



The Amsterdam Statement

by city politicians from EUROCITIES' 5th Integrating Cities Conference
Amsterdam, 8 March 2012

Meeting in Amsterdam to address issues of migrant integration in Europe, we have exchanged knowledge and highlighted local practice. We have seen how city governments, together with civil society, are at the forefront of innovation to make integration work.

EUROCITIES' Integrating Cities Charter has so far been signed by 27 of Europe's most important cities. It underlines the political leadership of cities in welcoming migrants, fostering social cohesion, promoting effective anti-discrimination policies and adapting institutions to better serve diversity. This is a role acknowledged by the EU ministerial conference on integration held in Zaragoza in 2010.

However, it is with regret that we now witness dwindling efforts and shrinking resources in many European cities to develop better integration policies across Europe, triggered by the economic and financial crisis but also by shifting political priorities. The received wisdom that integration is failing puts in jeopardy efforts to create more inclusive societies.

We cannot fulfil our responsibility for creating inclusive cities without appropriate political and financial support from national governments and the European Union. We therefore call upon member states and the EU to increase their support for local integration policies and to improve policy coordination with cities.

We are encouraged by the European Commission's Communication of this past summer on the European agenda for the integration of third country nationals. This recognises the strong role of the local level, and the potential for local integration measures supported by future EU funding. The EU provides an arena for better policy coordination and learning between local, regional and national levels. As members of EUROCITIES, therefore, we are ready to contribute to any new strategic partnership with the European Commission and the Committee of the Regions that will make a real difference to the lives of all our citizens.

We acknowledge that migration is a complex and challenging issue and we strongly encourage governments of all member states, regions and cities to work constructively together. The challenges presented by migration and integration must be met in ways that truly respect the dignity of all human beings as defined in the European Common Basic Principles of Integration.

Eberhard van der Laan, Mayor, Amsterdam

Andrée Van Es, Deputy Mayor, Amsterdam

Miquel Esteve i Brignardelli, Commissioner of Immigration, Barcelona

Farhad Dilmaghani, State Secretary for Integration and Employment, Berlin

Signe Færch, Member of the City Council Committee for Integration, Copenhagen

Pekka Sauri, Deputy Mayor, Helsinki

Carlos Martinez Serrano, Coordinator of family and social services, Madrid

Cosimo Palazzo, Councillor for Social Policies, Milan

Karine Daniel, Deputy Mayor, Nantes

Maria Vadillo, Deputy Mayor, Rennes Metropole

Eizenija Aldermane, Chairperson of Education, Culture and Sports Committee, Riga

Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor, Rotterdam

Olli-Poika Parviainen, Deputy Mayor, Tampere

Jean-Paul Makengo, Deputy Mayor, Toulouse