercultural relations with Muslim communities. As mentioned above, the local administration appears to be aware of the relevance of immigrant associations, but no strategy of recognition is pursued. Participation as a keyword entails putting immigrant associations, Islamic ones included, into a position to take part in existing participative and consultative institutions and to contribute, together with autochthonous groups and organisations, to the development and well being of the city. Intercultural dialogue, especially at the district level, is considered to be particularly important. Yet, the municipal administration does not intervene to actively promote such a dialogue, and the initiative is left to neighbourhood organisations and consultative platforms, such as the Mesas de Solidaridad mentioned above.

The Municipality does not have any formal or regular institutionalised contact with Muslim organisations. Contacts arise on specific issues and demands, and may be either with politicians, like the Social Policy and Integration Alderman, or with CAI officials. In general, the Social Policy and Integration Alderman is perceived as the one in charge of dealing with immigrant-related issues, including religious ones. However, there is neither a person nor an office formally responsible for contacts with religious communities.

In everyday practice, however, CAI has informal contacts with all the Muslim groups and associations established in Valencia. Contacts have also been established with the recently arrived Pakistani community thanks to the mediation of NGOs that collaborate with CAI.

There are no Muslims among the elected municipal councillors. As for consultative institutions, as already pointed out in various sections of this report, the strategy is to open them to immigrant participation, regardless of religion or ethnic background. As for the Commission for Immigration that the Plan Norte-Sur intends to establish, it is expected that immigrants will be represented essentially on the basis of their nationality. However, this institution has not yet been organised, as I have pointed out above (§ 4.2).

As for funding, the Municipality has on various occasion supported the initiatives of Muslim organisations presented in its main lines of funding. Among the financed activities, CAI mentions Spanish and Arab language courses, vocational training projects (computer science for instance), psychological and employment support for women, and economic contribution for the organisation

⁴¹ The research was based on qualitative interviews with the representatives of the main religious associations in the city (Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007: 327–349).

of religious celebrations such as Ramadan festivities. Moreover, public soil has been granted for the Islamic cemetery and the building of the Gran Mezquita in 1991, thanks to the interest of the then Mayor of Valencia Mr. Pérez Casado. This latter was built in 1992 with contributions from the Kuwait government (Baudes Fuster and Vidal Fernández 2007). The Islamic Community has also received financial contributions from abroad, but from private donors and not from governments. According to the representatives interviewed, Middle Eastern businessmen and entrepreneurs have contributed either money or furnishing. The Municipality, and CAI officials in particular, do not consider such external contributions to be problematic.⁴²

The Municipality has responsibility over local police, yet no specific practices have been put in place in order to deal with Muslim organisations, neither there is any collaboration with them.

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

As already mentioned, the city is not keen to undertake group-specific policy. Its integration approach is essentially aimed at fostering participation and integration into existing services and institutions. The same holds true for the Muslim community: no specific policies to improve intergroup relations between the Muslim minority and local majority population have been promoted.

As a consequence, an example of good practice mentioned by CAI is the cultural week of the Orriol neighbourhood, financed by the Municipality through the District Board,⁴³ to which the Islamic Cultural Centre has always been actively committed. During this particular week, the Mosque is open to all the people of the neighbourhood and programmes to inform about Islam are held.

In 2004, the Municipality attempted to organise an intercultural week in the Ruzafa neighbourhood, which is another area of the city characterised by an important immigrant concentration.⁴⁴ The intercultural week was an idea of the Social Policy and Integration Alderman in order to promote the opening of a youth centre in the district. Nonetheless, according to CAI officials, this initiative was far less successful than the Orriol cultural week.

As mentioned above, “open mosque” initiatives are also promoted by the Islamic Community in the Natzaret district, where there is also a close collaboration with neighbourhood associations,

⁴² Actually, in a visit to the Gran Mezquita, the people encountered did not seem to be aware of the contribution received from Kuwait. According to them, the Mosque was built with money from the Valencian Muslim community.

⁴³ The District Board (11 in total) is an administrative, non-elected, board, which has the purpose of implementing municipal policy at a district level. However, in order to solicit bottom-up mobilisation and participation, on the Board there is a community worker, who is an official of the Municipality, and who has the task of working with the neighbourhood associations to promote cultural programmes and activities.

⁴⁴ This was one of the first areas of immigrant arrival in the city. Now immigrants have moved into more peripheral neighbourhoods. Nonetheless, most commercial activities, such as Islamic slaughters and Chinese shops, can be still be found in Ruzafa.

and by the Gran Mezquita. This kind of initiative is regarded by the Municipality as important for its activities aimed at improving intergroup relations. The local administration, as mentioned above, provides financial support for the organisation of the districts' cultural weeks.

The Cátedra de las Tres Religiones and the CeiMigra Centre are considered by CAI as initiatives that contribute to improving intergroup relations in the city. Yet the Municipality does not have regular relations with these institutions; only informal meetings and contacts, and does not provide any direct support.

According to CAI, these initiatives are important since they are aimed at building positive exchange and dialogue between different cultures and religions. The kind of collaboration that has been emerging around the Orriol cultural week is regarded as particularly relevant since immigrants have the opportunity to be directly involved in the preparation of common initiatives with other neighbour associations; i.e., they concretely implement a kind of intercultural approach based on participation and involvement that is at the basis of the city integration policy.

5.4 Public communication

The Municipality has no explicit strategy for public communication on Islamic issues in the media. Similar to what has been said above with reference to immigration and interculturality in general, the Communications Officer of the Social Policy and Integration Alderman pursues a low-profile approach, in order to avoid public debates in the media. There is a perception that excessive emphasis or a sensationalist approach is likely to generate misunderstanding and even rejection.

In general, local media have no regular relations with Muslim organisations. As mentioned above, journalists favour institutional sources and complain of the lack of official representatives from the Muslim community. According a study on the treatment of immigration by the Valencian press (Siruana Aparisi and Garcia Calandín 2004: 86), the newspaper *La Provincia* stands out as an exception: in an article about the ban on wearing the headscarf introduced by French law, the opinions of five Muslim women living in Valencia were reported; two of them were the spokespeople of the Association of Muslim Students and of the Gran Mezquita. However, evidence from this study points out that such good practices are still exceptions. This is also confirmed by the field visit interviewees, who underline the scarce interest of the television towards the Muslim religion, with the exception of cases of male chauvinism involving Muslims, which are always abundantly covered.

As mentioned in § 4.5, free press journals for Arab immigrants are few: *Raiz* and *Sí se puede* have editions in Arabic, yet, these cannot be considered Muslim journals. According to the journalists interviewed in the field visit, the Islamic associations have an efficient internal communication system; they produce a lot of newsletters and information leaflets for internal communication, but have no external communication strategy or media directed to the wider public. This is confirmed by visits to the Islamic centres. A partial exception is represented by the Islamic Cultural Centre, which seems to be more interested in the media and communication at large. In May 2008 it organised a two-day seminar together with the Faculty of Philology, Translation and Communication of the University of Valencia on "Islam in the Media," with the

purpose of analysing how the media communicate about the Islamic world.⁴⁵ The two days were directed at professionals in the media—journalists and students of journalism and audio-visual communication—with the aim of elaborating a handbook for journalists on how to communicate about Islam. Moreover, the Islamic Cultural Centre regularly publishes the proceedings of its conferences and seminars, usually with the support of various public and private institutions such as the University of Valencia, the Generalitat Valenciana, the Mesas de la Solidaridad de Benimaclet (the district in which the Orriol neighbourhood is located), and the Fundación de Pluralismo y Convivencia.

5.5 Summary and lessons learnt

Relations between the city and Muslim organisations seem on the whole to be positive, even though the excellent relations of collaboration in the neighbourhoods of Orriols and Natzaret appear to contrast considerably with the experience of the Gran Mezquita in the Xúquer neighbourhood, especially as far as the attitude towards Arabic language classes for children is concerned. However, despite these episodes of refusal and distrust, the representatives of the Mosque consider their relations with the residents to be good enough, and the Mosque is open every week for the schools wishing to visit it.

As is clear, the non-interventionist strategy of the local administration appears to lead to very different outcomes. The Municipality does not have any specific policy towards Muslim minorities, but, as in the case of immigrants in general, promotes participation and involvement in existing consultative and participative institutions such as the Mesas de la Solidaridad. The divergent trajectories in the areas of the city where the main concentrations of Muslim residents are located, indicates both the potentials and the limits of such an approach. If collaboration and participation start from below, they have the advantage of spontaneously linking very different groups around common projects which are felt by the local communities to be particularly important. On the other hand, such participation is likely to depend on the real willingness to collaborate on the part of the resident majority. Research on the factors leading to positive collaboration or, on the other hand, to more distant attitudes, is lacking but would be of extreme interest for policy-makers. However, as pointed out by the failure of the Ruzafa cultural week, municipal action may not necessarily be the solution. Participation can hardly be injected top-down: yet a clearer understanding of the conditions that may foster collaborative attitudes could be of help in designing appropriate policies.

The case of Orriol and Natzaret show that, despite a historical legacy unfavourable to Islam, prejudice and distrust may be overcome. The issue is how to stimulate the diffusion of such positive experiences across the city.

⁴⁵ See http://www.webcciv.org/CCIV/Prensa/docs_de_prensa/islam_mc_jornadas.pdf (accessed June 2009).

6 Intergroup relations and radicalisation

6.1 Radicalisation within the majority population

6.1.1 Radicalisation tendencies: who and what

The response of the autochthonous majority population towards immigration is depicted by CAI officials as inspired by a sort of “peaceful but distant” attitude. Radicalisation is not an issue in the city, although there does seem to be more concern for possible growing resentment towards immigrants caused by the current economic crisis.

There is no evidence of or research studies about the actual relevance of such negative attitudes, yet they are perceived as a challenge the Municipality should be aware of, especially as they concern some groups more than others. This is the case of black Africans, Arabs, Gypsies and Romanians. These groups encounter particular prejudice especially when looking for a house to rent.

Valencia 2000 is the only group that has assumed an openly anti-immigrant and racist stance. This is depicted by CAI as a small group, composed essentially of young supporters of the Valencia football club, and in particular of the *Grupo Ultra Sul*, that is well known for its racist slogans against black football players.⁴⁶ Its headquarters is in the Orriols neighbourhood, and its actions are limited to the printing and distribution of racist leaflets distributed in the streets. In the past, however, Valencia 2000 has been accused of launching a Molotov cocktail against the main door of the Islamic Community, without causing any harm. The neighbours called the police to denounce the offence.

Apart from these demonstrative actions, Valencia 2000 does not seem to have any influence either on the local political discourse or on the population attitudes. In the Orriol district they are actually marginalised and not influential at all. In general, the Muslim associations interviewed in the field visit, as well as CAI and other NGOs encountered in the visit, see Valencia 2000 as a highly isolated group. However, no formal research on radicalisation and extremist groups in the city is available.

6.1.2 General approach, policies and measures towards these groups

There is no explicit policy on the part of the Municipality on radicalisation, because this is not an issue in the city. As a consequence, there is no officer or a board in the local administration structure with explicit responsibility on this matter.

Valencia 2000 and similar groups are marginalised by the administration, which does not see them either as a real threat or as a relevant interlocutor to start a dialogue with. The incidents

⁴⁶ Despite these openly racist attitudes of Valencia supporters, the Valencia football club has never been sanctioned. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (2006) report on racism and intolerance in Spain complains of the inadequate response of the Spanish football authorities to racist behaviour.

mentioned above are regarded as mere episodes of ordinary criminality to be pursued by the police. No special policy or communication strategy is considered necessary.

6.1.3 Relations between groups

As has been pointed out in the previous sections of the report, the CeiMigra Centre can be regarded as an important initiative starting from a Catholic organisation and aimed at fostering intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and thus, indirectly, to counter radicalisation against ethnic and religious minorities. The Cátedra de las Tres Religiones can be viewed in a similar vein, having among its goals fostering tolerance and dialogue. Even though these initiatives cannot be seen as directly addressing anti-immigrant groups, their engagement in improving intergroup relations clearly militates against racist organisations such as Valencia 2000. Catholic religious organisations play a crucial role in these initiatives, as well as, in the case of the Cátedra, the Jewish and Islamic ones.

Another active party militating against racism and xenophobia in the city is the Alternative Forum for Immigration. As already mentioned, this is a platform of immigrant associations that since its beginning has assumed a very demanding attitude, organising protests to pressure the Municipality on specific issues such as the regularisation of sub-Saharan immigrants camping under the Rio Turía bridge (see § 4.4).

As already pointed out, the city has informal relations with all the organisations mentioned above, i.e., CeiMigra, the Cátedra de las Tres Religiones, Foro Alternativo etc.

6.2 Radicalisation within the migrant and/or minority population

6.2.1 Radicalisation tendencies: who and what

According to all the actors interviewed during the field visit, there are no radicalisation tendencies within the immigrant or minority population in the city. Only the case of a radical Imam in the Ruzafa worship room is mentioned. Yet this Imam was promptly isolated and marginalised by the community and he did not attend the Mosque anymore. Leaders of the Muslim associations interviewed during the field visit maintain strong social control on their members. Religious radicalisation is not considered to be a problem.

After the March 2003 attacks in Madrid, a small group of fundamentalist terrorists were arrested in a village near Valencia. According to CAI officials and other interviewees, these people had just arrived in the city. They had no relation with established Muslim organisations in Valencia or in the region. As a consequence, this event is not considered to be indicative of any radicalisation tendency in the resident Islamic community.

6.2.2 General approach, policies and measures towards these groups

The Municipality has no policy against radicalisation within the immigrant groups simply because, as already mentioned, this does not seem to be a problem in the city. Immigrant associations are

mainly socio-cultural organisations based on nationality and even when they take a more politicised stance, as in the case of the Foro Alternativo, this has never had any radicalisation tendency. Likewise, religious organisations, and in particular Islamic ones, do not perceive radicalisation as a problem, and in any case internal social controls appear to be sufficient to discourage any such attitude. No intervention on the part of the Municipality is regarded as necessary.

6.2.3 Relations between groups

Once again, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue initiatives are considered the best examples of a sort of pre-emptive mobilisation against possible radicalisation tendencies between immigrant groups. In particular, the Cátedra de las Tres Religiones has sought to institutionalise relations between the three monotheistic religions. On the Christian part, although the founding organisation was a Catholic one, over the years Protestant and Orthodox representatives have also been involved. Cooperation and dialogue have been mentioned by all the interviewees as key assets to combat any form of radicalisation.

6.3 Communication strategy concerning radicalisation

No communication strategies have been developed by the Municipality to counter radical groups since these are not considered a problem. Yet, all the interviewed actors have shown a certain awareness of the risks linked to the diffusion in the population of more subtle feelings of resentment against immigrants because of the economic crisis. In this respect, the Public Communication Officer of the Social Policy and Integration Department once again stressed the necessity of adopting a low profile and a prudential communication strategy. Too much emphasis on immigrant policy projects and initiatives may convey the wrong idea that a lot of money is spent on foreign residents, which is not the case.

The media for their part do not seem to have a strategy for reporting on radicalisation. There is some concern about how the media report news on immigration and religious minorities. As mentioned above, a 2003 study pointed out how the use of the word *moros* has not been completely banned from the city local press, despite clearly conveying prejudice and discriminating attitudes against North African, Arab immigrants.

6.4 Radicalisation: Summary and lessons learnt

Radicalisation does not seem to be an issue in the city. On the contrary, more subtle feelings and attitudes of refusal and discrimination appear more relevant, even though these are not organised by any kind of association. Such attitudes hit more visible groups, such as black people, Muslims and Roma. Islamophobia has deep historical roots in Spain, and it may account for the distrust some Islamic organisations have encountered in the receiving society (see the case of the Arabic language classes).

Nevertheless, a number of positive experiences emerge, especially in some neighbourhoods, for example the Orriol district I have extensively reported on. Likewise, in the Natzaret area a fruitful

and positive collaboration between the Islamic Community and the neighbourhood associations has been consolidating throughout the years. Such a collaboration appears to be crucial to countering possible radicalisation tendencies in the immigrant communities. However, no evidence of such negative attitudes, either of a political or religious kind, were reported during the field visit. Just a few isolated cases were mentioned.

7 Conclusion: Key challenges, lessons and learning for CLIP

Participation is the keyword in the Municipality's approach towards immigrant associations. Intercultural dialogue is expected to stem from the participation of immigrant associations in the mainstream consultative and participative institutions, as clearly pointed out by the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013, which is the main policy document of the local administration in this area. Ad hoc commissions and bodies are regarded less favourably, since immigrants are expected to contribute to the city's general well being and development.

The positive experience of the Mesas de la Solidaridad—the solidarity platforms established at a district level—appears to be the main result of such a strategy. Immigrant associations are actively engaged in neighbourhood projects and event especially in Orriols and Natzalet, two areas characterised by important concentrations of foreign residents. Yet, not all the participative institutions formally foreseen by the Plan Norte-Sur 2009–2013 have been implemented yet and it is not clear on what basis immigrant associations will be selected and admitted to these institutions.

In this policy context, it should come as no surprise that no specific policies for Muslim associations have been put in place. The Municipality does not have any specific policy towards Muslim minorities, but, as in the case of immigrants in general, promotes participation and involvement in existing consultative and participative institutions, mainly the Mesas de la Solidaridad. The non-interventionist strategy of the local administration appears to have led to several different outcomes, with experiences of positive collaboration but also cases of distrust and refusal. If collaboration and participation from below has the advantage of spontaneously linking very different groups around common projects which are viewed by the local communities as particularly important; at the same time, much is likely to depend on the real willingness to collaborate of the resident majority.

The issue that the Municipality does not seem to have dealt with yet, is how to stimulate the diffusion of positive experiences of participation and collaboration across city neighbourhoods and how to eventually stimulate new forms of participation and engagement, especially of religious groups. At the moment, as far as inter-religious dialogue is concerned, the floor is left to civil society organisations, where a preminent role is played by the institutions of the Catholic church, which has played a crucial role both in the establishing of the Cátedra de las Tres Religiones and in CeiMigra. While all the interviewees acknowledged the relevance of these initiatives, the

demand for a more neutral mediation also emerged, both on the part of new and old religious minorities.⁴⁷

The lack of a radicalisation phenomenon could be interpreted as an indicator of an overall positive and peaceful social context. Yet, concerns for the diffusion of more subtle feelings and attitudes of refusal and discrimination have been expressed, especially against more visible groups such as black people, Muslims and Roma. In this context, the need for a strategy aimed at consolidating positive experiences of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and collaboration, as well as at starting new ones, is likely to gain a more prominent place in the municipal immigrant policy agenda.

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⁴⁷ The Evangelic church, for instance, has expressed such a necessity.

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