European Pillar of Social Rights
Cities delivering social rights

Equal opportunities and access to the labour market in cities in Europe
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Introduction

Cities are committed to implementing the European Pillar of Social Rights. In October 2017, EUROCITIES adopted a statement on ‘Social Rights for All’ showing that cities are ready to partner with the EU and member states to deliver the Pillar’s principles. In 2018, individual cities, starting with Madrid and Stuttgart, have signed political pledges to translate the principles of the Pillar into actions to improve people’s lives at local level.

EUROCITIES conducted a survey to map cities’ existing policy measures that are in line with the principles of the EU Pillar of Social Rights. Many cities already deliver inclusive social policies to promote social rights for all people even before the EU Social Pillar was adopted. However, we found that cities’ efforts are not always known or recognised at national and EU levels. Furthermore, we aimed to understand where cities could be doing more to accomplish social rights for all and the obstacles they face.

This research is the first in a series of EUROCITIES surveys to collect evidence from cities in line with the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. The report covers 20 cities in 12 EU member states governing a total of 20 million people. The evidence was gathered directly from city authorities and their relevant administrative departments. The responses fed into a comparative analysis to identify trends and map inspiring practices.

This report presents the findings on how cities deliver inclusive education, gender equality, equal opportunities and access to the labour market. It provides:
- an overview of city competences in each of the four policy areas
- trends and current social challenges at local level
- good practices of city measures in line with each of the four principles
- obstacles cities face to doing more or implementing better policies
- policy recommendations for cities, member states and the EU
Key Findings

Cities play a key role in delivering social rights at local level. Most European cities have shared competences to design and deliver education, training and employment measures with gender equality and equal opportunities in mind. Cities invest efforts and resources to ensure equal access to and enjoyment of social rights by all, including the most vulnerable groups such as migrants and refugees, the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, older people and young people, and people living in poverty or in deprived areas.

“A strong social Europe is a Europe of inclusive cities for all people.”
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<th>1. Inclusive education</th>
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<td>- large gap in access and attainment between different areas in the same city: learners from the most deprived areas have the highest dropout rates and lowest qualification and skill levels.</td>
<td>- gender gap in employment, part-time work and wages is visible in cities, which has led to increased attention to gender equality by city authorities.</td>
<td>- cities are facing serious challenges from socio-economic and geographical segregation to language, sociocultural barriers to participation in society.</td>
<td>- employment rates are on the rise in cities, but the situation of the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, older people and those living in deprived areas remains much worse than the average.</td>
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<td>- acute shortage of teachers and those available are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the challenges of school super-diversity in urban contexts.</td>
<td>- persisting difficulties around reconciliation of work and family life.</td>
<td>- the groups most at risk of discrimination are people from migrant backgrounds, Roma and other ethnic minorities.</td>
<td>- reaching out to those inactive and most vulnerable is resource-intensive.</td>
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<td>- structural discrimination of women on the labour market.</td>
<td>- cities ensure equal, non-discriminatory access to public services.</td>
<td>- equality data is lacking at local level.</td>
<td>- skills mismatch is a serious concern on the urban labour markets.</td>
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<td><strong>City challenges</strong></td>
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<td>- cities put strategies in place to promote equal opportunities in education.</td>
<td>- cities are mainstreaming gender equality in municipal strategies and action plans.</td>
<td>- cities ensure equal, non-discriminatory access to public services.</td>
<td>- cities give tailored support to those furthest away from the labour market (e.g. the long-term unemployed, youth, under-qualified, older people).</td>
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<td>- nearly all cities take measures to prevent school dropout.</td>
<td>- cities introduce gender clauses in public procurement.</td>
<td>- cities are actively involved in implementing non-discrimination legislation.</td>
<td>- cities apply an integrated approach by coordinating education, employment and social services.</td>
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<td>- cities provide targeted support to vulnerable groups, especially migrants and non-native speakers.</td>
<td>- cities work in partnership with local employers and NGOs to promote gender equality.</td>
<td>- cities are providing tailored support to target groups at risk of discrimination, e.g. people with migrant or ethnic backgrounds.</td>
<td>- cities work together with public employment services, local employers, training providers and civil society to match demand and offer on local labour market.</td>
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<td>- cities run actions for improving literacy and qualification levels of adults (up- and re-skilling) to facilitate the transition to employment.</td>
<td>- cities are investing in raising public awareness of gender inequalities.</td>
<td>- cities are actively involved in implementing non-discrimination legislation.</td>
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Across Europe, cities have different competences in the field of education from preschool, primary and secondary education to vocational education and training, and adult education. The level of municipal responsibility varies depending on the structure of the education system in their country. The most typical model across EU countries is that cities have a shared education competence with regional or national levels of government. The trend in recent years is that cities are doing more than what they are legally responsible for in order to meet the need for inclusive education for their ever more diverse populations.

Figure 1.1
What legal competence does your city have concerning education?

- Full competence: 70%
- Limited competence, but actual work goes beyond the legal competence: 20%
- Shared competence with other levels of government: 10%
In our sample of 20 cities in 12 EU member states, 14 cities have a shared competence with other levels of government. However, the ‘sharing’ can be organised in different ways:

- having clearly defined division of competences for education provision between municipal and national authorities (Berlin, Leipzig, Ljubljana, Lyon, Milan, Nantes, Warsaw) and with high school autonomy (Amsterdam, Twente, Utrecht).
- having jointly managed education in an autonomous structure such as the Vienna Board of Education or the Barcelona Education Consortium (with equal representation of the government of Catalonia and Barcelona city council).
- city is responsible only for managing municipal schools, which coexist with other types of schools (regional schools, state-funded private schools) like in Antwerp and Ghent.

In Scandinavian countries and Latvia where education is decentralised, municipalities (Gothenburg, Malmo, Riga, Stockholm) have full responsibility to organise all compulsory public education based on the objectives and guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. In practice, Swedish cities are responsible for all education ranging from preschool to primary and lower secondary, upper secondary education and adult education.

In Central-Eastern European countries where education tends to be centralised, cities like Timisoara have limited competence in education. However, in practice, cities tend to do more than what they are legally required to do because they are faced with urgent needs in their local communities. Cities take action to cover the gaps in education provision for pupils with disabilities or special needs. They also provide support measures to improve access to and completion of education for children from disadvantaged groups.

**Municipal responsibilities in education and training**

In line with their competences, city authorities play a key role in education and training. Cities are organisers and providers of education services. All cities are alike in that they share a direct responsibility to ensure access to and availability of early childhood education (non-compulsory preschool) for a good start in life for all children. Most cities with full or shared competence are also involved in providing compulsory school education from primary school up to upper-secondary level. While this responsibility is in the city education department, vocational training and adult learning typically fall under cities’ department for labour market, requiring close coordination between the two departments. Tertiary education is rarely under the remit of city authorities, but there are some exceptions. In Malmo, the city organises several higher vocational education programmes (Yrkeshögskola) to meet the skills demand on the local labour market.

By far the most significant role all cities have in common is fostering social inclusion and equal opportunities in education. Given the diversity of backgrounds, languages and rising inequalities in urban areas, cities invest additional efforts to ensure everyone gets a place in school and receives adequate support to obtain a qualification. All cities in our study provide supportive measures to tackle the large gaps in educational outcomes for students from deprived neighbourhoods, low-income families or migrant backgrounds. Such measures include early school leaving, counselling, vocational guidance, up-skilling and second chance programmes, literacy in the official language and digital skills, as well as informal learning activities such as sports and culture. These measures are complementary to the state education policy and mostly supported by municipal budgets.

Cities are main providers of educational measures for the integration of refugees and migrants. Cities accomplish this by organising language classes, short courses to ‘bridge’ past studies for a qualification, career guidance, validation of prior learning and experience and upskilling through vocational training. These activities all aim to facilitate refugee and migrant entry into the local labour market.
Cities manage education infrastructure by building new schools, modernising existing ones, ensuring public transport to schools, providing local libraries and school canteens; some even recruit teachers, appoint school leaders or provide in-service teacher training. Finally, cities facilitate an integrated approach to education by coordinating related services (education, employment, health and social services) and collaborating with national education authorities. Cities facilitate close cooperation between all education providers and local stakeholders (parents, teachers, local businesses and NGOs).

Education challenges in cities

City reports reveal that the biggest challenge is the large gap in educational outcomes between different groups of pupils (native vs. non-native, high-income vs. low-income families). Socio-economic status and the diverse (migrant) backgrounds continue to be key predictors for educational outcomes. Nowhere is this more visible than in big cities, especially in western Europe where a super-diversity of backgrounds characterises the urban context. Evidence from cities shows that educational outcomes strongly correlate with the living conditions in the learner’s neighbourhood. Pupils in the most deprived areas perform, on average, worse in skill levels, qualification levels, early school leaving. This de facto segregation (by residence or choice of school) shows that inclusion in education needs both a learner-focused and place-based approach through integrated actions.

Early school leaving is a persistent challenge in cities. The EU and national averages do not capture well the situation in cities. For example, the rates in both Antwerp (20.7%) and Ghent (14.4%) are well above the average for Flanders (10.4%; Eurostat, 2016). Moreover, while the figures at EU and national level show considerable improvement, in most cities, the rates have stagnated or only slightly decreased in recent years. There are still over 30% of early leavers from vocational training in dual system in Berlin and Gothenburg (due to early termination of apprenticeships). Notably, there are disparities in the same city, with early leaving rates being the highest in the most deprived urban areas. Skills mismatch is another key challenge across European cities. This issue goes hand in hand with a difficult transition from school to work due to low levels of skills or different skills than those required by employers on the local labour market. The skills gap is particularly challenging for adults with low qualifications or low literacy skills, such as digital skills among older adults. Evidence from cities suggests that language can play a role. Insufficient proficiency in the official language, especially among non-natives, can result in students falling behind and lower overall attainment. Given that some cities have a third (Ghent) or even half (Amsterdam) of pupils with a different mother tongue than the official language, improving language proficiency is essential. It is especially vital as a support measure for refugees or migrants to integrate into schools and the labour market.
City measures for inclusive education

Across Europe, cities are working hard to ensure equal opportunities for all people to realise their full educational potential, regardless of gender, ethnic origin, socio-economic status or family background.

These efforts include city measures on three levels:

- **individual learner level** – cities provide extra support to match the individual needs of learners, such as those with disabilities, special needs, migrants, non-native speakers

- **school level** – cities give support to create inclusive learning environments that value the diversity of students in the classroom (involving teachers and parents)

- **systemic approach** – cities invest in improving the quality of schools and living conditions in deprived areas to weaken segregation and increase student heterogeneity

The most frequent measures that cities are using to ensure inclusive education are:

- **18 cities take measures to prevent school dropout**, ranging from early detection of risk (e.g. Timisoara’s methodology for early warning system) to adapting support plans for each student and helping dropouts get back to school. Successful measures rely on an integrated approach between schools, teachers, families, the city’s education and social services and NGOs. Some cities (Amsterdam, Nantes, Utrecht) target support to help students in the transition from one level of education to another when the dropout risk is high. The focus is on guiding and motivating students to stay in school.

- **18 cities invest in targeted measures to support specific disadvantaged groups:**
  - learners with special needs get additional support from psycho-pedagogical counselling professionals (Barcelona, Ljubljana). Stockholm offers a separate course for learners who are not able to study in ordinary classes.
  - non-native speakers can access special language courses to improve their proficiency in the official language (Berlin, Ghent, Vienna). Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Twente, Utrecht) support all children whose mother tongue is not Dutch to attend preschool (age 2-4) to learn Dutch so they can start school with the same language skills.
  - newly arrived migrants and refugees can access specific preparatory classes and ‘fast track’ training to help them get a professional qualification (Berlin, Stockholm).

- **15 cities have a strategy to promote equal opportunities in education.** Berlin introduced a new curriculum for ‘inclusive schools’ for the school year 2017/2018. Some cities use socio-economic compensation systems to offset the disadvantages of children living in deprived areas (Gothenburg, Leipzig, Lille, Lyon, Stockholm). An innovative measure in Leipzig was introduced in 2017 and places ‘school social workers’ in primary and secondary schools data-based in the city’s most deprived neighbourhoods.

- **15 cities take measures to facilitate the transition from school to work.** Such measures range from vocational orientation in school to specific training for those who leave school with a low level of qualification, to mentoring during vocational training, apprenticeships and on the job. Malmo introduced new shorter vocational programmes in sectors with high demand for workers. In the Netherlands, Twente’s four-year programme ‘Twentse Belofte’ shows that the recipe for success is the partnership between the city, educational providers and employers.

- **12 cities run actions to improve literacy levels**, including digital skills. For example, Amsterdam offers 5,000 courses a year to adults who need to improve their language and digital skills. Lille is running a programme to increase the skills of young people in four areas: insertion, engagement, mobility and digital skills.

- **11 cities invest in teacher training and inclusive school infrastructure.** Ljubljana set up a training centre for teachers working with pupils with special needs. Warsaw runs an Erasmus+ project to improve intercultural competencies of teachers in multicultural cities. Berlin is investing €5.5 billion until 2025 in innovative and inclusive school infrastructure.
Illustrative practices of city measures for inclusive education

Equal opportunities

‘Equal Gothenburg’ (Jämlikt Göteborg) is a holistic strategy of Gothenburg 2018-2026 to offset the socio-economic disadvantages of people living in deprived areas. It aims to improve the living conditions in the most deprived city districts by supporting every child to get a good start in life (0-6 years) and providing suitable conditions throughout their school years (6-18 years).

Leipzig runs preventive approaches to foster equal educational opportunities from a young age. Kindergartens in the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city were developed into children and family centres to offer family support and guidance for the individual development of their children. A European Social Fund (ESF) project ongoing since 2016 provides one additional social worker to each kindergarten (16 in total) in the city’s most deprived areas.

Fighting early school leaving

Ghent adopted a local strategy for 2016-2020 to reduce early school leaving rates from 15% to 10%. The unique feature of the plan is its integrated approach involving different services – employment, youth, culture, social services – with a holistic approach ranging from the individual student to the school and systemic level. The plan has 30 actions, including optimising the early warning system, supporting schools to offer high quality career guidance, partnering with parents and teachers and improving language proficiency in Dutch for non-native speakers.

Riga manages an ESF-funded project to reduce school dropout. It takes a holistic approach to defining the risks of dropout from social and health risks, risks associated with learning, economic and family-related risks. Teachers set up an individual support plan for each student, assess the risks of dropout and how to reduce them. So far, 50 schools and over 850 pupils have taken part.

Improving literacy and basic skills

Berlin has a strategy1 for improving literacy and basic education of adults 2015-2018. Through 30 measures in multiple policy areas and a transversal approach for the city administration, the strategy aims to improve the literacy skills of 320,000 people aged 18-64 who cannot read or write.

Training teachers for special needs

Ljubljana set up a training centre to provide systematic training to elementary school teachers on how to educate children with disabilities or special needs. It also established a special mobile pedagogical service for pupils and put additional staff in place. The city provides additional funding for pedagogical and other support for pupils with special needs (e.g. smaller groups of children and better equipment). The initiative is part of the city’s strategy for quality education 2009-2019.

Integration of migrants and refugees

Stockholm is running the ESF-funded project “YFI” to provide ‘fast track’ courses to a professional qualification for migrants. The project combines vocational education with Swedish language classes. It allows students to go directly to a level that suits them for faster progress, even starting vocational training before finishing the language course. The programme shortens the time migrants need to enter the workforce.

Warsaw is running nine EU-funded projects (Comenius, AMIF, Erasmus+) on intercultural education focused on migrants and refugees (e.g. mentors for young refugees, intercultural schools). It set up a multicultural centre as a contact point where newly arrived migrants can get information on how to access different educational and support programmes. The centre offers Polish language lessons and pedagogical training to teachers working with migrants.

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1 Berlin’s strategy to improve the literacy and basic education of adults 2015-2018, https://www.berlin.de/sen/bildung/lebenslanges-lernen/alphabetisierung-und-grundbildung/
Obstacles to achieving the right to quality and inclusive education for all

The shortage of teachers is currently the biggest obstacle to achieving the goals of inclusive education. Two-thirds of cities reported an unprecedented shortage of teachers, educators and trainers. Moreover, the available teachers are not sufficiently prepared to deal with the school challenges in the super-diverse urban contexts. They need more support and resources to work with learners from low-income or migrant backgrounds and to help them achieve their full educational potential and value their diversity as an asset. There is a need for attracting more teachers into the profession and building their capacity to deal with the new challenges of super-diversity in schools in urban areas.

Cities also find it challenging to provide quality educational infrastructure (Antwerp, Berlin, Ghent, Leipzig, Vienna) due to the rapid growth of city population and the numbers of newly arrived migrants to some cities in 2015. Some school buildings and their equipment are not equipped to support learners with special needs. There is a need for investing more to expand school infrastructure and improve its quality for inclusive learning environments.

The lack of innovation in school organisation is also hindering the full potential of inclusive education (Antwerp, Ghent, Milan, Nantes, Stockholm, Warsaw). The way schools are organised does not allow them to tackle societal challenges sufficiently. Schools need innovation, such as flexible curricula, options to change tracks, knowledge management in school teams and multidisciplinary cooperation of teachers, but they do not have the time, expertise or resources to produce that innovation on their own. To harness the potential for innovation in education and inclusive learning practices, schools need to work closely with the education authorities and the wider learning community.

The key barrier common to nearly all cities is the insufficient resources from the state budget. In some cities, this is due to too little public investment in education (less than 3% of GDP in Catalonia). In other cities like Ghent and Vienna, the issue is the structural under-funding of measures for socio-psychological support for learners from disadvantaged groups. The lack of funding results in insufficient non-pedagogical staff in schools such as psychologists, social workers, counsellors and language support teachers. These experts’ extra help can make a difference for disadvantaged learners to achieve their full potential.

The lack of integrated approaches to equal opportunities is a major drawback to inclusive education (Nantes, Utrecht, Timisoara). Lacking a transversal policy to address child development from all social, educational and health perspectives with all services working together hinders schools’ capacity to tackle complex issues around inclusion and equal opportunities in education. Coordination can be an issue if there is no effective exchange between social and education services to identify and guide students who are at risk of dropout. Moreover, given the shared competences in education, no support measure can be successful without proper coordination between municipal and national authorities in sharing data and working together to provide support tailored to each city’s local needs.

Finally, monitoring data on education is lacking at local level. Some cities (Antwerp, Ghent, Timisoara) only receive aggregated data from national or regional authorities and cannot collect data for longitudinal follow-up. The data is often not comparable between EU cities and cannot be used for learning and transferring successful practices. Cities need a monitoring system and the capacity to use data to review local education policy.
Policy recommendations

Cities are committed to doing more to ensure that everyone has the right to inclusive education but need more support from the EU and member states. We recommend:

1. **The EU and member states need to invest more in quality and inclusive education.** A strong focus on preventive approaches can improve equal opportunities from a young age. More resources including teachers, support staff, school infrastructure could be channelled to local level to increase accessiblility, availability and affordability of education. The EU should enable cities to make better use of ESF, ERDF and Erasmus+ funds to promote equity and respond to the specific challenges of rising educational inequalities in urban areas by supporting the participation of disadvantaged groups.

2. **The EU and member states need to address the shortage of teachers.** There is a need to step up investment in recruiting and preparing teachers to deal with the challenges of inclusive education. Initial and in-service teacher training need to be updated to provide teachers with the skills required to work in super-diverse urban contexts and the intercultural competences to work with learners from migrant backgrounds. More administrative support is needed to promote collaboration between teachers in innovating inclusive learning practices, such as through teacher exchanges between schools in different EU cities. Overall, there is a need to raise the attractiveness of the teaching profession and recognise their key contribution to society.

3. **Make equal access to inclusive education a key priority in the EU.** The priority for European cooperation in education and training should be on equity in education (equal access and inclusion). Member states could cooperate and exchange know-how on how to adapt curricula, teacher training and school infrastructure to better respond to the needs for inclusive learning for all learners. Policy-makers should pay special attention to support learners from low-income households and migrant backgrounds to improve their education outcomes. Member states could involve cities in their mutual learning and peer reviews to learn and upscale effective support measures from local level.

4. **Improve monitoring of access to education and achievement gaps.** The EU needs to improve its monitoring of the implementation of principle one of the EU Pillar of Social Rights through the European Semester. Aggregate, macro-level figures based on national averages are not sufficient to reveal complex problems in the most deprived areas. To better capture the situation on the ground, the social scoreboard indicators, such as the rate of early school leavers, could add a level of monitoring at local level. The data could be disaggregated by target groups to capture the gaps in access to education and achievement. This would help monitor progress in pillar implementation at local level.

5. **Involve cities as partners in education policy.** City authorities are the closest to people; they know their specific needs and are best placed to reach the most vulnerable. They can add immense value if involved in designing and monitoring education policy (e.g. in ET2020 working groups). The first step is to improve information sharing between schools, city administrations and national authorities and then to coordinate with other departments such as employment and social services. Next, cities need to be involved in setting the priorities for the ESF+ and ERDF Operational Programmes to reflect the challenges at local level.
Cities promoting gender equality

Cities are showing increased interest in promoting gender equality at local level. Thirteen of 16 cities responding to the survey on gender equality reported having full or partial competence to ensure equal treatment and opportunities between women and men.

Four cities reported having full competence in tackling gender equality at local level (Barcelona, Gothenburg, Malmo, Stockholm). For example, Barcelona has a municipal law to promote the full integration and participation of women in society and fight against gender discrimination. The municipal law gives the city the responsibility to plan and implement gender equality policies and organise municipal services providing support for carers. Cities in Sweden (Gothenburg, Malmo, Stockholm) are responsible for local policies of gender equality in line with the Swedish Discrimination Act.

More than half of the cities in our sample have shared competence with regional or national authorities (Amsterdam, Berlin, Ghent, Leipzig, Lille, Ljubljana, Lyon, Vienna, Warsaw). Their responsibilities are laid out in national or regional regulations and range from tackling discrimination against women to mainstreaming gender equality in all municipal policies and services. For example, Vienna has a department for women’s affairs to coordinate a cross-sectoral approach on gender equality in all city policies and services. Some cities have no competence (Timisoara) or limited competence (Milan, Riga), but they still promote gender equality through equal access to public services.

Some cities, such as Leipzig and Malmo, signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life to show their strong commitment to work towards gender equality.
Evidence of gender inequality

The gender gap is visible in labour market participation, the type of employment (full-time vs. part-time) and the pay gap, all of which leads to a significant difference in pension pay.

Gender gap in employment is a key challenge in urban labour markets. The difference in labour market participation between men and women varies from a low of 1 percentage point (pp) in Stockholm to 4.8 pp in Milan and Vienna, up to 8 pp in Amsterdam and 10 pp in Barcelona. Notably, Berlin has data showing the employment gap between men and women is three times higher in foreign-born groups (19%) compared to the native-born (7%). Conversely, Riga and Malmo have more women in employment than men.

Gender gap in unemployment is less visible than the gap in employment. The difference in unemployment rates between men and women is 0.6 percentage points (pp) in Gothenburg and Barcelona. However, in some cities, the share of men in unemployment is higher than that of women (1.5 pp difference in Leipzig and Lille in favour of women).

The gap in part-time employment is another key challenge reported by cities. Women are more likely to be in part-time employment than men. In Leipzig, the share of women in part-time work is 62.9% compared to 22.5% of men – a gap of 30.4 percentage points. Similarly, in Barcelona six out of 10 women are in part-time work compared to three out of 10 men – a difference of 36.4 pp. A significant gender gap in part-time work was also reported in Lyon, Berlin, Milan, Malmo (above 20 pp difference) and Lille (13.3 pp).

Gender pay gap is the most visible indicator of inequality between men and women. The pay gap between men and women varies from a low of 5% in Malmo and 7.6% in Ghent to 13% in Berlin and Stockholm, 15% in Lyon and Vienna, up to 22% in Barcelona.

Some cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Malmo, Stockholm, Vienna) systematically collect data to monitor gender equality. They report the data using gender breakdowns for a range of indicators such as the number of hours dedicated to household and family tasks, maternity and paternity leave, risk of poverty, life expectancy, the perception of one’s health and the gender in operation management system. Notably, Vienna has a gender equality monitor with 123 indicators to measure progress in 12 policy areas.

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2 This is a proxy as only few cities have disaggregated data on voluntary vs. involuntary part-time work. Still, the gap between part-time work for men and women is so wide that it reflects a real gender gap in employment.
City measures to ensure equal treatment between women and men

Cities deliver a variety of measures to promote gender equality, as shown in graph 2.2.

Figure 2.2
What legal competence does your city have on gender equality?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Funding specific projects of NGOs</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mainstreaming via strategy or action plan</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targeted measures for empowerment of women</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaboration with equality bodies</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actions involving employers</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Awareness raising campaigns</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Including criteria in public procurement</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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Most cities work with and support NGOs working for gender equality (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Ghent, Gothenburg, Leipzig, Ljubljana, Lyon, Malmo, Riga, Stockholm, Vienna). For example, Ghent gives grants to support NGO activities and projects; in 2018, the topics of gender, sexual orientation and gender identity were defined as priority topics and the NGOs that successfully applied for grants on these topics received a higher maximum grant for their project and were allowed to spend 30% of the subsidy for staff costs.

Two in three cities mainstream gender equality in their policies via a dedicated strategy or action plan. Nine cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Ghent, Gothenburg, Leipzig, Lille, Lyon, Malmo, Stockholm, Vienna) have a strategy or action plan to promote gender equality at local level. For example, Ljubljana has an ‘Action plan for gender equality 2016-2018’, Barcelona enacted ‘The strategy against sexism 2017-2022’, and Lille Metropole adopted a ‘Gender equality strategy 2016-2020’ to identify and combat gender-based discrimination and include a gender-based approach in all its policies. Vienna introduced gender budgeting.

Many cities deliver targeted measures to empower women from most vulnerable groups. For example, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Leipzig, Malmo and Vienna have dedicated initiatives like action plans and clauses in public procurement to support the inclusion of women from vulnerable groups (e.g. single mothers and women from migrant backgrounds or ethnic minorities). These efforts provide support for education, training, employment and in overall community life to reach their full potential and actively participate in society.

To combat systematic gender inequalities, many cities set up anti-discrimination offices in cooperation with equality bodies. Warsaw set up a ‘Presidential Plenipotentiary of Warsaw for equal treatment’ that is responsible for promoting gender equality, among other tasks. Leipzig established an ‘Advisory Board for Gender Equality’ to enforce the city’s gender equality action plan with a focus on work-life balance and establishing an office to report on gender-based discrimination. Vienna has a women service centre to help and advice women.
Half of surveyed cities run campaigns to raise public awareness of gender inequalities. Amsterdam has a ‘pink agenda’ and Utrecht a ‘rainbow agenda’ for the inclusion, visibility, safety and acceptance of the LGBT community. Lille Metropole organises awareness raising campaigns on violence against women. Barcelona is raising awareness of the labour rights of sectors where women have a major presence through ‘labour rights information points in the city’. Ljubljana has a booklet for gender equality that presents gender perspective in various areas from political decision making and economic independence to work-life balance.

Cities also work with employers and include criteria for gender equality in public procurement. Barcelona, Berlin, Ghent, Gothenburg, Stockholm and Vienna have introduced clauses in public procurement to encourage gender equality. Through such clauses, cities are enforcing their gender equality objectives by integrating a gender perspective in awarding public contracts, focusing on different groups like single mothers and women with migrant backgrounds. These efforts encourage providers to offer and develop services in line with the municipal gender equality agenda. For example, in Barcelona, 79 new public contracts have included gender clauses along the city’s new contracting criteria since July 2017.

Cities invest in capacity building for gender equality. For a better response to gender issues, a third of cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Leipzig, Stockholm, Vienna) reported they invest in training and capacity building for municipal staff. Lille offered professional training to human resources and healthcare personnel. Lyon has a ‘Diversity Taskforce’ responsible for promoting a gender equality organisational culture, including training managers.

Cities collect data on gender inequalities. To support the development of evidence-based policies, some cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Malmo, Stockholm, Vienna) run ‘gender monitors’ to gather information on gender inequalities at local level. In Berlin, the Senate Department for Health, Nursing and Gender Equality and the Office of Statistics Berlin-Brandenburg publish a ‘Gender Data Report’ annually with data on gender equality in Berlin.
Illustrative practices of city measures for gender equality

**Municipal strategy on gender equality**
Barcelona adopted the ‘Strategy against the feminisation of poverty and deprivation 2016–2024’. The strategy aims to reduce poverty among women and include a cross-sectoral approach to gender equality in all local measures. The strategy has three core interventions: data and information gathering systems; tailored economy to ensure adequate standards for subsistence, reproduction and wellbeing; action frameworks as a priority for a structural fight against the feminisation of poverty and deprivation: housing, health, basic social conditions, empowerment and sociopolitical participation of women. The strategy has 71 specific measures, 85% of which are already being implemented by 2018. Among its main results, around 4,400 women improved their work situation thanks to municipal advice, training and gender clauses in public contracts awarded since 2017.

**Coordinator to mainstream gender equality**
Ljubljana, based on national legislation, has appointed a coordinator for equal opportunities at local level. The coordinator is responsible for the implementation of the national equal opportunities programme at local level, proposing measures and activities for gender equality and formulating solutions for equal opportunities. She has also prepared and coordinated the development of the first ‘Action plan for gender equality in Ljubljana 2016-2018’.

**Gender perspective in public procurement**
Berlin has a long tradition in addressing the reconciliation of work and family life in public procurement. Since 1999, the advancement of women is mandatory for public contracts whose value exceeds €25,000 for services and supplies, and for construction works in case the value exceed €200,000. The regulation also provides for setting up a qualified plan for the advancement of women, increasing the percentage of women in higher positions, to appoint a women’s representative and the possibility of flexible working hours.

**Empowerment of mothers**
Warsaw’s programme ‘Mother Work and Me’ aims to support the labour market activation of women. The programme targets women up to 30 years of age, raising at least one child up to 6 years of age. The programme helps and encourages women onto a pathway of study and job seeking tailored to their individual skills and aptitudes. Participants are supported through a combination of training, vouchers, vocational advice, childcare reimbursement and matchmaking with job offers from local employers.

**Gender equality in all public services**
Stockholm adopted the ‘Program for Equal Rights and Opportunities Irrespective of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, or Gender Expression 2018-2022’. The main goal is to mainstream gender in all city operations and to ensure that the services offered to citizens are equally accessible, of equally high quality, and equally well-suited for everyone, regardless of gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. The programme addresses seven focus areas of city operations to close the gender gap.

**Empowerment of young girls**
To tackle gender-based stereotypes on the labour market and in society, Vienna produced a toolkit for educators to work with young children in early childhood education and care based on a gender-sensitive pedagogy. Moreover, Vienna’s department for women’s affairs runs ‘girl empowerment workshops’ where city staff work directly with young women to raise awareness about women’s rights, gender stereotypes and media portrayal of women.

**Integration of migrant women**
Amsterdam has a tailored approach to empowering refugee women in their access to the labour market. Atria, the knowledge institute for emancipation and women’s history, has developed a training for case managers working with refugee women. In addition, Amsterdam offers special language courses to mothers at the elementary school of their children. The ‘Language and Parenting Commitment’ programme has mothers get together in small groups with a certified teacher at the school of their children during class hours to learn Dutch language and to discuss topics related to school and the neighbourhood.
Obstacles in addressing gender quality

- Difficulties in reconciling work and family life is a key obstacle to gender equality (Barcelona, Berlin, Ghent, Leipzig, Lille, Lyon, Stockholm). In many cases, limited access to quality and affordable childcare or elderly services imply career breaks for women who are the designated caregivers for children, older family members or those with disabilities. The situation reflects an unequal distribution of domestic chores between men and women, which is often rooted in stereotypes about the role of women in society, particularly shown by the wider gender gap in some migrant communities. The combination of these factors leads to lower female participation in the labour market.

- Gender-based discrimination in the labour market. Gender-based discrimination in the workplace is reflected in the discrepancies in the level of pay, the hiring process, the allocation of work tasks and promotion opportunities between men and women. Lille, Ljubljana and Stockholm mentioned the challenge of unbalanced representation of women and men at senior management levels. Ghent and Stockholm also identified the unequal access to employment and entrepreneurship for women as an obstacle.

- Persisting stereotypes. A big barrier to achieving gender equality remains the common stereotypes related to women’s role as family and home focused. Ghent, Ljubljana and Lyon voiced the need to recognise and raise awareness of the diverse contributions of women to society as employers, employees, entrepreneurs and policy makers – and their roles in the communities in general. Cities can combat gender stereotypes starting from primary school to enable young women to choose non-gender-biased career paths and encourage them to enrol in technical and STEM fields of education and vocational training.

Other obstacles reported by cities, but less frequently, include sexual harassment in the workplace, domestic violence and unequal access to support services. For solutions to be effective and sustainable, cities pinpointed the importance of shared ownership for coordinated actions between the public administration, private sector, civil society, local communities and individual families as a key success factor.
Policy recommendations

1. **The EU and member states should establish better conditions for work-life balance.** Member states should facilitate women’s participation in the labour market by supporting flexible working conditions and encouraging parental leave. They should also allocate sufficient resources to ensure quality and affordable childcare services. The divergence in such conditions between countries should be addressed at EU level through the ‘Directive on Work-Life Balance for Parents and Carers’ and priorities in EU funding. At the member state level, priorities should be reflected in the ESF+ operational programmes to encourage initiatives for better childcare and work-life balance.

2. **EU should mainstream gender equality in all sectoral policies.** A gender perspective is needed as a cross-cutting principle in the future EU multi-annual strategic agenda to ensure the effective realisation of gender equality in the EU in line with the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. City authorities could be involved in some of the measures that have a strong local impact.

3. **Member states should improve the enforcement of existing legislation on gender equality.** Many countries in the EU already have laws or regulations to combat gender-based discrimination in employment and other areas. What is missing is better enforcement of the laws already in place. Stronger cooperation between national and local authorities with equality bodies is essential for identifying and reporting cases of abuse and discrimination. Member states should follow the ‘Commission Recommendation on strengthening the principle of equal pay between men and women through transparency’ and the recommendation for the creation of equality bodies at national level, both recommendations issued by the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality.

4. **EU and member states need to improve gender disaggregated data.** Both qualitative and quantitative gender disaggregated data could be collected in the monitoring and evaluation systems of programmes at EU and member state level (Eurostat, Fundamental Rights Agency, European Institute for Gender Equality). The data should be collected from institutional, policy and legislative frameworks.

5. **Member states should invest in training and raising awareness to combat gender inequalities.** There is a need for further investment in national effective gender equality strategies in order to revise the educational programmes and teaching methods to ensure non-stereotypical attitudes and practices. This goes beyond public education and covers training of civil servants in all policy areas, as well as training guidelines recommended for employers and NGOs to tackle existing stereotypes and discriminatory behaviours.
Eight in ten cities from our sample reported having some competences concerning equal treatment and non-discrimination and implementing city measures in those areas (see figure 3.1). Mostly cities from northern and western Europe reported that they have full or partial competence, while cities in southern and eastern Europe have limited or no competence. Only a minority of cities have no authority over equal opportunities, while some even work in this area beyond their legal competence. However, it is not always entirely clear to what extent city authorities have a defined legal competence in the area of equal opportunities or whether they take action on the basis of de facto responsibilities as service providers to ensure equal access to services for all residents.
Swedish cities as well as Berlin reported having significant competences on equality policy and providing municipal policies that often go beyond the minimum provisions set by the national law. Most cities (64%) have shared competences with the national government. Conversely, other cities (Barcelona, Ljubljana) do not have legal competence at municipal level but take action based on laws at national level.

Figure 3.1
What legal competence does your city have in equal treatment and non-discrimination?

Regarding the areas of responsibility, city authorities apply the principle of equal access when acting as an employer, service provider and as a buyer of goods and services in public procurement. They have policies in place to ensure equal access to services and non-discrimination on several grounds, such as age, nationality, ethnic origin, language, religion, socio-economic status, political opinion, sex or sexual orientation, age, health conditions and others. For example, Stockholm has full competence on equality, including equal access to public services for all residents in line with the grounds for discrimination detailed in the Swedish Discrimination Act; moreover, the city strives to provide equal access also on grounds that go beyond the national law, such as the socio-economic status. While some cities (Berlin) draft anti-discrimination legislation, others (Barcelona, Ghent, Malmo, Timisoara, Utrecht) make use of action plans and other non-legislative measures to implement the principle of equal opportunities and non-discrimination. Several cities such as Barcelona, Ghent and Malmo are members of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism (ECCAR) and are guided by the 10-point action plan against racism for 2015-2019 to tackle discrimination in several areas, including housing, work, cultural participation, recruitment policy and education.
Evidence of the situation on the ground

As shown in graph 3.2 below, the areas in which cities reported most challenges of equal treatment and opportunities are employment, housing and to a lesser extent education.

Overall, as shown in graph 3.3, most cities reported that people from migrant backgrounds and ethnic minorities are at highest risk of discrimination because of a combination of several factors. Mostly these groups have more difficult access to information on their rights due to language and cultural barriers; an absence or limited proof of professional qualifications; additional administrative requirements; reticent attitudes of the population towards foreigners; and temporary or uncertain legal status.

Ten in 20 cities reported local data on two inequality indicators, namely income inequality and share of persons living below the poverty line. Of those cities, four reported the existence of income inequality in their territory (Ghent, Gothenburg, Lyon, Nantes) and five have over 15% of their population living below the minimum wage (Amsterdam, Ghent, Leipzig, Lyon, Nantes). In Lyon for example, the poverty rate is lower than 7% in the western side of the metropolitan area, whereas in the eastern part of the metropole it exceeds 30%. This share represents 195,000 people living under the poverty line among a population of 1.35 million citizens (15% of the population).

Figure 3.2
What legal competence does your city have on gender equality?

![Chart showing the percentage of cities with legal competence on gender equality]

- Employment: 31%
- Social protection: 22%
- Education: 27%
- Access to public goods and services (e.g. social housing): 10%
- Other: 10%

Figure 3.3
Which are the groups at highest risk of discrimination in your city?

- People with migrant background (incl. refugees): 17
- Roma people and/or Travelers: 13
- Ethnic minorities: 12
- Homeless: 10
- People with disabilities: 9
- LGBTQ people: 6
- Religious minorities: 5
- Young people: 4
- Women: 4
- Other: 3
Municipal equality measures

There is a variety of measures in place in the reporting cities depending on city competences in the area of equal treatment and non-discrimination. Even those cities without a formal competence in this area reported implementing some measures, thus going beyond their legal responsibility if intervention is required and justified. Notably, most cities have laws or policy framework for setting the principles guiding city measures.

Many cities take on an integrated and systemic approach to equality measures, based on a legislative or policy framework setting the guidelines for all policies covering different parts of the residents’ daily life: social and community perspective, economic dimension, and political participation. The overall aim is to steer city authorities’ transversal approach towards all sectoral policies based on equality and anti-discrimination principles. For instance, Berlin is in the process of drafting an anti-discrimination law to fill the gaps of the ‘General Equal Treatment Act’ on the federal state level. The new law, which is expected to be passed as a federal state law in 2019 by the Senate of Berlin, concerns the services and acts of the federal state’s public authorities. The draft law foresees protection against discrimination on grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender, religion or belief, disability, chronic disease, age, sexual identity, social status and nationality. The draft law outlines the key non-discrimination action areas and services of the federal state public administration and public education system. Furthermore, it formulates mandatory standards to implement processes to enhance diversity in the public administration. In addition, Berlin is setting up a strategy for diversity which lays down a list of targets and milestones for better incorporation of diversity in the city public administration. The focus of this first federal-state programme in Germany will be on measures in diversity and human resources. Furthermore, it will define a guiding principle for an open-minded administration, sensitive towards diversity.

Some cities set up offices or bodies overseeing all policies under the equal treatment principle (Barcelona, Lyon, Warsaw). For example, Warsaw established in 2009 the ‘Plenipotentiary of President of Warsaw for equal treatment’. This municipal institution oversees the city activities related to the area of equality and anti-discrimination, such as: promoting diversity, equality, gender equality, social justice, equal opportunities and citizens’ participation in public, cultural, social and economic life. The Plenipotentiary also provides counselling to residents who experience or are at risk of discrimination.

Some other cities address equality through sectoral policies which may also be programme or project-based, ensuring equal access to services in the given area (Barcelona, Gothenburg, Riga). For example, Barcelona Activa, Barcelona’s public employment agency, has put in place an employment access programme for economic inclusion of people in a situation of vulnerability or precariousness labour situation, including women, youth, people over 45 years, long-term unemployed and migrants.

Many cities (Barcelona, Ljubljana, Malmo, Stockholm, Warsaw) invest in capacity-building through training and manuals, tools, for raising capacity and awareness of municipal staff to apply equal treatment. This is the case of Ljubljana’s LGBT+ friendly certificate, whose aim is primarily to raise awareness and create a climate that is favourable to all. First, an education module was developed based on research and analysis on the needs of LGBT employees and LGBT users. The certificate is awarded to all public and private organisations that complete the education module and share knowledge among their co-workers. The first courses were implemented for management staff from the city administration and Ljubljana Health Centre, reaching 36 certificate holders in schools, kindergartens, public institutes and private companies.
Illustrative practice of city measures providing equal opportunities

Malmo’s Strategic Development Plan for Anti-Discrimination Work
The city’s plan for 2014-2020 aims to achieve an inclusive, open society by identifying and combating discrimination from different angles:

1. Social perspective by promoting equal opportunities in community life
2. Operational perspective by ensuring equal rights and opportunities in access to services
3. Employer’s perspective by setting workplace free of discriminatory structures.

The plan identifies the municipality as responsible for promoting human rights and safeguarding the equal opportunities of residents. It applies to all levels of the city administration: the city council, executive board, city services, departments, agencies, administrative bodies, managers and employees. So far, the plan achieved the following results:
- produced concrete tools to support city staff in identifying challenges, preventing discrimination and promoting equal rights and equal opportunities.
- introduced a systematic integration of an equal rights approach in the ordinary decision-making process, thus increasing the quality of follow up, monitoring and evaluation.
- adopted tools with systemic effects in various areas: ‘LGBTQ certification’ of libraries, social welfare offices, drug addiction rehabilitation and home care for elderly people.

Obstacles and barriers
The biggest obstacle cities reported in relation to ensuring equal access to services for all residents is connected to the groups at highest risk of discrimination, especially those from migrant backgrounds and ethnic origin. Six cities (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Ghent, Malmo, Riga) stressed the difficulty of providing those groups with the relevant information about available services as well their right to equal treatment and the legal means to enforce such a right. The mentioned target groups are likely to be the most difficult to reach due to language, cultural and social barriers as well as due to the uncertainty of their legal status. To overcome access barriers, cities reported the need to improve attitudes of civil servants and service providers towards people of foreign origin.

Moreover, cities see the need for investing more efforts in targeted anti-discrimination and outreach strategies to reach this difficult target group combined with other measures such as awareness raising campaigns (Stockholm, Timisoara); counselling and support for migrants (Riga); and using ‘mystery shoppers’ to detect discrimination in service provision (Ghent). These challenges are also linked to a limited representation of the population with diverse backgrounds in public administrations. One proposal from Barcelona is to introduce a quota of municipal staff with diverse backgrounds.

The lack of adequate financial and staff resources is another major challenge reported by some cities (Malmo, Timisoara). In particular, law enforcement in the area of equality and non-discrimination requires specialised and trained staff, multilingual services, outreach tools and ad-hoc infrastructure.

The variations in availability, quality and access to services depending on the geographic areas within the city is another key challenge to equality measures in cities. In consequence, the most deprived urban areas, which structurally suffer a gap compared to the standard regarding access to services and goods in the city, are typically populated by disadvantaged groups suffering discrimination. In practice, this means that people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods, typically in low-income families or from migrant backgrounds, may have fewer opportunities to access services.
backgrounds, also have the biggest gap in accessing public services or even just being aware that support services are available and they are entitled to access them. Evidence from cities shows that groups living in poverty or on low income, especially in deprived areas, have more limited access to city services and related information on their rights and opportunities. They are more likely to be affected by discrimination in access to education, health, housing and other public services. To counter this challenge, Stockholm adopted in 2015 its strategy for 2040 ‘A Stockholm for everyone’. The strategy aims to make Stockholm a city that fulfils, secures and respects human rights to ensure that everyone, regardless of where they live, can achieve their full potential to participate in society.

Cities also reported other challenges, but less frequently:

- **Lack of disaggregated data based on the discrimination grounds** constitutes a barrier to evidence-based policy making for assessing and evaluating equity access to public goods and services. As discrimination is not linked to a single factor, but multiple factors interact, a more systematic use of cross tabulation is needed to analyse the relationship between multiple variables and enhance an intersectional approach in inequality analysis to help make more complex patterns visible (Malmo). Moreover, ‘situation testing’ could help collect cases of discrimination based on concrete situations on the ground, and then use the evidence to strengthen the existing legislation and its enforcement (Ghent).

- **Lack of legal competence** on equal treatment and non-discrimination which limits the scope of the city’s intervention (Barcelona)

- **Risk that privatisation of services** might lead to more unequal access to services (Ljubljana).
Policy recommendations

Cities wish to do more to ensure equal access to public services and equal treatment for all people. To make this possible, cities recommend to:

1. **National governments and the EU should ensure the implementation of the existing directives on anti-discrimination and equal treatment.** Cities would like to see an agreement reached on the proposal for a new EU equality directive[^3] that has been under negotiations since 2008. This directive goes hand in hand with strengthening and updating existing legislation on anti-discrimination in different contexts (employment, education, goods and housing) as well as developing standards and recommendations on equal treatment and equal opportunities.

2. **Establish or strengthen enforcement bodies at national level.** In particular, truth commissions on equal rights (such as in the areas of racial and ethnic equality, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability) could be set up to consult with and provide evidence of the discrimination challenges that exist at national and local levels.

3. **Adopt an integrated approach to social inclusion, beyond just labour market inclusion, at EU and national level.** Granting equal access to services such as health-care, stable housing and education are essential components complementary to economic inclusion. Therefore, the EU and member states should invest efforts and resources into wide ranging strategies for social inclusion with a holistic approach that links all relevant policy areas.

4. **EU and national governments should allocate more resources to public administrations at the local level.** As adequate financial means and specialised human resources are essential for city authorities to enforce the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination, more resources need to be allocated at local level. Cases of discrimination are most effectively reported and dealt with at local level; therefore, cities need to have the capacity and resources to do that. National governments could consider spending a higher share of their budgets on tackling discrimination at local level while the EU could ease the access of cities to EU funding for supporting equality measures.

5. **Improve collection of equality data.** There is a need for adding socio-economic indicators to better capture social exclusion and segregation faced by disadvantaged groups especially those living on low income and from migrant or ethnic backgrounds. For example, all social scoreboard indicators could include disaggregated data based on the discrimination grounds. At the same time, developing systematic indicators and gathering equality data could extend from the national to the local level. The data could then better capture the diverse situations within countries and between different areas of the same city. The findings could feed into the European Semester country reports and country-specific recommendations.

Cities offer active support to employment

All 20 cities in the survey reported having at least some competences regarding employment, mostly complementing national employment policies. The common trend, found in 16 cities, is that local authorities have a shared competence, involving coordination with the national or regional public employment services. In several cases, especially in metropolitan areas in France (Lille, Lyon, Nantes), local authorities have only limited competences in employment, but they invest in measures for the inclusion of the people furthest from the labour market, going beyond their statutory requirements.

Municipal support to employment ranges from defining itself as complementary to the role of the national public employment services to a quite extensive and complete set of services. Stockholm, for example, provides both income support and active support to employment to young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) and other specific target groups. Warsaw supports job seeking, recruitment, provides guidance and information services, registers the unemployed and job seekers, grants and pays benefits, designs, implements and finances active labour market services and tools, provides vocational training for the disabled, delivers measures to mitigate large-scale redundancies and engages in employment-related negotiations with big multinationals. Many cities are somewhere in between, whereby they provide active support for inclusion on the labour market of the people furthest away from the labour market with a specific focus to disadvantaged groups, such as the long-term unemployed, refugees and migrants, youth and older people, and people living in deprived areas (Amsterdam, Berlin, Nantes, Timisoara).
Some cities are not directly responsible for employment policy but influence it indirectly through other related policies for which they have competences. This is the case of Ghent who is organising and providing support for local social economy, Lyon carrying out measures of inclusion and social policy, and Lille investing in economic development and urban renewal initiatives such as the ‘zero long-term unemployment zone’ that foresees job creation by setting up social cooperatives in two specific neighbourhoods with high share of long-term unemployed.

**Evidence of the situation on the ground**

Employment rates vary significantly among cities in Europe and even between cities in the same member state. This difference is due to the specific context of the local economy and the pool of skills and talents available in each given city, showing that variations in employment are largely dependent on the demand and offer on the local labour market.

It is important to note the limitations of comparing data from local level given that age groups, definitions and reference years differ greatly among cities and the latter may also differ within the same city for different indicators. This caveat is applicable to all data analysis presented in this section and the figures reported in the table below.

**The share of persons in employment** varies greatly from city to city, ranging from a low of 58% in Antwerp to a high of 93% in Gothenburg. Most cities in our sample have between 68% and 78% of workforce in employment, but they have different reference years and age group.

The unemployment rate in our sample is as low as 2% in Warsaw and as high as 18% in Lyon, although the latter is an outlier as it dates to 2014. About half of cities in our sample have unemployment rates under 10%, while the other half is slightly over 10%. The average is around 8%, which is somewhat higher than the EU average of 6.8% (Eurostat, August 2018).

Cities’ reported youth unemployment rates range from a low of 1.5% in Riga to a high of 27.7% in Barcelona. The evidence at local level is consistent with the trend at EU level with youth unemployment being twice as high as unemployment in the general population. Cities in southern Europe have more than one in five youth unemployed as compared to less than one in ten youth in cities in northern and central Europe and even less than one in twenty youth in cities in Baltic states, with western EU cities in Belgium and France being in between with approximately one in seven young people unemployed.

The most concerning figures are the rates of long-term unemployed (more than 12 months) out of general unemployment. The range is the widest, from a low of 3% in Vienna to a high of 53.2% in Antwerp. Interestingly, there are cities with low general unemployment out of which there is a high proportion of people who are long-term unemployed. For example, Warsaw only has 2% of its workforce in unemployment, but more than half of them are long-term unemployed. The trend reveals there are vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion or structural discrimination, such as people with physical or mental disabilities or Roma people.

The share of young people (aged 15-24) not in employment, education or training varies significantly across cities, from a very low 1% in Gothenburg up to 14% in Milan. The variation in how cities define NEETs and how they collect data (whether only from public employment service registries or a multitude of sources) may justify the large differences.

Fewer cities (13 in 20) carry out regular monitoring of the share of persons over 45 who are unemployed (as a percentage of total workforce). There is a wide range from as low as 5.2% in Utrecht up to about 40% in Ghent and Barcelona (37% in Warsaw). The evidence shows that Dutch and German cities are much better at keeping people active for longer.

Overall, the trend across cities is that employment rates are on the rise and unemployment is decreasing as a sign of economic recovery after the crisis. However, there are big concerns about the quality of employment and the working conditions as the rate of working poor is increasing year after year. The trend is linked to the boost of new forms of employment with atypical, part-time and temporary contracts. Moreover, evidence from cities shows that the employment situation of disadvantaged groups remains precarious or has even worsened – especially in the case of the long-term unemployed, people with disabilities, older people and people living in the most deprived urban areas where opportunities are scarcer.
City measures

All cities work hand in hand with the public employment services, training providers, local employers, social partners, chambers of commerce and NGOs. City employment services usually offer support to employment as a complement to the public employment services, by focusing on the target groups furthest away from the labour market, especially the long-term unemployed, people who live on social welfare, migrants and refugees, and NEETs.

The biggest role of cities is to reach out to the people furthest away from employment, identify their needs and guide them towards support services, be it training, up-skilling, job search or, the most common of all, counselling and guidance (Amsterdam, Berlin, Ghent, Lyon, Nantes). Case managers typically assist people in their pathway to re-integration with language courses, job coaching and job search. Guidance is most effective when tailored to the specific needs of vulnerable groups (e.g. long-term unemployed or under-qualified).

<table>
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<th>City</th>
<th>% employed</th>
<th>% unemployed</th>
<th>% youth unemployed</th>
<th>% NEETs</th>
<th>% long-term unemployed</th>
<th>% unemployed over 45 years</th>
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<td>71.9%</td>
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Vocational training is strongly supported by city authorities who work with employers and schools to increase the number and quality of apprenticeships, implement work-based learning, create new vocational courses and offer information sessions. In Antwerp, the construction, industry and logistics sectors created ‘Talent factories’ to inform young people, job seekers, teachers and parents about the professional opportunities offered by technical-scientific training, motivate them to pursue such training and support skills-match between job seekers and job vacancies in companies in view of a matching the offer and demand on the labour market. Similarly, Amsterdam created ‘House of Skills’ to offer skills-oriented career programmes in the technology, health care, hospitality and ICT sectors.

Up-skilling of adults is another key measure to ensure sustainable job insertion. For example, Vienna adopted a strategy ‘Qualification Plan 2030’ in partnership with the public employment services, the ministry of social services and social partners, to enhance the qualification levels and vocational skills of people who only completed compulsory schooling.

Support for youth employment is also typical among cities, ranging from identifying and targeting NEETs to dedicated support for young people (e.g. ‘Fond d’aide aux jeunes’ in Nantes), but the most common is the implementation of Youth Guarantee. For example, Riga’s project ‘Know and Do!’ targets the inactive and most disadvantaged NEETs (aged 15-29) to engage them in individual plans for (re-)integration based on their skills and interests.

A common feature among city measures is the integration of services (Malmo, Stockholm, Twente, Warsaw). For example, Warsaw developed Local Support Systems (LSS) to provide integrated services to young people (aged 16-26) living at risk of social exclusion in the deprived areas. The integrated services are delivered by a consortium of NGOs commissioned by the city for three years to offer support regarding social and vocational activation, equal opportunities to access training and work, and cooperation with public and non-profit actors.

Several cities set out multi-year strategic plans to support employment at local level. For example, Barcelona has an Employment Strategy for 2016-2020 that focuses on better adapting local employment services to the specific needs of target groups. Metropolitan areas in France like Lille and Nantes have a Local Employment and Inclusion programme, supported by national and ESF funding to support job seekers into pathways of integration into work. Nantes’s Metropolitan Employment Pact is structured around enhancing the coordination of key local actors, such as national, regional and county governments, the public employment services, the chambers of commerce, universities, social partners and NGOs. Amsterdam has a strategic plan to combat youth unemployment (2015-2018) to help find a job for a minimum of 21,000 young people, with a focus on the most vulnerable youth.

City measures for active support to employment are mostly financed from municipal budgets, but some also benefit from national and ESF funding. About a third of cities in our sample reported implementing ESF funded projects (Ghent, Lyon, Nantes, Riga, Stockholm, Vienna, Warsaw).
Illustrative practices of city measures for active support to employment

For long-term unemployed: Since 2017, Lille Metropole is piloting a project called ‘Zero long-term unemployment zone’ within two neighbourhoods. The project established a cooperative ‘Employment Factory’ that offers work to long-term unemployed people. Each ‘volunteer’ gets a permanent contract with a chosen working time. Over 100 long-term unemployed people have been hired so far. Based on this success, Lille is planning to expand the pilot to other neighbourhoods. Berlin runs a job-coaching programme for the long-term unemployed to help them re-integrate into the labour market by overcoming employment disadvantages and getting help to find a job. Every round involves 200 job-coaches with each of them training over 40 long-term unemployed to access integration pathways. Job-coaches profile individual job seekers’ difficulties and assist them to enhance their skills. Each case is documented in a data-base to evaluate the impact of job-coaching activities.

For young people: Stockholm offers individual support for employment or training for youth through local job centres. The job centres work closely with the Swedish public employment services, the city district administrations, the adult education, the local business community and civil society. The job centres offer support to youth who receive income support from the city but are also responsible for outreach work to reach youth 16-19 years who do not attend or have completed upper secondary school and youth 20-29 that are NEETs. They offer support with job seeking, counselling and guidance, training and qualification and entry-level jobs through subsidised fixed-term employment in the city.

For labour market integration of refugees: Ghent is managing a big project to guide refugees into work as soon as possible. The project aims to integrate several services (language training, housing, integration, work and education) into a one-stop-shop approach. Ghent also has projects targeting EU citizens from eastern Europe who need guidance towards the local labour market as well as training and language classes.

For older people: Warsaw’s ‘active 50+’ programme aims to support unemployed people aged over 50 to get into employment or self-employment. The programme provides training and subsidises for start-ups and relies on a solid feedback loop with employers. The programme achieved 88% success rate, exceeding its objectives.

Supporting job creation: In 2016, Riga’s welfare department decided to stimulate job creation for socially excluded groups by giving grants to social enterprises, foundations and NGOs, a total of €7,000 for 12 months. The grants support projects for creation of new jobs for unemployed people with complex needs (multiple vulnerabilities due to poverty, discrimination, low education) as well as support for employed people at risk of redundancy to help them keep and stay in work via training and up-skilling. The success was so high that RIGA decided to continue the grants on a yearly basis and raise the total to €11,000.

Mobilising support of companies: Lyon Metropole’s ‘Charte des 1,000’ is a tool to mobilise private companies to support social inclusion. By signing the charter, businesses pledge to support local inclusion through training, recruiting and up-skilling of job seekers with difficulties finding a job, as well as socially responsible purchasing and other actions. The aim is to get 1,000 pledges by 2020; so far, over 650 companies have signed the charter.
Obstacles and barriers

Lack of resources is the biggest obstacle for cities to provide active support to employment (Ghent, Gothenburg, Lyon, Milan, Malmo, Twente, Vienna). Providing support for activating people who are furthest away from the labour market (the long-term unemployed, the under-qualified, migrants and refugees, older people) requires greater intensity in outreach, guidance and tailoring of support. Delivery of tailor-made support is resource intensive and can easily stretch the capacity of city services. While targeted support for the inclusion of disadvantaged groups is inherently a local approach, insufficient resources are channelled from national or regional levels to cities. This is linked to the fact that cities’ efforts are not sufficiently reflected in their legal competences, which hinders their capacity to build a functioning local labour market and tailor support to the changing situation on the ground.

Coordination is another key obstacle. Many cities reported a lack of shared approaches, data exchange, interoperability and clarity of roles (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Lille, Nantes, Utrecht, Warsaw) as major barriers to effective coordination of active labour market policies. Such coordination is needed both vertically between local, regional and national authorities and their respective public employment services as well as horizontally through partnerships between public agencies, the private sector, training providers and civil society. Fragmentation of actions is also a matter of internal coherence among the different services for education, employment and social services, requiring a more integrated plan and delivery.

Outreach to those furthest away from the labour market is another challenge (Berlin, Ghent, Vienna). Inactive people from disadvantaged groups are often not aware of the support services available to them. Some may be aware but face language barrier or fear discrimination. To overcome these barriers, city authorities invest in integrated approaches to connect social services that identify people in need of support with employment services that provide tailored support for labour market activation. Moreover, cities are investing in making their services more accessible. For example, Ghent installed four additional offices to provide accessible counselling and support in the areas with the highest unemployment. In addition to the proximity of physical offices, cities are also making their services digital. Digital services can be of help for some people but can hinder access for others. Given the digital skills gap, older people and those who lack digital literacy may find digital services as a barrier. Digital services cannot replace the personalised guidance that is so valuable for activating people furthest away from the labour market; therefore, cities need to keep both.

Insufficient engagement of employers is another challenge (Berlin, Riga, Timisoara). Employers are interested in recruiting the best candidates and are often reticent to hire people who have been long-term unemployed, under-qualified or present a disadvantage or disability. In the face of acute skills mismatch in some cities in western Europe, cities need to engage employers in up- and re-skilling programmes and incentivise them through social clauses in public procurement to hire people from disadvantaged backgrounds.
Policy recommendations

1. National and regional governments should follow the principle of subsidiarity and empower cities, via commensurate competences, to act where they are best able to support effective local labour markets. Cities are the level of government closest to people and most aware of the changes in the local economy, and as such, they are best placed to match the demand and offer on the local labour markets. Cities can provide tailored and locality-specific measures to fight unemployment and support the activation of people furthest away from the labour market. Therefore, cities should have their role recognised and empowered.

2. The EU and member states should allocate more resources at local level for tailored support to labour market activation of vulnerable groups at risk of exclusion. To reach out, identify and provide tailor-made support to those furthest away from the labour market, cities need extra resources for staff and funding. The resources can boost integrated support for training, up-skilling, job coaching, counselling and job search. The return on investment is higher through such a local approach rather than national measures unfit to local reality.

3. The EU and member states should involve cities in defining the priorities and target groups of the ESF+ operational programmes for 2021-2027. New groups at risk of social exclusion are emerging, such as the working poor, the under-qualified, the digital illiterate and those living in deprived urban areas with low incomes. To ensure no group is left behind from ESF+ support, and that support is extended from job insertion to support for keeping and staying in the job, cities need to be involved in defining targets, indicators and criteria.

4. The EU and member states should support close coordination between the public employment services and the city services. Cities play a key role in covering gaps of public employment services by focusing on inclusion of the most disadvantaged groups. There is a need for closer cooperation between municipal and state employment services through the exchange of information and shared action plans in the city or even at a neighbourhood level. The EU Commission should also involve cities in the peer learning network of PES-to-PES.

5. The EU and member states should invest in skills-matching while engaging employers. Skills mismatch is hurting people and the economy and needs to be addressed at all levels from local, regional, national and the EU. Employers should be engaged to take ownership in up- and re-skilling programmes. Cities are well-placed to work with employers and can incentivise them through clauses in public procurement to be more inclusive in their hiring.
Cities play a key role in the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights. As the level of government closest to people and the local economy, cities are the first to see that labour markets are changing and inequalities are rapidly increasing. It is now more important than ever to ensure social rights for all people and preserve social cohesion.

Most city authorities have competences and even go beyond their legal responsibilities to provide inclusive education, promote gender equality and equal opportunities, and deliver active support for employment. As policy makers and service providers, cities:

- deliver local strategies to reduce inequalities in access to education and the labour market and combat gender-based discrimination and ensure equal opportunities
- implement targeted actions to promote the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups, including migrants and refugees, the long-term unemployed, older people, people with disabilities, people living in poverty or in the most deprived areas
- constantly innovate to adapt services to the newly emerging needs of vulnerable groups and integrate education, employment and social services into coordinated local actions
- take measures to prevent school dropout, improve literacy and qualification levels of adults, and facilitate the transition from education or training to employment
- introduce social clauses in public procurement to promote gender equality and inclusive training and employment of migrants, the long-term unemployed, the under-qualified
- build the capacity of municipal staff to provide non-discriminatory access to services
- complement the public employment services by giving tailored support to those furthest away from the labour market through job search, coaching, counselling and guidance
- coordinate broad local partnerships between public services, employers, training providers and civil society NGOs to match demand and offer on the local labour market

Cities are committed to turning the Pillar principles into tangible actions but need more support from national and EU levels. We recommend the EU and member states to:

1. **Allocate more resources to local level** from the state budgets and the EU funds to build capacity for local measures and services for tailored support to the most vulnerable groups.
2. **Involve cities as partners in social policy-making** at national and EU level to ensure social policies are effectively responding to the real needs on the ground. Multi-level governance for policy and funding, including the ESF+ operational programmes, is needed.
3. **Support integrated urban development** to tackle rising inequalities between urban areas and improve living conditions by combining people-based and area-based solutions.
4. **Adopt a post-2020 EU strategy on equal opportunities and social inclusion** with an integrated approach to tackling inequalities and specific focus on challenges in urban areas.
5. **Improve equality data** by disaggregating social scoreboard indicators on gender, socio-economic status and migrant background to feed evidence-based inclusion policies.

Cities are committed to creating a stronger social Europe by ensuring that everyone has the right to inclusive education, training and employment to participate fully in society.
### Overview of city competences

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- ● Full competence
- ○ Shared competence shared with other levels of government
- ◼ Some limited competence, but actual work goes beyond the legal competence
- ◼ No competence
- NA No information available
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The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official position of the European Commission.