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## The new cycle of the EU Social Inclusion Process - an opportunity for cities?

The EU Member States are currently producing their National Strategy Reports for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010. These reports form the basis for policy coordination in the social field at the European level, commonly referred to as the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). They are of high importance as they map out the main priorities and activities of national governments with regard to social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term care for the coming years.

The Member States have agreed to strengthen the involvement of stakeholders, including local authorities, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the reports. This will provide an opportunity for engagement and exchange with the Ministries on social trends, challenges and priorities as well as to discuss governance-related issues.

EUROCITIES is following this process in various ways. The relevant national Ministries in each Member State have been provided with contacts in EUROCITIES member cities and have been asked to consider these in the consultation process, so that a direct representation of large cities can be achieved. In addition, the EUROCITIES Working Group on Social Inclusion is currently preparing a message to be sent to the Ministries, highlighting some of the main concerns of cities as regards social problems, responsibilities and resources in social inclusion policies. Thirdly, a series of national seminars are taking place, where cities gather together to develop a message to their national government. A first seminar has been held in the UK, further meetings are planned in Finland, Poland and the Netherlands. EUROCITIES is convinced that by drawing on knowledge and experience gained from actions at the local level, the reports and their implementation, and in turn the national social inclusion policies, will be considerably improved.

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**Dear Reader,**

*The European world of social policy is wide. Sometimes it is motivating and even fascinating, when new pilot projects explore innovation and promote dialogue. At other times it can be discouraging or disappointing, when the political leaders in Brussels seem to be blind to the social reality in our cities. It often is, without doubt, complex and full of jargon. Despite limited EU competencies, important decisions are taken at European level that have implications for local social policies, but often their impact is only recognised later on. At the moment, for instance, there are intense debates on the future of the EU budget and the future of EU Cohesion policy, whilst the European Social Agenda is also under review - all these discussions will have consequences for the future of our cities.*

*With this newsletter, we try to bring a little bit of light into the “black box” of the EU Social Agenda and inform you about recent developments. At the same time, we want to give space to important issues and events in your cities and promote them to your colleagues across Europe - you will, for example, find information about a new European campaign against forced marriages that has been initiated by the city of Rotterdam. And, of course, you will find an update about what is going on in the EUROCITIES network. A regular feature will look at one theme in more depth, this time it is a historic view on EUROCITIES work in the field of social inclusion. INCLUSIVE CITIES FOR EUROPE\_NEWS has been made possible by a new partnership between EUROCITIES and the European Commission. It will be published four times a year; the next issue should be ready before the summer break.*

*A newsletter will only be alive if information is available, so we'd like to encourage you to share your news with us, and we are always happy about any critical and constructive feedback you have. A final word on the format: Each edition of INCLUSIVE CITIES FOR EUROPE\_NEWS will be illustrated by a thematic series of pictures. In this first number, the theme is the “urban mosaic”. We invite local initiatives to contact us and contribute with thematic illustrations for forthcoming issues.*

*We wish you a good read,*

*Your Inclusive Cities team*

## Recent Developments

### *EU consultation on food for the most deprived in Europe*

In the exceptionally cold winter of 1986/87, the European Community launched a scheme to distribute free food to the most deprived people in the Community. Since then, surplus stocks of food commodities have been given to Member State charities for distribution to people in need. Each year, the European Commission adopts an annual plan for the distribution of products available in intervention stocks between the Member States, who then share the available products between charities. As a result of reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy, the intervention stocks that the Programme has been based on, are decreasing and make a revision of the programme necessary. The European Commission is now asking for the views of concerned charitable bodies, government services and non-governmental organisations, as well as the general

public. An online questionnaire on this matter is open to everyone until May 14 2008 at: [www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/freefood/consult/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/freefood/consult/index_en.htm). The results of the consultation will be taken into consideration by the Commission when it draws up its Impact Assessment and Proposal for the future of the scheme. A summary of the results will be published on the Most Deprived Persons website. Any organisations or individuals wishing to contribute more detailed comments on the scheme and its future are invited to send them to: [AGRI-Most-Deprived-Persons@ec.europa.eu](mailto:AGRI-Most-Deprived-Persons@ec.europa.eu). Further information: [www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/freefood/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/freefood/index_en.htm)

## *Barrot likely to become new European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security*

According to the president of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, Jacques Barrot will become the new commissioner of DG Freedom, Security and Justice. This change is due to the probable departure of Commissioner Franco Frattini who is Silvio Berlusconi's candidate to become Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Italy. As Commissioner for Transport, and Vice-President of the European Commission, Jacques Barrot has been taking responsibility for Justice, Freedom and Security since Frattini took leave to support Berlusconi's electoral campaign in Italy.

## *EU Spring Council stays vague on social issue*

At the EU Spring European Council on 13-14 March, the heads of state and governments of all EU Member States discussed the future course of major EU policies in the coming year. The Council recognised the role of the local and regional level in delivering growth and jobs and contributing to more coherent and effective policy-making, and it reiterated the importance of strengthening the involvement of relevant stakeholders in the Lisbon process. With regard to social issues, however, the conclusions remained rather vague, saying that "a continued EU-level commitment to structural reforms and sustainable development and social cohesion will be necessary after 2010". Emphasis was put on the need to invest in people and to modernise labour markets. Member States are now asked to take various measures, such as reducing the number of early school leavers, improving the reading skills of young people, and improving the achievements of learners with a migrant background and from disadvantaged groups. Attracting more adults into education, promoting higher overall labour force participation, and improving policy consistency also figured among the measures. The conclusions stress the key role of the renewed European Social Agenda that would strengthen the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy with increased efforts to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to promote active inclusion and increase employment opportunities for people furthest from the labour market. In the light of alarming figures on poverty in Europe and raising inequalities, the Council Conclusions have been heavily criticised by social NGOs for being disconnected from urgent matters, for their lack of vision and for their "social emptiness", as the President of the Social Platform put it. The conclusions of the Spring Council can be found here: [www.eu2008.si/en/News\\_and\\_Documents/Council\\_Conclusions/March/0314ECpresidency\\_conclusions.pdf](http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/Council_Conclusions/March/0314ECpresidency_conclusions.pdf)

## *European Parliament calls for end to street homelessness by 2015*

Earlier this month, 438 Members of the European Parliament representing all EU countries and the whole

political spectrum, called upon Member States and the EU institutions to take urgent action to end street homelessness by 2015. The declaration sends out a clear message that the issue of homelessness is an urgent one across Europe and must be tackled in a determined and focused way. The MEPs ask for the development of a European framework definition of homelessness, the collection of reliable statistical data and the elaboration of winter emergency plans as part of a wider homelessness strategy. The declaration is welcomed by EUROCITIES and numerous European civil society organizations. FEANTSA, the European Federation of national associations working with homeless, believes that the adoption of the Declaration is an important step in the fight against homelessness, showing that now there is political impetus to actually end homelessness. This echoes developments that have already taken place in a number of European countries, such as Scotland and Finland, which have pledged to end the problem and have implemented measures to do so.



## *Future of Common European Asylum system under discussion*

While ministers from EU member states agreed on a further harmonisation of national systems towards a Common European Asylum System at a meeting of the 'Future-Group' in Ljubljana on 31 March and 1 April 2008, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) criticised the very basis of this system as unjust, inhumane and expensive. In a report published in March 2008, entitled "Sharing Responsibility for Refugee Protection in Europe: Dublin Reconsidered", ECRE questions the European Commission's analysis that the objectives of the Dublin system would have been, to a large extent, achieved. The ECRE report questions the very possibility of a Common Asylum System on the grounds of the current policy, which allows for strong differences in recognition and protection of asylum seekers among member states. The European Commission plans to publish an action plan in July 2008 for asylum in the future, and amendments to three pieces of legislation: the Dublin II Regulation, the Eurodac Regulation and the Directive on reception conditions for refugees. The ECRE report can be downloaded at: [www.ecre.org/resources/policy\\_papers/1058](http://www.ecre.org/resources/policy_papers/1058)

## *CLIP-Study on Housing and Integration of Migrants in Europe*

The network “Cities for Local Integration Policy” (CLIP) has published its first study entitled “Housing and integration of migrants in Europe”. The network brings together some 25 cities to examine integration policies at local level. It was founded in 2006 by the Council of Europe’s Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the City of Stuttgart. The study on housing was undertaken with the support of researchers from the IMISCOE network.

The study identifies local policies that help to improve access to housing for migrants. A collection of good practice covers a variety of policies, ranging from anti-segregation-measures to support for community relations. The study stresses the particularly vulnerable position of migrants in the housing market due to discrimination and often limited resources. It underlines that there is no panacea to local housing integration and that the approaches differ due to local circumstances. The majority of the identified local practices address a wider, also non-migrant public as their target group.

In its recommendations, the study demands that a perspective of permanent residence should be granted earlier for migrants. Furthermore, integrative, cross-departmental cooperation and participative approaches are considered to be critical for the success of these policies. A fundamental claim derived from the research undertaken is to foster social housing on all levels: To integrate social housing into EU cohesion policy, to offer subsidies for buildings and people on the national level and to maintain a sufficient social housing stock for strategic control of housing supply at the municipal level. The CLIP-study and a good-practice guide can be downloaded at [eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm](http://eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/clip.htm)

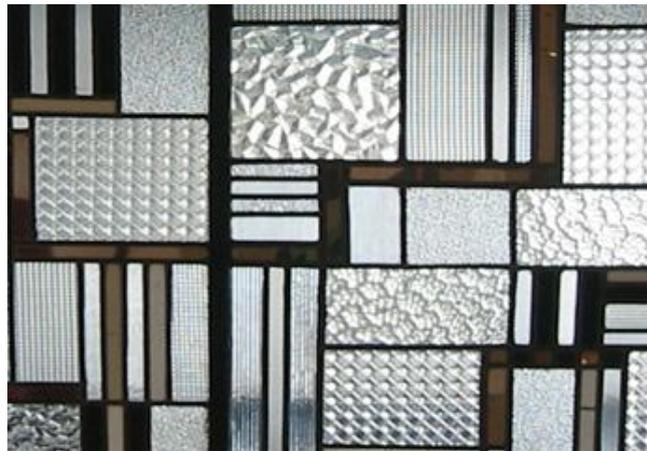
## *Publication on local initiatives addressing the needs of Muslim Communities*

The EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA, former EUMC) has published a report on local integration policies particularly addressing Muslim citizens. The collection of local practices draws on a series of seminars that brought together practitioners from eight European cities and covers municipal practices from various fields, such as public services and education and co-operation with self-organisations. A mainstreaming approach to diversity based on commitment, awareness and consultation is presented

as a key strategy for municipal service providers. The report can be downloaded at [fra.europa.eu](http://fra.europa.eu)

## *European Campaign against forced marriages*

The city of Rotterdam, together with the Platform for Islamic Organisations “Rijnmond” (SPIOR), has initiated a European campaign against forced marriages. It will be launched in the Netherlands, Belgium, UK, Spain, Germany, France and Italy in May 2008. Forced marriages are a reality in our society. They can only be tackled successfully with the involvement and cooperation of all parties, and the campaign shall be implemented in all countries as a joint effort between community organisations and public authorities at all levels. An example for such an approach is the project “Joining hands against forced marriages” which is carried out by SPIOR in Rotterdam with strong support from the city government. The launch of the European campaign will be held in Rotterdam on May 14. At the meeting, information on forced marriages and the concept of honour, including



practical examples on prevention, detection and taking action against forced marriages, will be provided in various languages and presentations and discussions will take place. Further information on the campaign is available through [s.espigares@jos.rotterdam.nl](mailto:s.espigares@jos.rotterdam.nl).

## *European Research Platform on Cities and Social Cohesion*

The European Commission has recently launched a research platform on cities and social cohesion “Social Polis” within the 7th EU Research Framework Programme. It is an open social platform for dialogue between scientific and policy communities and civil society practice networks, with the objective of developing a research agenda on the role of cities in social cohesion and key related policy questions. Communication between all those engaging in the platform and with those outside will include a user-friendly, interactive website or ‘meeting-rooms’ equipped with information-finding, information-sharing and discussion facilities. A series of specific joint workshops and local conferences will be held, as well as a large conference, to act as catalysts for research by focussing and fine-tuning research agendas, agreeing themes and methods and building the platform. The coordinator and lead partner of this project is the Global Urban Research Unit (GURU) at the University of Newcastle.

## EUROCITIES Developments

### *EUROCITIES Position Paper on Local Public Services*

On 20 February, EUROCITIES and the Urban & Housing Intergroup of the European Parliament (EP) organised a seminar on the theme: 'Delivering high quality local public services'. Members of the EP, representatives from the European Commission and cities discussed approaches to ensure the provision of high quality public services in Europe's cities. Following on from this debate, EUROCITIES has produced a position paper "Local Public Services: A case for subsidiarity, legal clarity and quality". In this document, a clear case is made for a need to ensure subsidiarity and legal clarity at EU level and to promote bottom-up initiatives to develop quality principles for services of general interest. This paper reacts to a Communication from the European Commission on services of general interest which, in the view of cities, left various questions unanswered. The EUROCITIES position paper will be launched at an event in the European Parliament on 7th of May.

### *EUROCITIES studies on Demographic Change*

Within the "Inclusive Cities for Europe" programme, EUROCITIES is carrying out a series of studies on the impact of demographic change on key aspects of urban development. Based on the EUROCITIES Work Programme 2008 and following on from the main conclusions of the EUROCITIES Demographic Change Survey 2007, four themes for the studies have been identified and commissioned to leading research institutes. A study on the impact of demographic change on the provision of social and health services will be conducted by ITD/Barcelona); a report on mobility and public spaces is coordinated by EUROPAFORUM Vienna); the Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies (CURDS) in Newcastle is looking at urban labour markets, and the UFZ/Leipzig is producing a paper on local housing markets. The studies will be developed by the researchers in association with EUROCITIES' members working on these topics and the interim reports will be presented in June. The final studies will be published in time for the European Demographic Forum, scheduled for 24-25 November of 2008.

### *EUROCITIES establishes a working group on eInclusion*

Making sure that every citizen can benefit from advantages coming from new technologies has always been an important pillar for EUROCITIES Knowledge Society Forum. As an instrument to help cities achieve this objective, it has developed the "Charter of Rights of the Citizen in the Knowledge Society" which has been signed by more than

40 cities over the past years. The topic of an inclusive knowledge society or 'eInclusion' continues to be high on the agenda in cities and at the European level as well. The European Commission recently started the campaign: 'eInclusion: be part of it!' and underlines that eInclusion should not be looked upon as something that only 'costs' but that actually can bring a lot of benefits if every citizen is involved - currently only 50 % of the EU citizens regularly use the Internet. The Knowledge Society Forum decided to choose eInclusion as its overarching theme for its activities in 2008 and has now also decided to set up a Working group on eInclusion. The group is chaired by city of The Hague and has Birmingham as Vice Chair. It will replace the working group on eRights but will continue to provide a platform for cities that have signed up to the charter of eRights and that wish to cooperate on the implementation of the objectives of the charter. Therefore all cities that have signed up to the Charter of eRights are invited to join in the new working group on eInclusion. So far, the members of the new group are: Antwerp, Bologna, Gent, Kingston upon Hull, Rijeka, Tallinn, Turin and Vienna. EUROCITIES contact: Maurice Paulissen, Policy Officer Knowledge Society, [maurice.paulissen@eurocities.eu](mailto:maurice.paulissen@eurocities.eu)

### *EUROCITIES position on EU Budget Review*

On 14 April 2008, EUROCITIES published its response to the consultation on the EU Budget Review launched by the European Commission. In its response, EUROCITIES encourages the European Commission to establish a long-term budget that is based on the real and practical challenges facing the EU such as globalisation and economic change, demographic and social change, and energy efficiency and climate change. The impact of these challenges on Europe's territories will be different in scope and nature. It is important to understand the reality of the local dimension of these global trends and to ensure that the policies and programmes developed to address these challenges support targeted action at the local level. Not only Cohesion Policy, so it says, but all EU programmes should include urban priorities.

### *EUROCITIES position on the future of EU Cohesion policy*

EUROCITIES has recently contributed to the consultation on the Fourth Cohesion Report of the European Commission. The main points developed in the response concern the fact that, as cities are now considered to be at the heart of the Cohesion Policy Agenda, the European Commission should include a chapter on urban areas in all future reports on regional policy. Apart from the debate on the future Cohesion Policy, this response will also feed into the

work of EUROCIITIES on other issues such as the Lisbon Strategy, the Territorial Agenda and the Leipzig Charter, and the future EU financial perspectives and budget review. The next steps include a response to the EU Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion that the European Commission will publish in September-October 2008 and a response to the Mid-Term-Review of the current period of Structural Funds in 2009.

## *EUROCIITIES contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008*

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was officially launched in Ljubljana on 8 January. The main objectives of the Year are promoting intercultural dialogue and raising the awareness of European citizens of the importance of developing active European citizenship. EUROCIITIES is playing an active role during this year as main partner of the "Intercultural Cities" programme, a joint action of the European Commission and the Council of Europe aiming at fostering intercultural dialogue in cities. In the framework of the "awareness and exchange" strand of this programme, 23 cities of the EUROCIITIES network will facilitate dialogue and exchange on practices between politicians, citizens and municipal service providers across Europe and will highlight the important role of local action to achieve real intercultural dialogue and to promote European citizenship. The objectives of EUROCIITIES' contribution to the programme are to highlight at European level the role of cities in promoting intercultural dialogue, to promote the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue to citizens across Europe, to engage cities and citizens across Europe in an exchange on the significance and forms of intercultural dialogue, and to combine the promotion of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue at popular high-visibility events with activities that will ensure a lasting impact.

At the heart of the EUROCIITIES activities is a series of visits from city to city. Each participating city will send a team of ambassadors to one other participating city - all in all 23 visits will take place. Each team of ambassadors will be composed of a politician, a young person and an officer. These visits will take place on the occasion of major local events and festivals around the theme of intercultural dialogue (i.e. Belfast city carnival, Intercultural week in Cologne). Special sessions dedicated to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue such as panel debates, and participatory activities will be organised in the framework of these events for the ambassadors to meet with local politicians, stakeholders and citizens.

In early 2009, a publication containing political recommendations will make the findings available to municipalities across Europe. It will be presented at the occasion of a conference taking place in March 2009 in Amsterdam. For more information about the Year 2008 please consult:

[www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu](http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu). For the Intercultural Cities programme please see: [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/policies/cities/default\\_EN.asp?](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/policies/cities/default_EN.asp?)

EUROCIITIES contact: Julie Hervé, Policy Officer Culture, [julie.herve@eurocities.eu](mailto:julie.herve@eurocities.eu)



## *EUROCIITIES launches Working Group on Housing*

Providing affordable housing has become a major task of local authorities as part of their efforts to create or to preserve social cohesion. In order to strengthen the role of cities in this field, the EUROCIITIES Social Affairs Forum has decided to establish a Working Group on Housing. This WG will be chaired by the City of Vienna, Austria. The main aim of the group will be to underline the role of local authorities in promoting social cohesion by the provision of adequate and affordable housing to all citizens. It will look at themes such as accessibility and affordability, housing for vulnerable groups (migrants, ethnic minorities, low-income households, single parents, persons with special needs...), housing for an ageing society, the link between housing and spatial planning and the role of citizen participation for social cohesion, including the participation of so-called hard-to-reach groups. A first meeting of the group will take place in Rotterdam in June. For further information you can contact the Chair of the WG, Wolfgang Förster, city of Vienna, at: [wolfgang.foerster@wien.gv.at](mailto:wolfgang.foerster@wien.gv.at)

## *EUROCIITIES launches Working Group on Social Inclusion*

The newly established EUROCIITIES Working Group on Social Inclusion held its first meeting in Leeds on April 18. The objectives of the group are to contribute to EU policy developments in this field, to support and enable the development and implementation of social inclusion policies and practices among member cities of Eurocities, and to assist cities in their efforts to influence, and have a say in, national policy. Currently, the group is developing a message to all Member States including recommendations concerning urban social problems and governance issues to be considered in the National Action Plans on Social Inclusion 2008-2010. At its next meeting in September, it will, amongst other things, discuss possible EUROCIITIES activities for the European Year to combat poverty and social exclusion 2010. For further information you can contact the Chair of the WG, Simon Underwood, city of Newcastle, at: [simon.underwood@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:simon.underwood@newcastle.gov.uk)

## EUROCITIES activities in the field of social inclusion: looking back and ahead

EUROCITIES has currently re-launched its Working Group on Social Inclusion to increase its efforts to raise the voice of cities in the European Social Inclusion process. This is a good moment to look back in history and take stock of where we are coming from.

Social Inclusion has always been an important strand of EUROCITIES activities. In 1991, the EUOCITIES Social Welfare Committee met in Barcelona to discuss the possible social consequences of the European Union and produced a “Barcelona Resolution” calling for the recognition of social problems and better instruments at European level. This was followed by a EUROCITIES White Paper in 1993, “European Social Policy and the City” which looked into the causes and dimensions of the “urban crisis” of increasing poverty and marginalisation and the accumulation of social problems in deprived neighbourhoods. The paper mentioned key social challenges for Europe’s cities such as increasing levels of poverty and unemployment, changes in social composition (ageing, immigration, new household patterns), segregation, homelessness, discrimination of minority groups, cultural deprivation, non-take up of services and benefits.

In 1996, the EUROCITIES Social Welfare Committee became involved in the 3-years project “LIA - Local Integration Partnership Action” which looked at innovative approaches to support the integration of immigrants. A particular emphasis was put on adapting public services to the needs of migrants and ethnic minorities, promoting their participation in local political life, opportunities for self-employment and job creation. In 1998, at the Urban Forum in Vienna, EUROCITIES asked for a European social vision and an integrated approach to tackle urban problems. The need for integrated, area-based approaches and local partnerships against social exclusion was highlighted again in a position paper on social inclusion in 2000. A crucial characteristic of poverty and social exclusion, so it was argued, is multidimensionality. Many factors contribute to exclusion which may appear in different configurations. Thus, intelligent and careful policy responses in a variety of fields such as employment, social welfare, education, housing and health are crucial. But the competences, resources and responsibilities in the delivery of these policies and services are often still fragmented and need be better coordinated.

From 2000 - 2003, the project “CASE - Cities’ Actions against social exclusion” was carried out. It looked at local experience and good practice in linking up the different dimen-

sions of exclusion and tackling them with an integrated, multi-agency approach.

Since 2000, when the EU Strategy for Social Inclusion was launched, EUROCITIES repeatedly asked for better involvement of cities in the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), by which Member States coordinate their social policies and agree on common European objectives. In 2001, a EUROCITIES Working Group on Social Inclusion was set up to monitor this process and to advocate the voice of cities in it. In 2003 and 2005, position papers were submitted that called for a better recognition and involvement of cities as key actors in

promoting social inclusion. Just recently, at the beginning of 2008, a partnership was established between EUROCITIES and the European Commission under the title “Inclusive Cities for Europe”. The partnership provides cities with better access to the process and gives hope that these calls will be heard in the future. Also in early 2008, the “CONNECTIONS” project was launched to look at organisational approaches to tackling

multiple deprivation at a city level. This project is led by the city of Rotterdam and closely linked to the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum.

As this brief overview shows, lobbying and networking have always been the two key strands of EUROCITIES work on social inclusion. Furthermore, the call for an integrated approach to tackle exclusion through area-based partnerships has been a key component of EUROCITIES’ work since the early 1990s. Through projects and exchange in the EUROCITIES Social Welfare Committee, which was later transformed into the EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum, and its working groups, good practices were shared and mutual learning was facilitated. Capitalising on these insights, the various position papers highlighted the capacity of cities to support social innovation and pointed to the benefits of recognising this wealth of knowledge also at EU and national level. The EUROCITIES Working Group on Social Inclusion will continue along these lines, facilitating exchange and raising the voice of cities in the EU Social Inclusion Process. At its meeting in April, it developed recommendations on good governance in promoting social inclusion which will be sent to the European Social Protection Committee (the body through which Member States and the European Commission coordinate their work on social inclusion). Later this year, it will contribute to the EU discussions about deepening the Open Method of Coordination, and also develop proposals for EUROCITIES actions in the European Year to combat poverty and exclusion 2010.



## Events/conferences

<b>Preparatory Meeting for the European Integration Forum</b>	<i>29-30 April 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
With this preparatory conference the European Integration Forum enters a decisive phase prior to its launch. Consisting of stakeholders who represent civil society and international umbrella organizations, the Forum shall serve as a complementary source of information and consultation for the European Commission.		
<b>Intercultural Cities Conference</b>	<i>1-3 May 2008</i>	<i>Liverpool, UK</i>
As part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, the Intercultural Cities Conference will look at migration, diversity and urban life in a fresh way. The conference will not only provide an opportunity for International city leaders and experts to see how different cultures can live together but how mixing can be turned to economic, social and cultural advantage. New thinking is needed on how diverse communities can better co-operate in productive harmony. Further information: <a href="http://inter.culture.info/icc">http://inter.culture.info/icc</a>		
<b>Responding to new social realities</b>	<i>5-6 May 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
On May 3-5 the European Commission holds a high-level conference on the future of the EU Social Agenda in Brussels. At this event, the Commission wants to exchange with stakeholders across Europe about social trends and ideas for an EU agenda for opportunities, access and solidarity. The debate will feed into the review of current EU policies and is of high political relevance.		
<b>Cities for Children</b>	<i>6 May</i>	<i>Stuttgart, Germany</i>
Founded in 2007, the European Network "Cities for Children" holds its second annual conference in Stuttgart. This year's programme has a focus on youth violence – prevention and repression. Further information: <a href="http://www.citiesforchildren.eu">www.citiesforchildren.eu</a>		
<b>Europe on the Move</b>	<i>15 May 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
This conference will examine the findings of recent research on how to maximise the benefits of this key labour market resource and at the same time ensure that migrant workers have the support they require to integrate into the wider community. The results from research projects across the EU on labour market movement and social integration give a better picture of the skills levels and motives of migrant EU workers. Contact and registration: <a href="mailto:business@westmidlandsineurope.org">business@westmidlandsineurope.org</a>		
<b>Financial Inclusion: Improving Access to basic financial services</b>	<i>28 May 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
The high-level conference will present and discuss the results of a study commissioned by the European Commission on the prevention of exclusion from financial services - a crucial problem for people facing poverty or social exclusion in general. Further information: <a href="http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/events_en.htm">http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/events_en.htm</a>		
<b>Strategies to end homelessness: Elements of conflict and cooperation at local level</b>	<i>6 June 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
This seminar, organised by FEANTSA and hosted by the Committee of the Regions, will focus on obstacles and drivers of successful policies to end homelessness, which ties in with the demands of the European Parliament Written Declaration on ending street homelessness (EN) adopted on 10 April 2008. For more information: <a href="http://www.feantsa.org">www.feantsa.org</a>		
<b>Employment Week 2008</b>	<i>11-12 June 2008</i>	<i>Brussels, Belgium</i>
The Theme of the Employment Week 2008 is "Adapting to change - making Europe a prosperous labour market". Managing the demands of global competition and demographic change is equally complicated for governments, businesses and Europe's workforce. The Conference will address questions such as: How are we dealing with this transition? The European Commission is playing its role in promoting a balance between change and security, but what is happening in reality? How have companies and member states approached this need for change? The objective of the conference is to learn more about today's employment trends and initiatives by hearing the different stakeholders' views and concrete and practical case-studies. Website: <a href="http://www.employmentweek.com">www.employmentweek.com</a>		
<b>Shaping the Future of Local Services in Europe</b>	<i>2-4 July 2008</i>	<i>Paris, France</i>
This conference recognises the key role of local services in the rapidly changing, often problematic and sometimes divided communities in which they work and it will explore the experiences of a number of European countries in this regard. The conference will look at a range of developments in service partnerships with other stakeholders, including users and local citizens, and will ask how local services can best respond to the social challenges of the 21st century. For more information: <a href="http://www.esn-eu.org/paris/eng/index.html">www.esn-eu.org/paris/eng/index.html</a>		
<b>Diversity in Mental Health and Wellbeing</b>	<i>7-9 August 2008</i>	<i>Aalborg, Denmark</i>
The Mental Health Europe Conference 2008 is inspired by the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. It will be an opportunity to see and discuss how intercultural dialogue can be used as a means to create and achieve mental health and mental well-being. Workshop themes include: the philosophical dimensions of culture and diversity for mental health and well-being, the cultural dimensions within the different health systems, cultural differences which exist in practice among professionals operating in the health, social and justice systems, and the provision of care, treatment, rehabilitation, recovery and employment for people with mental health problems from different cultural backgrounds or origins. Website: <a href="http://www.mhe-aalborg.dk">www.mhe-aalborg.dk</a>		

## EUROCITIES events

<b>Launch of EUROCITIES position paper on Local Public Services</b>	7 May 2008	Brussels, Belgium
The launch event of this publication on services of general interest, including social services of general interest will take place in the European Parliament at 6pm, and will be followed by a cocktail. The publication also contains a report on the event of 20 February 2008 jointly organized by EUROCITIES and the European Parliament Intergroup on urban issues.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on Services of General Interest</b>	7 May 2008	Brussels, Belgium
At its May meeting, the Working Group will discuss the quality of local public services and the EU initiatives on this issue, and also public private partnerships and concessions.		
<b>EUROCITIES discussing social criteria in public procurement</b>	13 May 2008	Bristol, UK
The Responsible procurement and Consumption Working Group will hold its second meeting of 2008 in England. Public procurement is considered by its members as a very effective tool to reach a better social equilibrium through responsibility in procurement. Choosing social-oriented products and partners can make a difference for public servants and citizens.		
<b>EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum meeting</b>	15-16 May 2008	Oslo, Norway
The next meeting of the Social Affairs Forum will take place on May 15-16 in Oslo and look at social and health services. It will look at various aspects of service provision, including questions of innovation – how to respond to new social demands?, integrated service delivery, quality and affordability, and issues around procurement and contracting in the social sector. Case studies will be presented from various cities, including a site-visit to a low-threshold medical care project. Furthermore, the future regulation of social and health services at European level will be discussed, including its implications for cities.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on eInclusion</b>	6 June	Ostrava, Czech Republic
The recently established working group within the Knowledge Society Forum on eInclusion (replacing the former working group on eRights) will have its first meeting at the Knowledge Society Forum Summer Event in Ostrava in the Czech Republic. The working group on eInclusion will continue to provide support to cities that have signed the Charter of Rights of Citizens in the Knowledge Society but takes a wider approach to ensure the development of an inclusive knowledge society, allowing for better cooperation with the European Commission on this matter and to provide a framework to address the overall priority theme for the forum in 2008, which is eInclusion. EUROCITIES members and partners are invited to join the working group on eInclusion and welcome to attend the working group meeting in Ostrava.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on Migration and Integration</b>	11-13 June 2008	The Hague, Netherlands
The WG Migration and Integration is currently dealing with benchmarking exercises and the identification of good practice in various sectors related to local integration policy. The aim is to inform European policy making from this comparative evaluation of local integration policies.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on Urban Security</b>	11-13 June 2008	Brno, Czech Republic
At its June meeting, the WG discuss about the situation of young Roma in the city of Brno and other case studies. It will also have a debate about the future Work programme of the group.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on Economic Migration</b>	20 June 2008	Poznan, Poland
This WG is dealing with effects of labour-related migration in Europe. The group's focus here is on migration from new to old-member states and good-practice in terms of local integration policy.		
<b>EUROCITIES Working Group on Homelessness</b>	10-12 September 2008	Utrecht, Netherlands
At its September meeting, the WG will look at the approach to tackle homelessness in Utrecht. It will also discuss the update of a comparative report on cities strategies against homelessness.		
<b>EUROCITIES Social Affairs Forum / Economic Development Forum – joint conference</b>	6-7 November	Berlin, Germany
The Berlin meeting of the Social Affairs Forum will be held jointly with the Economic Development Forum. It will have a thematic focus on Economic Migration and integration, in particular in the field of employment policy.		

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