

September 2019

## **Integration Policy Targets of the City of Zurich 2019–2022**

# **ZURICH EMBRACES DIVERSITY**

**ENABLING ACCESS // STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION // CULTIVATING A  
WELCOMING CULTURE // TACKLING CHALLENGES // TAKING A CLEAR INTEGRATION  
POLICY STANCE**

### **Background and Examples**

Integrating the foreign population is a multi-layered process. It involves various policy areas and falls under the responsibility of a number of departments and offices. It is a cross-sectional task and happens within the existing public services directed at the population at large, but also within a framework of specific support measures. Furthermore, integration is only successful if all residents incorporate it, in neighbourhoods, at work and in everyday life.

The Integration Policy of the City of Zurich follows the strategic targets set by the City Council for each legislature. The policy targets 2019–2022 were enacted on 28 August 2019. The fourteen targets go by the title «Zurich Embraces Diversity» and adhere to five focus areas. They are based on the targets of the previous legislature, which were further developed in interdepartmental discussions and reviewed in an internal administrative consultation. The Foreigners' Advisory Council was also consulted. The strategy is implemented in the respective departments.

This paper written by the Integration Office concisely explains the City Council's strategic targets along with background information and examples. They were brought forward by a survey carried out in the Administration in spring 2019.

## A ENABLING ACCESS

**All residents benefit equally from the offers and services of the City of Zurich.**

### 1 **The City of Zurich designs its services and offers in such a way that they reach the population. Important information is easy to understand and available in several languages if necessary.**

The city's population is constantly changing. That is why all city institutions must regularly check which population groups they reach and how effectively they reach them. This also applies to newcomers from abroad, who should know about and use the services and offers that are relevant to them. This implies an occasional adaptation of how people access these services and the delivery of easily understandable information in different languages. In 2016, the Integration Office published a guideline for the Administration on easily comprehensible language.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- The Resident's Office will make the most important information on its website available in English. The Office for Supplementary Benefits will ensure that information sheets are easy to understand and are translated into other languages. The Education Authority provides schools with a list of intercultural interpreters and ensures quality standards.
- The Museum Rietberg is examining how its art education program can reach a greater number of migrants in the future. The Office of Social Affairs is expanding the volunteer-run writing workshops for people with limited German language skills or little knowledge of administrative procedures. The Protection and Rescue services are recruiting multilingual employees in order to facilitate communication in emergencies. Thanks to its «Bridge Builder» (Brückenbauer), the City Police is in regular contact with cultural associations and religious communities.
- The access of undocumented migrants to city services and offers is being reviewed on behalf of the City Council. Information on residence status shall only be asked for if there is an overriding legal requirement to do so.

### 2 **The City of Zurich is committed to fighting discrimination. It amends regulations and procedures that make integration more difficult.**

Unfair treatment, insults and exclusion based on (suspected) origins, skin colour or religious and cultural traditions are offensive. They make people feel marginalised and make integration more difficult. Racist discrimination can come in a variety of forms. It can arise through individual actions or because of institutional processes and habits. To the best of their abilities, city institutions have a responsibility to prevent discrimination and offer their attention and support to those affected by racism.

### **Selected Examples:**

- Through a public authorities' initiative, the City Council is working to introduce municipal voting rights for foreigners who have lived in the city of Zurich for at least two years. The City informs those citizens who have recently reached the minimum period of residence required for naturalisation. A survey is under way how a city identity card (Züri City Card) can be introduced.
- The interdepartmental working group against racism provides information on the insights and recommendations contained in its current report. The group facilitates discussions and does follow-up work, publishes an updated flyer on available contact points and counselling centres, and is preparing its next report for 2021. It is in regular contact with organisations from civil society and with city authorities fighting discrimination based on gender or disability.
- The newly planned outpatient centre of the city hospital in the city centre aims to make access to specialised and highly specialised medical services easier, in particular also for the foreign population. The municipal health services are developing a concept to guarantee quality healthcare even to those who do not have health insurance. The city police will continue their «Round Table Against Racism» and carry out follow-up work based on insights derived from its project «Police Work in Urban Areas of Tension».

### **3 The City of Zurich welcomes the diversity of its staff. It supports its employees in the tasks that arise from having a diverse workforce and population.**

The City of Zurich is a major employer. It is responsible for helping its employees fulfil their tasks as well as possible, for the benefit of the entire population. Through targeted recruitment, it can also ensure that the city administration reflects the diversity of the population and uses the potential of this diversity to the full. Those in a leadership position are responsible for protecting employees from difficult clients and their occasional offensive remarks.

### **Selected Examples:**

- The Career Advice Centre raises awareness about migration and strengthens the intercultural expertise of its counsellors through further training and peer coaching groups. Viventa College continues to raise awareness about diversity with an expert group specialising in integration issues. Increasing the diversity of teaching staff is a strategic priority at the city's day care centres over the next few years. The internal working groups «Becoming a Culture Professional» and «Diversity» are active in the Resident's Office. Diversity is part of the curriculum of the internal development programme at the Protection and Rescue services, features in a project run by the municipal nursing homes, and is taken into consideration during recruitment at the municipal retirement homes.

The Integration Office runs a quality circle on the theme of diversity for City employees and employees in institutions close to the City, and organises events that provide background information on selected topics. It is also concluding a performance agreement with the Zurich Institute for Interreligious Dialogue that will include support for City institutions on religious matters.

## **B STRENGTHENING PARTICIPATION**

**The residents of the city of Zurich participate in economic and social life according to their means. Civil society makes an active contribution to community life.**

### **4 The City of Zurich ensures that children and young people who grow up in the city are supported in their individual abilities and complete an education.**

The city's school structures support the individual child on the one hand and community life on the other hand. Other related activities and measures focus on the situation of children who have recently arrived or do not yet have a sufficient level of German. In addition, various offices have made a commitment in the area of early years support, and the City is particularly keen to ensure that as many young people as possible enter vocational education. This reflects in the array of available counselling and interim offers, but also by providing more than a thousand training and internship positions within the city administration.

#### **Selected Examples:**

- The education authority is pushing ahead with its project «Day Schools 2025» and implementing the project «Childcare and Leisure», which allows for a more flexible use of the childcare and leisure offers. The Sports Office is supporting a survey by the Zurich City Sports Association on the integration work being done by the clubs, and is also continuing to promote low-threshold sports programs for children and young people. The Zurich School of Music (Musikschule Konservatorium Zürich), a department of the Office of School and Sport, plans to continue developing its musical and social program «Music in the Classroom» (Klassenmusizieren).
- The project «Well Prepared for Kindergarten» (Gut vorbereitet in den Kindergarten) will be implemented in all school districts in close collaboration between the Office of Social Affairs and the Office of School and Sport. The project develops the German language skills of three-year-olds as well as the German-teaching skills of the participating day-care centres.
- The Office of Social Affairs is developing an educational strategy for 16-to-25-year-olds to ensure all young Zurich residents receive the best possible support in choosing and completing a professional education. Offices and institutions such as the Office of Civil Engineering (Tiefbauamt), the Office of Parks and Open Spaces of Zurich (Grün Stadt Zürich), Zurich Municipal Electric Utility (ewz) and the municipal retirement homes also plan to offer pre-vocational training in future to help young refugees and temporarily admitted persons with their integration.

**5 The City of Zurich promotes the basic linguistic, mathematical and social competences required by its adult population in everyday life and at work.**

The city's language support programme subsidises German courses that complement the private market. It is directed at adults whose native language is not German, generally offers childcare and is implemented by private institutions. Recipients of social benefits are the focus of various city measures and structures that improve peoples' chances of (re)joining the job market. There are also programmes within the administration to improve language skills in the workplace, as well as specific integration offers for asylum seekers.

**Selected Examples:**

The new Language Support Concept of the City Council, which took effect in 2019, is implemented by the Integration Office and overseen by an interdepartmental working group. A qualified consulting service for German courses is available to the public. The Office of Parks and Open Spaces (Grün Stadt Zürich) and the municipal retirement homes make it possible for their staff to attend German lessons.

- The curriculum of the integration courses offered by the Viventa College for young adults is being reviewed and the need for everyday maths skills will be taken into greater consideration than before. The ELDIS (Parents learning German) project of the Office of School and Sport is being reorganised and will, among other things, provide information about the school system. The «Femmes Tische» conversation groups, which are supported by the City, will continue to run and may be expanded.
- The Office for Social Affairs' new strategy on social and professional integration will be implemented. It takes account of the fact that not all social welfare clients will find a place in the job market again. The social institutions and services offer easy access to courses that strengthen basic competences.

**6 The City of Zurich involves the population in its integration policy work. It expects residents to commit to their integration and to a positive community life.**

**7 The City of Zurich promotes civic activities that emphasise the diversity of the population and encourage relationship-building, mutual understanding and collaborative endeavours.**

Like any community, the City of Zurich depends on its population taking an active part in everyday social and civic life. The more people engage in this, the higher the chances are for a positive community life and the shaping of a shared future. It is therefore important that the City makes use of available opportunities to facilitate community participation. This can happen in the context of participatory processes, the promotion of social and cultural activities, or the maintenance of free spaces that permit self-organised participation. Special attention should be paid to those members of the population who do not have voting rights or who otherwise have few opportunities to make their concerns heard and participate in everyday social life.

### **Selected Examples:**

- The Foreigner's Advisory Council is in contact with the foreign population, initiates interdisciplinary discussions across various departments, and meets with a City Council delegation once a year.
- The Contract Management at the Office of Social Affairs concludes service agreements with larger institutions and finances neighbourhood and other projects to ensure a strong sociocultural environment. The Integration Office maintains various forms of collaborations with migrant organisations and promotes community activities with a view to better integration. It also participates in a European project aiming to strengthen voluntary work in general and the civic engagement of migrants in particular. å
- In 2019 and 2021, a mandated private organisation is organising an intercultural program of events for the first time in Zurich. The City Property Administration (Liegenschaften Stadt Zürich) will support the founding of housing associations or other self-organised bodies by tenants in the many currently planned new and replacement buildings. The Office of Social Affairs wants to reach less privileged population groups with specific cultural offers for children in peripheral neighbourhoods. In addition, it is supporting a tenants' office for people affected by the demolition of properties. The new managers of the Schauspielhaus, Neumarkt and Gessnerallee theatres are increasingly focusing on themes such as diversity and participation.

## **C ENSURING A WELCOMING CULTURE**

**Every inhabitant of the city of Zurich is part of the city community. Their individual lifestyles are respected based on the legal system.**

- 8 The City of Zurich welcomes newcomers; it provides them with details about the most important services as well as the information they need to find their way.**
- 9 The City of Zurich advocates that the cultural and religious traditions practised in the city can be visible and that they are valued.**
- 10 The City of Zurich responds to reservations about migration and city integration targets with open and factual dialogue.**

The population of the city of Zurich is so diverse that it is hardly possible to describe a «majority society». It is easier to view Zurich as a city that is primarily made up of minorities, which intersect at many points. Despite, or perhaps because of this, the City of Zurich sees the people who live here above all as Zurich locals. To ensure they become locals in everyday life too, it maintains a welcoming culture and a culture of recognition. The way in which a newcomer is welcomed into a club, at work, in their neighbourhood or in their residential area – if indeed they are welcomed – reflects attitudes that have an impact on integration. Information services should therefore take into account the requirements of both new arrivals and residents who have lived here for a longer period.

### **Selected Examples:**

- Foreigners who have recently arrived continue to receive a welcome pack when they register at their district office (Kreisbüro). The Integration Office, which is responsible for implementing and developing the initial information concept, is examining how greater use can be made of digital information channels, and whether new language groups or topics should be considered due to changing requirements.
- Various city institutions take special requirements of the population into consideration in their work, for example in the funeral, protection and rescue, and healthcare services. The City supports welcome events organised by neighbourhood associations upon request. The Zurich Forum of Religions (Zürcher Forum der Religionen), which is supported by the Integration Office, regularly organises events, which allow people to visit places of worship. The city's infrastructure and public spaces are available to the entire population on an equal basis for use, or rental.

## **D FACING CHALLENGES**

**The City of Zurich pays attention when «things are not going well». It reacts with workable solutions to the challenges of community life.**

- 11 The City of Zurich recognises the challenges and problems of integration policy, defines them as such and actively tackles them.**
- 12 The City of Zurich wants the population to feel safe and able to use public spaces. It works preventively to fight all forms of radicalisation and reacts with appropriate measures when necessary.**

In the City Council's Zurich Strategies 2035, the focus area of «Caring Society» (Solidarische Gesellschaft) offers a point of reference of Zurich's integration policy in the long term. Adjustments can be made in the short and medium terms based firstly on observations and analysis of the current situation – the results of which can feed directly into the specific planning of responsible offices – and secondly on unexpected developments such as the major challenges that have arisen in the refugee sector since 2015. If the City recognises undesired developments or an emerging need for action, it generally responds in a manner appropriate to the topic at hand and within existing structures.

### **Selected Examples:**

- Opportunities arising from the cantonal implementation of the Swiss Integration Agenda will be used to improve the professional and social integration of refugees and provisionally admitted foreigners.
- The results of the 2019 population survey carried out by the Office for Urban Development and of the security survey scheduled for 2020 by the city police will be taken into account and all possible fields of action investigated. Security in public spaces is continuously monitored and improved by targeted interventions and measures when necessary.

- City institutions and institutions close to the City are aware that the Office of School and Sport's specialist unit for prevention of violence has knowledge and experience of the increasingly relevant area of violent extremism and radicalisation and make use of this when necessary.

## **E TAKING A CLEAR INTEGRATION POLICY STANCE**

**The City of Zurich expresses its position on the major integration policy issues. Zurich is perceived as a cosmopolitan city in which liberal views and solidarity are important values.**

- 13 The City of Zurich bases its integration policy on fundamental and human rights. It is committed to improving the situation of particularly vulnerable groups such as refugees and undocumented migrants.**
- 14 The City of Zurich carries out groundwork and facilitates discussion on themes related to integration. It expresses its position on important political issues and works to promote exchanges of experience and the further development of integration measures on the regional, national and international levels.**

The city of Zurich is disproportionately affected by migration and integration issues. It has a great deal of experience and expertise, but its flexibility is limited by overriding regulations in other relevant areas. As a result, the City represents its interests in the appropriate forums and contributes to the development of cantonal and national integration policy through exchanges of experience and professional groundwork.

### **Selected Examples:**

- The City of Zurich is committed to improving the access of undocumented migrants to all applicable fundamental and human rights at the cantonal and national level. The City is prepared to maintain its increased level of commitment in the refugee sector and, for example, to accept additional resettled refugees.
- At its annual migration conference, the City focuses on topics that have previously enjoyed relatively little political or specialist attention. It compiles statistical or specialist groundwork which is also of interest to others.
- The City of Zurich participates in cantonal and national committees that deal with migration and integration issues. It expresses its expert and, if necessary, political opinion on planned changes to laws and support programmes. It also communicates with other Swiss (and European) cities.