

## 2009 General Conference of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism

### Cities Against Racism New Challenges – New Partnerships: Shaping our Future

Toulouse, 19 – 20 November 2009

#### Final Declaration

We, the participants in the 2009 General Conference of the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism, meeting in Toulouse on 19 and 20 November 2009,

**Concerned with** the manifestations of exclusion and discrimination over the last years, with the rise of racism and extreme right-wing movements and the increase of hate crimes in Europe, and being aware that particularly municipalities find themselves at the heart of this troubling development and are therefore urged to look for immediate and long term solutions;

**Emphasising** that social cohesion, the capacity of a society to ensure the equality and welfare of all its members by minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation, is more important than ever and requires increasing political commitment;

**Convinced** that the promotion of social cohesion calls for policy measures at municipal level which effectively combat racism and discrimination and provide effective access for everyone to his or her rights, particularly for anyone who lives in, or is at risk of social exclusion;

**Grateful** for the support the coalition of cities project received from the Durban Review Conference in Geneva in April 2009, resulting in its specific mention in the outcome document;

**Recognising** that building and maintaining social cohesion is one of the main challenges municipalities are facing today, and that mutual cooperation – particularly through the exchange of knowledge and experiences and through dialogue on issues which transcend national borders – greatly support progress towards social cohesion;

**Aware** of the fact that the struggle against racism and discrimination concerns us all, and that responsibility for social cohesion has to be shared by all and requires active and integrated municipal policies involving the private sector and civil society;

**Reminding** the objectives of the *2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All*, the *2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue* and the *All Different All Equal* campaign of the Council of Europe ending in December 2007, and supporting the current Council's campaign *Speak Out Against Discrimination*, the *International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures* to be launched in 2010 as well as UNESCO's efforts to promote dialogue among cultures and seeking ways and means to foster respect and mutual understanding;



**Convinced** that combatting racism and discrimination effectively requires acknowledging processes of multiple discrimination, and consequently, where relevant, recognition and inclusion on the grounds of gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation and age;

**Underlining** the important role the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism is playing in supporting these efforts taken by European organisations and institutions as well as UN agencies, and in promoting inclusive urban societies in Europe;

**Call upon** all local authorities in Europe to join the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism as a municipal network of solidarity and exchange against any form of racism and discrimination, and to work together in this long term struggle;

**Invite** member cities to take an active part in implementing the Ten-Point-Plan of Action by consolidating and initiating concrete activities according to their priorities and capacities;

**Request** the Steering Committee to strengthen its efforts to promote the Ten-Point-Plan of Action in as many European municipalities as possible, and to establish close cooperation with relevant European organisations and institutions;

**Appeal** to the European Union, the Council of Europe, the governments of the European countries, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and non-governmental organisations to support the European Coalition of Cities Against Racism in its endeavours to combat racism and discrimination and promote social cohesion at a municipal level in Europe.

