



## **IV ASEM-MGM – Lisbon May 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> 2017 Inclusion and Interculturality – Concept Paper**

During the last decade the World was confronted with a change of paradigm of societies. Be it as the result of the economic and financial crisis that hit a large number of countries, or for the situations of political instability and war conflicts, the migratory movements hit levels not yet seen and it became necessary to rethink social and economic policies. "To think globally and to act locally" had been the motto to approach such issues, the cities were forced to react immediately even when there are no reaction at a national level.

It will be necessary to face this change as a fatality and a threat? Or should we face it as an opportunity and an added value?

When we face themes as Mobility, Sustainability and Innovation it will be important to discuss the inclusion and interculturality as answers to the migratory fluxes, resorting to methods and innovative practices, in order for Societies to be sustainable. International Organizations as the Council of Europe or Eurocities have been developing programs with local authorities, in Europe and outside Europe, with the purpose of adopt policies based in inclusion. Also in Japan, Korea and Australia we start to see movements adopting innovative practices. As an example, in March 2017, the Minister of Internal Affairs and Communication of Japan (with power over local governments) made public a report of good intercultural practices, at a local government level, in the areas of education, employment, housing and prevention of natural disasters.

The concept of integration is well defined and based in general policies principles and actions. However, while local authorities attained a level of significant integration, there are legal limits to their mandates and their range as a result of the national laws. It seems to be essential to promote governance at different levels in order to achieve an effective policy of inclusion of immigrants and refugees, allowing to transfer good practices and innovative policies at a local level to the national or even transnational level.

This IV ASEM MGM is an important and timely moment to reflect on such themes.

