

Parallel session 3

Living together in diversity

Date & Time

Tuesday, 12 June, 15:00 – 17:00

Room

A1

Description

Eleanor Roosevelt explained that universal human rights begin in “small places, close to home – so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm or office where he works. (...)” Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere”. As employers and service providers, local and regional governments are the ones in charge of making of these rights a reality for each one of us, young, old, woman, man, heterosexual, lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans- and inter-gender, catholic, atheist, or Muslim, Black or White, whoever we are and whatever our abilities may be.

And much is already being done. Many local governments across Europe have shown remarkable solidarity for diversity, awareness of the challenges, and willingness to implement integration, equality and inclusion policies. How can national-level policies also benefit from a shift in a more inclusive direction? How can these examples push for a greater resources-transfer to the local level? How can other local governments use these practices in their turn?

As we face economic downturns, terrorist attacks, and rise of authoritarian populism, all of which undermine the human rights standards we thought were a given – and when political rhetoric mobilises voters for the defence of a fixed national identity narrowly defined by ethnicity and culture, we need to voice out, more than ever and stronger than ever, inclusive discourses that recognise hyper-diversity and cultural pluralism as a factor of societal development and innovation in today’s globalised societies.

This is what this session is about: finding inspiration for peace when the calls for war are so loud. And this inspiration can be found in local governments which have found the way to open and adapt their policies and public services to be age and child-friendly, diversity-friendly, LGBTBI-friendly, minority and refugees-friendly, disability-friendly, etc. with, of course, gender equality as a baseline. This session is meant to inform and give examples of how a local or regional government can get things done but, beyond and above all that, the aim is to share inspiration, political courage, and visions to make universal human rights mean something in every neighbourhood, school or college, factory, farm or office.

Format

Debate, panel

Language foreseen

Basque, English, German, Spanish (1 additional to be confirmed)

Contact

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About

Rainbow Cities

The Rainbow Cities Network is an interactive, inspiring place to discuss, exchange and work together on increasing social inclusion and equality for all. The aim of the network is threefold: 1. Exchange experiences among cities, by local policy makers, on mainstreaming or including LGBT issues in local policies. 2. Exchange of local good practices with regard to sexual orientation and gender identity. 3. Link up with (developments in) international networks and organisations.

Intercultural Cities

The Intercultural cities programme supports cities in reviewing their policies through an intercultural lens and developing comprehensive intercultural strategies to help them manage diversity positively and realise the diversity advantage. The programme proposes a set of analytical and practical tools to help local stakeholders through the various stages of the process.

AGE Platform Europe

AGE Platform Europe is a European network of non-profit organisations of and for people aged 50+, which aims to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness on the issues that concern them most.

European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR)

The Coalition of Cities against Racism is an initiative launched by UNESCO in 2004 to establish a network of cities interested in sharing experiences in order to improve their policies to fight racism, discrimination and xenophobia.

The European Disability Forum

The European Disability Forum is an independent NGO that represents the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. EDF is a unique platform which brings together representative organisation of persons with disabilities from across Europe. EDF is run by persons with disabilities and their families.

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