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## City of Zurich Integration Policy 2015-2018

Increasing equal opportunities

Living a welcoming culture

Facing challenges

Enabling individual responsibility

Supporting a good coexistence of people

Active positioning of integration policy

### Backgrounds and Examples

In November 2014, the City Council defined 16 strategic targets of municipal integration activities for the current legislative period pertaining to six prioritized guidelines. This paper explains the targets of the Integration Policy 2015–2018 by means of background information and selected examples.

The City of Zurich's integration activities include on the one hand projects and measures implemented by public structures. This implies all services meant for both local residents and new immigrants. This concerns most of the city's services.

On the other hand, the city offers specific services to promote integration. These have been set up to meet a particular need of the foreign population. Those measures are part of the city's implementation of the cantonal integration program, which is also co-financed by the Federal Government.

The Departments and Offices are responsible for the implementation of the municipal Integration Policy. If needed, the Office for Cross-cultural Issues supports them. The Delegation for Integration of the City Council coordinates the activities.

## 1 INCREASING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**All inhabitants of the City of Zurich are equal members of society. They benefit equally of the offers and services of the City of Zurich.**

### 1 A Children and youths growing up in the City of Zurich are promoted according to their individual skills and abilities in order to be able to complete an education.

The **school structures** with their teachings and further offers support both the individual child and the competences of how to live together in an urban society. This is linked up with various activities and measures that are developed for the particular situation of newly arrived children.

The city is engaging in **Early Intervention Programs** including among others advisory services for mothers and fathers in order to reach out to all sections of the population; it also includes targeted support of the non-German speaking children in day care centres and provides comprehensive information for the contact points childcare.

In particular, the city places great emphasis on the **Transition from School to Vocational Training**. Hence, it offers a broad range of advisory and supervisory services, bridge-year programs, motivation terms and additional transitional solutions – not least by providing more than 1000 training and internship places within our municipal administration.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- To prepare for kindergarten, the parents of three-year old children are invited to assess the speech development of their children. If it proves to be appropriate, they are encouraged to send their children to a child care facility offering a specific support program.
- A language kit («Sprachmappe») offers information on issues concerning school and is made widely accessible. The kit is available in ten different languages.
- Approximately 80 municipal school classes enjoy playing music together. Regardless of their family background all children may learn to play a wind or string instrument for a period of two years. After that, music lessons are supported if the child wishes to continue.

### 1 B The City of Zurich designs its services and offers to reach out to all sections of the population. Important information should be easily understood and, if required, available in several languages.

All professional administration procedures take into account the constant **changes** in society. The administration monitors demographic trends and assesses which groups of the population are reached to which extent. From the perspective of the Integration Policy, it is vital that the migrants know and benefit from the targeted offers available. They are being adjusted as required. **Texts in simple German** increase comprehensibility. Relevant information is either translated or made more easily accessible via intercultural translation.

These tasks are of special relevance for those municipal institutions having **direct customer contact**. Therefore, specific activities are developed for example in the Residents' Office, in healthcare (and health promotion), in care provisions for the elderly as well as in social assistance and socio-culture. Among others, these activities are geared to improve the efforts to inform target groups that have not yet been adequately reached; they also intend to increase the **transcultural competences of staff** or to verify the present forms for their clarity, language and simplicity.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- The city administration can make use of a manual when preparing written information. This manual includes information provided in German, translation issues and ways of how to outreach to target groups.
- Upon request, police and rescue services visit organisations and communities connected to the migrant population to inform about their work.
- In the field of cultural activities, projects are supported which specifically aim at creating awareness and consideration for the diversity of the population. This involves for example the urban dance weekend «Zürich tanzt» and JULL, the literature lab for the young.

### **1 C The City of Zurich works actively against discrimination; it engages in dismantling structures that prevent integration to happen.**

Disadvantages in everyday life and at work may arise in various ways. In terms of integration policies, the focus has been put on discriminatory **unequal treatments**, taking place due to (presumed) origin, skin colour or religious, or cultural traditions. They violate human dignity, lead to **marginalisation** and prevent integration. Individual action as well as procedures and routines implemented by institutions can turn out to be discriminatory.

Every four years, the City of Zurich publishes a **Report on Racism**. An interdepartmental working group is mandated to prepare the report focusing on selected subject areas. The next report will be published in 2017. It will consider recommendations from previous reports and take up issues emerging in the exchange with the city institutions, the migrant population and other involved groups. In addition, information will be shared on the measures that are implemented in the framework of the Cantonal Integration Program.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- Those affected by (racist) discrimination have easy access to contact points, consultation and support services.
- Municipal employees may benefit from a series of events and activities dealing with difficult working situations; these contribute to rising awareness in front of discriminatory unequal treatments.
- Several times a year, the city police meet representatives of the migrant population and of NGOs for a round table discussion. On this occasion, current issues and problems are taken up and discussed.

## 2 ENABLING INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

All inhabitants of the City of Zurich participate in economic and social activities on their own responsibility and according to their means. The organisations of civil society contribute to community life in the city.

### 2 A The City of Zurich supports language, mathematical literacy and social competences required by its adult population to cope with everyday life and work.

The city's language support programs subsidise **German Language Courses** which complete the services of the free market. These courses are tailored to the foreign-language population and reach out to 2000 people every year. Private institutions organise the individual language classes and provide childcare when required. Moreover, the city's administration has developed its own program of **Language Development at Work**. Several municipal facilities organise courses and other proactive measures to promote the German language competences of their employees.

The City's various measures and structures aiming at the (re-) **Integration into the Labour Market** are open to all beneficiaries of social welfare. These include among others «Basisbeschäftigungen» (minimal working activities), partial wage projects and qualification programs. There are also specific integration services for temporarily admitted persons and refugees.

#### Selected Examples:

- Adults without an official recognition of their foreign qualification are entitled to benefit from a personalised career guidance of no charge.
- In the framework of the language training courses subsidised by the City of Zurich, innovative forms of learning are being tested to improve the German oral language skills of target groups that have so far not been reached sufficiently.
- Municipal facilities offer internships or assignments in community work for people with little job experience. Examples can notably be found in the City of Zurich's Office of Waste Disposal and Recycling, the Office of Parks and Open Spaces or in municipal nursing homes and care centres.

### 2 B The City of Zurich actively maintains close contacts to migrant associations, communities and companies. They are involved in the development of integration policies.

Migrants tend to be underrepresented in well-established **associations**. They rather network via structures relating to their origin, social media, working relations and informal meeting points. In order to know their interests and concerns and to include these into the City's activities and work, the municipal authorities need **direct contacts** to the migration population. These contacts are complex and flexible including widely varying issues such as renting sports facilities or planning participatory processes.

As foreigners are largely excluded from political decision making processes, the City Council meets with the **Foreigners' Advisory Council** once a year. The latter has a

consultative function and informs among other things about current developments and needs of the City's foreign residents. In addition, it organises public projects and events at regular intervals as well as supports the authorities in developing and implementing activities that are of special relevance to foreign nationals.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- Those cultural and religious associations considered to be important for the migrant population are invited to an annual information meeting. Here, municipal institutions are present and inform about their services.
- Several Departments of the City of Zurich have defined interfaces facilitating the exchange with the Foreigners' Advisory Council.
- A Facebook-site intended to promote integration manages the further dissemination of information services and maintains contacts with migrants who are organised in social media platforms.

### **3 LIVING A WELCOMING CULTURE**

**All inhabitants of the City of Zurich are respected in their personal way of living on the basis of the legal order. Zurich is perceived as a cosmopolitan city in which liberal views and solidarity are important values.**

- 3 A The City of Zurich welcomes newcomers and provides information to them in a language they understand; this includes making them familiar with the most important offers on integration services and showing them how to find services to meet their needs.**
- 3 B The City of Zurich informs the public about fundamental rights applicable and about the rules of everyday life that are important to the population.**
- 3 C The City of Zurich advocates the visibility and appreciation of different cultural and religious traditions.**

The City of Zurich welcomes the diversity of its population and considers the people living in the city above all as Zurich locals – notwithstanding their origin. The city maintains a **Welcoming Culture and a Culture of Recognition**. This refers to all activities that underline Zurich's open attitude. It also includes information policies taking into account the needs of both newly arrived people and the local population who have already been living in Zurich for some time.

The esteem for diverse traditions is also shown in the **protection of fundamental rights** such as the freedom of assembly and the access to infrastructures. And it is especially shown in the fact that numerous municipal facilities take into consideration any existing **particular needs**. Such needs may include food or dress codes, daily routines determined by traditional habits or establishing an interreligious «room of tranquillity» in a hospital.

### **Selected Examples:**

- The information services for migrants are divided into different language groups; they are completed with offers focusing on the newly arrived members of a family reunification scheme.
- The City of Zurich promotes measures of **interreligious dialogue** and e.g. supports visitor programs and events of local religious communities.
- In all of its work, the City's Funeral and Cemeteries Office takes into consideration the different (secular, cultural, religious, individual) needs of each bereaved family.

## **4 SUPPORTING A GOOD COEXISTENCE OF PEOPLE**

**Every inhabitant of the City of Zurich is part of the city community. He/she knows and respects different peoples and their lifestyles.**

- 4 A The City of Zurich promotes activities which take advantage from the potential of a diverse population and which contribute to mutual understanding or common action.**
- 4 B The City of Zurich motivates the various sections of the population to get involved in the shaping of the city.**
- 4 C The City of Zurich welcomes the diversity of its employees and supports all staff members in the special tasks which may arise when dealing with a highly diverse workforce and population.**

Every planning or participatory activity of the city has the task to include the migration population; whereby, concerning integration-policy issues, the municipally managed **Socio-Culture** is of particular importance. It has a decentralised approach, the commitment of the population represents a priority and the migrants are always seen as a target group to be included. Projects and activities organised by **Civil Society** are financially supported if they contribute to an intercultural exchange and if they promote the living together in the City of Zurich.

In its function as **Employer**, the City of Zurich carries a special responsibility. On the one hand, municipal employees are supported in their work with and for the benefit of the entire population. And on the other hand, the Administration is encouraged to follow a recruiting strategy which mirrors the heterogeneous nature of the city's population. This policy has a high potential to enhance staff competences which is – not only language-wise – beneficial to all.

### **Selected Examples:**

- If the construction project of a large new housing settlement tends to transform the population of a city-district, then – at an early stage of the project – the inhabitants affected will be involved to work out a process trying to positively influence the future coexistence in the district neighbourhood concerned.
- The municipal Credit for Integration Projects supports for example an association in the district Zürich Nord which organises events together with the neighbourhood association and the community centre dealing with issues of intercultural cohabitation.

- Within the framework of the municipal HR-strategy, the so-called «Using Diversity as an Opportunity» represents one sub-project. It will be implemented with a focus on leadership issues.

## 5 FACING CHALLENGES

**The city of Zurich sees and tackles problems. It provides sustainable solutions for existing or emerging integration difficulties.**

**5 A The City of Zurich recognises problems of integration, names them and tackles them pro-actively.**

**5 B The City of Zurich meets public concerns about migration and the municipal targets of integration with an open and factual dialogue.**

The City of Zurich makes integration happen. Cohabitation works. However, Zurich is also home to a considerable number of people who out of a variety of reasons are not able to fully participate in the economic and social life of the city. The fact that the City of Zurich and its population are in a state of constant transformation is a challenge. Hence it follows that **new questions and problems** continuously emerge which must be taken into consideration when designing the integration policies of the city. These policies follow on the one hand the long-term **Strategies of Zurich 2035** authored by the City Council (and here in particular the field of action «A Society based on Solidarity»); and on the other side it is important to **observe and analyse** the present situation.

Whenever the City of Zurich recognises undesired developments or emerging difficulties it usually responds within the framework of the issue concerned and **within existing structures**. If required, specific measures can be taken or targeted projects be developed and implemented. These may concern for example contaminated places, isolated target groups or dismantling existing integration barriers.

### **Selected Examples:**

- An increasing number of migrants in the City of Zurich have reached the age of retirement – therefore, external nursing services (Spitex) are further developed. The information work and the services provided take into account the needs of the senior citizens among the migrant population.
- To strengthen the role of fathers in health promotion and education of their children, moderators with a migrant background are working for the “Fathers’ Forum” («Väter Forum») of the Office for addiction prevention organising discussion groups on relevant topics with men of the same language origin.
- In case individual city spaces or squares risk to turn into «Hotspots», the municipal facilities and institutions concerned take up coordination work.



## 6 ACTIVE POSITIONING OF INTEGRATION POLICY

**The city of Zurich is known for its active, pragmatic and seminal work in integration issues.**

- 6 A The City of Zurich provides fundamentals. It is actively engaging in a regional, national and international exchange of experiences, participates in the further development of integration policies and discusses integration measures.**
- 6 B The City of Zurich shares in the legislation procedures and in political discussions by issuing opinions on subjects of integration policies it is concerned with. Here, the focus is laid on the particular situation of urban regions.**
- 6 C The City of Zurich makes public discussions possible on current issues of migration and integration. It organises an annual migration conference.**

Cities are **disproportionately affected** by issues of migration and integration. Hence, almost one out of ten persons moving to Switzerland takes up residency in the City of Zurich, and about 45 percent of all newly arrived foreigners in the canton of Zurich move into the City of Zurich. These trends are not new. This is why cities have high competencies in issues of integration and in shaping heterogeneous societies.

Political decisions on the national and cantonal level in the field of migration, integration, asylum and naturalisation have an impact on the policies of the City of Zurich – therefore, the city represents **its interests** in various bodies. Moreover, the city contributes to the **Further Development** of the Swiss Integration politics with a (regional, national and international) exchange of experiences, as well as with innovative projects and by providing fundamentals.

### **Selected Examples:**

- The City of Zurich supports the Federal Authorities in their endeavours to re-direct structures and procedures of the Swiss Asylum System. Zurich gladly offers its competences in the search for constructive solutions.
- On the occasion of the Zurich Migration Conference 2015, one of the discussion topics will be the question what Swiss senior citizens think about foreigners and about a diverse society.
- The work performed by the population, administration and politics of the City of Zurich is made more visible through public activities.