



Business partnerships for the Intercultural City: making the Diversity Advantage real

San Sebastian, 18-19 October 2012

The seminar will be held within the framework of the Intercultural cities programme. Its main objective is to discuss initiatives and strategies that cities could put in place to help enterprises, in particular SMEs, to realise the benefits of cultural diversity ("diversity advantage"), and encourage enterprises to support the intercultural integration efforts of cities.

Participants will be "delegations" of three representatives each of the cities members of the European and Spanish Intercultural cities networks. Delegations should involve one person from the city administration (integration department, economic development office or agency), and two from business development association, business schools and universities, trade union, chamber of commerce etc.

Rationale

An increasing number of businesses in Europe recognise that diversity is a resource for creativity and innovation in a globally competitive business environment. However, even larger companies with diverse staff, including third country nationals, often fail to use much of that staff's potential and to adopt a strategic approach to diversity in the full range of business practice. The 2008 EU study "Diversity management in 2008: Research with the European business test panel" recommends that "Strategies for promoting the business case for diversity should focus on broadening the argument **beyond HR** and pointing out the ways in which **R&D** policies can benefit multiple areas of business activity". **The challenge is particularly acute for SMEs.**

The **challenge for local authorities is to create an environment that actively encourages and supports enterprises in realising the diversity advantage.** This would not only benefit economic dynamism and employment, but also help involve business as a partner in local integration efforts - which is still rarely the case, as the Intercultural cities programme has demonstrated.

Many of the approaches that cities use to improve diversity management and community relations could be beneficial also for business and can be delivered in partnership between local authorities and business development organisations. Others would be specific to business but require support by local authorities to be put in place.

These involve for instance:

- intercultural competence development of employees at all levels;
- mediated interaction and exchanges between entrepreneurs of different ethnic backgrounds and specific encouragement of cross-cultural joint ventures;
- targeted employment of local talent of diverse origins on positions where their specific skills and competence can be optimally used;



- actively involving employees of diverse origins in decision-making and product/service development;
- involvement of diverse employees in prospecting business partnerships in countries of origin;
- re-casting business incubators as diversity hubs, including intercultural mediation and specific initiatives to increase interaction and entrepreneurship across cultural divides;
- encouragement of business development organisations and chambers of commerce to reach out to migrant entrepreneurs, giving them positions of leadership, and providing mentoring...

The challenge for local authorities that wish to create an environment conducive to the diversity advantage is to adopt a strategic approach and build a strong partnership with business organisations and other relevant stakeholders (universities, business schools, trade unions). An additional challenge is to use reliable indicators for measuring success.

The seminar will serve to present local strategies to foster the diversity advantage and study their objectives, operational mechanisms and structures, the policies and initiatives they involve, the processes and resources put in place, local partnerships, skills, incentives and institutional arrangements have been effective, and the assessment mechanisms used.

DRAFT Programme

18 OCTOBER

9.00h Welcome and opening remarks

- **Juan Karlos Izagirre**, Mayor of San Sebastian
- **Irena Guidikova**, Head of Division Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue Division of the Council of Europe
- **Keizo Yamawaki**, Meiji University, Tokyo

Keynote speech

- **Myrtha Casanova**, President of the European Institute for Managing Diversity

Thematic sessions

10.00h Session 1:

"How do companies take advantage of the cities' diversity and make use of the talent of the diverse employees"

- **Jean-Michel Monnot**, Vice President SODEXO, Group Diversity and Inclusion
- **Montserrat Tarrés**, Communication Director NOVARTIS Spain

Group discussions

11.30h Coffee break

12.00h Session 2:

"Supplier Diversity: what is it? why do it? how to get started"

- **Beth Ginsburg**, Supplier Diversity programme

Group discussions

13:30h Lunch

15.00h Session 3:

"International population as a factor of city success and fostering start-ups through the diversity advantage"

- **Andrea Wagner**, Open Cities monitor
- **Marcel Prunera**, Entrepreneur and consultant. Imacity managing partner

Group discussions

16.30h Coffee break

17.00h Session 4:

"How do cities can create conditions for diversity advantage and business partnerships: the Copenhagen experience"

- **Dina Haffar**, Engage in Copenhagen project
- **Human Shojaee**, Project Manager at The association for New Danes

Group discussions

18.30h End

19 OCTOBER

10.00h Session 5:

"Teaching the diversity advantage in universities and how research centres benefits from it"

- **Gonzalo Sánchez**, Professor at Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Cádiz University
- **Jon San Sebastián**, Talent Search Director of Tecnalía Research & Innovation

Group discussions

11.30h Coffee break

12.00h Concluding session

13.30h Lunch at the "Talent House" in San Sebastian

15.00h Visit to the "Talent House"

Fomento de San Sebastian, as the company responsible for the sustainable economic development of San Sebastian and its surrounding area, is developing a support strategy to boost research and innovation as key elements in the transformation of the economic model.

The Talent House Integral Reception Plan is a project to support the attraction and reception of research talent in the city, which via its different services (accommodation, information, procedures, schooling...) must support their integration and professional development, as well as the dissemination of the knowledge generated and the opening up of lines of work with the actual research/technology centres and other institutions focused on the generation of innovation.

17.00h End of the conference

Programme updates will be available at

http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/events_en.asp