

## **Nantes Council for the Citizenship of Foreigners – Conseil Nantais pour la Citoyenneté des Etrangers (CNCE)**

**Nantes (France)**

### **EU-MIA REPORT SUMMARY**

#### **Introduction**

The Functioning Practice ‘Nantes Council for the Citizenship of Foreigners – Conseil Nantais pour la Citoyenneté des Etrangers (CNCE)’ was implemented in Nantes, France. The practice was investigated by the EU-MIA consortium partner FIERI.

#### **Operational context**

Starting in the 1980s, with the shutdown of its traditional shipyards, the city of Nantes underwent a radical change in terms of socio-economic system, city planning and population. The City countered the process of de-industrialisation and the economic downfall during the 1990s and the 2000s by fostering the establishment of ‘creative enterprises’ in the field of arts, music and culture and strengthening the relationship between scientific and technological research and high-tech industries.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the regional immigration flow – traditionally one of the lowest in France – began to rapidly increase, accordingly to a more general trend that saw the west of France starting to catch up with more traditional areas of immigration in France. In 2009 there were 21,176 immigrants living in Nantes, representing the 7.5% of its whole population. As concerns countries of origin, half of the immigrants who live in Nantes come from the Maghreb (33%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (15%) and another 31% come from Asia.

#### **The Functioning Practice**

##### **Objectives**

The CNCE is an advisory body whose main objective is to allow foreign residents who do not have the right to vote to actively take part in the production of the city public policies, in particular in the field of integration, the one which impacts their lives the most. More precisely, the objectives of this FP are:

- To match more appropriately local public policies in the fields of welcoming, integration and equality with migrants’ needs and demands;
- To experiment new forms of civic participation;
- To co-elaborate and co-produce specific actions and tools in the abovementioned fields together with beneficiaries themselves, including both immigrants and all other actors concerned.

The practice involved the creation of a council of migrants, rather than a council of experts on integration. Members of this new council have to be representative for the entirety of Nantes’ foreign residents, rather than for their own national community of origin. The main function of this new council had to be not simply to give advice to the city councillors, but to concretely elaborate and produce policies and actions together with city councillors, municipal departments and other non-institutional actors. The CNCE therefore consists of three *collèges*:

- 1) *Collège des étrangers*, made up of 40 third country nationals legally residing in Nantes
- 2) *Collège d’associations et organismes experts*, made up of around 10 local NGOs

3) *Collège des élus* comprising a variable number of city councillors responsible for issues related to integration and other relevant issues

As of July 2013 the CNCE was made up of 44 foreign members.

## Partners

The first institutional partners of the CNCE are internal to the Municipality: they are the municipal departments and services that cooperate together with the CNCE in the implementation of specific actions and in the production of concrete tools. In addition, at the city level, a number of 'intermediate structures' are partners of the Municipality in the implementation of specific initiatives.

## Chronology and funding

In the last two years (2012-2013) the CNCE experienced relevant changes, due to the implementation and incorporation of the EU-funded project *Coprod Migrant*. The EU financial support, as a means to put in practice the idea of co-production of public policies, offered a great opportunity for the CNCE to improve its activity, develop new actions and concretely produce useful tools.

## Outcomes and the next steps

In the period 2012-2013, the two main fields of action the CNCE focused its activities on within the framework of *Coprod Migrant* have been: welcoming of immigrant newcomers and ageing of migrants. Two dedicated workshops were formed to analyse and discuss these issues and respond with concrete policy proposals and tools to the questions expressed by the city councillors.

The CNCE recommendations and co-production activities are now considered as an extremely valid and useful contribution to the elaboration and implementation of local integration policies. The Municipality itself is now very much willing to refer questions and tasks to the CNCE, to receive its *avis citoyen*, to involve it in the production of integration tools and actions. The CNCE is not a merely formal participatory council, but succeeded in gaining a relevant role within the local policy community.

Follow-up and developments for this FP are foreseen both in the short run and in the long run. As concerns short-term developments, the most relevant are:

- A series of evaluation activities
- An update of the produced tools over time (e.g. the welcome guide);
- An improvement of the readability of produced tools, in order to ensure the access to information to migrants who do not speak/read French;
- The expansion of the CNCE activities towards new fields of intervention consistent with foreigners' needs and demands; possible priority fields of actions could be the issue of French language courses (how to facilitate access to the existing learning offer) and the problem of discrimination in the access to employment and training and in the access to housing.

The experience of Nantes represented a positive example for the City of Angers, which in 2009 studied the CNCE and took it as a model for the creation of its own council of foreigners, which has so far proved to be a well-functioning body. Furthermore, according to interviewees, the fundamental elements of this Functioning Practice could be replicated in different contexts elsewhere in Europe.