

**Speech by Claudia LUCIANI,  
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**Final DELI/C4I conference: Building Inclusive Societies**

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Rue Belliard 99-101, 1040 Brussels**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

Let me first thank the Committee of the Regions for hosting this event and Mr Jean-François ISTASSE from the Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture for giving it the political importance and recognition it deserves. I also thank Mrs **Marta CYGAN**, Director from DG Home Affairs of the European Commission for her continuous support for the co-operation with the Council of Europe in the field of integration.

My thanks also go to President of the Chamber of Regions, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, Mrs **Gudrun MOSLER TÖRNSTROM**, and to our colleagues from International Labour Organisation, especially Ms **Michelle LEIGHTON**, Chief of the Labour Migration Branch, whom I should thank for having accepted to share with us the international perspective on the issue of labour and migration.

I would like also greet representatives from the 21 European cities which have been our partners within the projects “Communication for Integration” (C4I) and “Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration” (DELI)- for the past 18 months

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The topic of the today conference is “**Building Inclusive Societies**”. It comes at the very timely moment for both the Council of Europe and the European Union and their member states as many important decisions need to be taken at the European, national, regional and local levels to address major social and political challenges. The growing cultural diversity of European societies is often portrayed as a reason for concern, at a time when citizens in many countries are worried by persistent unemployment and growing inequalities, and the rise of extremism and intolerance. We cannot find sustainable answers to these concerns using old paradigms. The current

refugee crisis demonstrates that presenting migration and diversity one-sidedly – as a source of costs, risks and conflicts, and refusing to acknowledge its positive sides and its potential, does not help find sustainable answers.

To benefit from the potential of diversity and address these challenges, societies need to be truly inclusive in order to combat social fragmentation, conflict and the risk of undermining fundamental rights and freedoms as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council of Europe has a distinct contribution to the debate on diversity and inclusion, based on its standards including the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, the recommendations of its monitoring bodies, and the innovative field actions it has piloted.

This conference examines the role of local policies and strategies that can play the role of a “pipeline” for inclusiveness, particularly in the European Union member states. It highlights the efforts made by cities to improve the social and economic integration of migrants, by supporting migrant entrepreneurship, and promoting balanced communication about diversity and migration, and fighting against rumors and stereotypes within local communities. The conference is an opportunity to assess the outcome of local initiatives implemented in the framework of two projects “**Diversity in the Economy and Local Integration**” and “**Communication for Integration**”, and discuss policy guidelines for the wider community of cities facing the challenges of integration and diversity management.

The two projects were launched and implemented by the Council of Europe with the support of the **European Integration Fund**. Both projects were built as a way of deepening specific know how of the **Intercultural cities programme, a pioneering Council of Europe initiative**, and strengthening its knowledge base.

The network of the Intercultural Cities was created in 2008 to respond to emerging diversity management needs of local governments and civil society actors. In that perspective, the ICC developed an integration model that gives an important place to diversity strategies. We call this model **intercultural integration, and it is now being adopted by over 70 cities in Europe and increasingly worldwide**.

We have been working at the local level because with international migration likely to increase in scale and complexity over the next decades, **local**

**governments are expected to play a more active role** in addressing the challenges of diversity and integration.

We believe intercultural integration is a strong contribution to the European integration agenda. The importance of diversity as a “**tool for growth**” and **the role of local and regional authorities** are underlined in 5rd Annual Report on Immigration and Asylum of the European Commission.

At the heart of the intercultural integration model is the conviction that achieving good framework conditions for migrant integration depends first and foremost on **society’s recognition of migrants as active social and economic players.**

The challenge for the DELI and C4I partnerships was to reduce existing barriers for migrants’ integration at different levels:

- For C4I project: at the level of public perceptions and attitudes, by fostering the participation of the civil society in myth busting and improving public communication about diversity and migration, through social networks;
- For DELI project: at the level of local sectoral policies, namely by mainstreaming diversity in public procurement policies and providing incentives for diverse workforce and suppliers in the private sector, through public-private partnership platforms.

Communicating about migration and diversity is a complex task and the results are not always clear. This is why we launched C4I: its challenge was to evaluate to what extent local anti-rumors campaigns can make a difference, and what actually works on the ground.

The surveys conducted in ten C4I cities **confirmed that perceptions have changed in the project period and that the anti-rumors campaigns can really contribute to this change.**

DELI was instrumental in fostering the participative policy-oriented debate around the issues of migrant entrepreneurship and diversity-friendly procurement policies. Based on the assessment review of local policies and practice, it provided technical expertise and advice to cities on how to remove obstacles to the development of businesses by migrants. The project helped put in place **a comprehensive set of policy requirements** to guide the

conception and implementation of specific programmes in support of migrant entrepreneurs.

To conclude, I would like to thank the European Commission, the partner cities, the Migration Policy Group (MPG) and our team of experts for partnering with the Council of Europe in DELI and C4I and I hope that the policy-makers and practitioners at national, regional and local level use the policy insights of this conference to develop strategies and activities that support migrants' integration and building truly inclusive societies.