

# Editorial

# The Tale of Two Cities:

## *Urban Profiles for Partnership and Participation*

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This is a success story about two cities where the arts communities have helped create conditions for a new urbanity, for new models of city living in the age of globalization. It is about music and the arts paving the way for the creation of a more caring and sharing community living.

### **From Music City to Intercultural City: The Hamamatsu Urban Vision**

Hamamatsu is a Japanese city of approximately 800.000 inhabitants located in the Shizuoka Prefecture. It has for long been recognized as a City of Music. In 2014 it joined the UNESCO Creative City Network in the field of music. An international conference on cultural diversity through music was held in 2015 and this year the city will be host to the World Music Festival. The city's only skyscraper dominating the skyline, The Act City Tower, is shaped as a harmonica, reminding of its leading role as producer of musical instruments together, with housing the world class Museum of Musical instruments and Music Box museum.

But the city's unique connection to the arts does not stop here. The city houses a full scale replica of the world famous original Polish statue of Chopin sculpted by the famous artist Wacław Szymanowski and arranges the tri-annual International Piano Competition in the Act City Concert Hall. Many of the leading Japanese artists, composers, musicians, dancers, and actors have made Hamamatsu city their home and the city houses many important art collections as well as the Shizuoka University of Arts and Culture.

The vibrating international art scene alone would give ample reason for the city administrators to embrace the larger vision of an intercultural city. But then there

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is the 16 000 Brazilians and 3000 citizens of Peruvian origin, making it the largest contingent of South Americans living in Japan together with the immigrants from Indonesia, South Korea, the Philippines, China, Nepal and Bangladesh contributing to the colorful ethnic diversity, setting its mark on the artistic and commercial life of the city.

With this background following the Great East Japan Earthquake and building on the original plan of 2001, the Hamamatsu City Council in 2011 drew up the 2nd Hamamatsu City Comprehensive Plan outlining the future of Hamamatsu City as a *creative city built on civil collaboration*, shining into the future. For full documentation see: [www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/kokusai/kokusai/documents/iccvision\\_en.pdf](http://www.city.hamamatsu.shizuoka.jp/kokusai/kokusai/documents/iccvision_en.pdf).

The basic policy governing a planning period of five years from 2013 to 2017 rests on the principle that *foreign residents are important partners in city planning*, that *the coexistence of diverse cultures will create a new regional culture and the necessity to respect rights and fulfill obligations*. The aim is “to build a city together in which everyone can take an active part of the community. As such, all residents, regardless of nationality, will come together in an intercultural society to fully exert the powers that they have within the regional economy and community.”

A priority after the great earthquake was to bring the whole population together to *develop and implement a crisis management system and improvement of disaster prevention capabilities* in the community. In order to ensure the cooperation of all actors, including administrative agencies, central players of regional development, the corporate sector and various stakeholders, citizens groups, neighbors associations, foreign resident communities and volunteers involved in intercultural integration, a *Hamamatsu City Intercultural Integration Promotion Council* was established, cooperating with Japanese urban networks and the Intercultural City program of the council of Europe. Besides establishing a disaster prevention system two other priority fields were envisaged.

### Education for Children

Education for mutual understanding is seen by the Hamamatsu City Council as important to build an intercultural society including developing perspectives on universal design and education for human rights. The plan building on the expressed will to *create a city that does not tolerate discrimination arising from different nationalities and cultures*, foresees engaging foreign residents living in the community and Japanese citizens who have experience of living abroad as instructors for lifelong learning classes for international understanding, cooperating with volunteers who introduce their own cultures.

### Diversity in City Development

Recognizing ethnic and cultural diversity as a source of city vitality the city council aims at promoting arts and culture in order to cultivate intercultural sensibility from early childhood and implement a scheme of empowerment through assistance in self- realization of city youth. An educational support

program which also involves the university sector includes dispatching a bilingual supporting staff of foreign residents or Japanese teachers who have lived abroad will be implemented along with a scheme of adult learning. Citizens of various backgrounds will be given opportunity to assist in promoting urban change in an intercultural direction through specially designed art projects.

Special provisions will be made to increase diversity in the work place and provide information on ethnic business and arts ventures making use of networks with residents home countries. Paying particular attention to new activities of the Intercultural City Program in Europe the Hamamatsu plan includes cooperation with intercultural cities around the world.

### Oslo – The City Xtra Large

The profile of Oslo, as drawn up by the panel of experts from the Intercultural Cities network after their latest review visit in the fall 2012 paints the picture of the Norwegian capital as a dynamic and changing city, with an inner city population of 613 000 comparable in size with Hamamatsu but with the fastest growing metropolitan population in Europe. For full documentation see: [www.coe.int/t/dg4/Cities/oslo/profile.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/Cities/oslo/profile.pdf).

Noting that Oslo has been ranked second in the Intercultural Cities Index of cities that have developed a large body of expertise in managing the process of immigration, the panel goes on to discuss if and how its progressive policies are put into daily practice. The latest of these entitled “City Government Decision 152/12 – Diversity opportunities” rests on the commitment to a policy of inclusion that aims at enabling new arrivals to participate in the labor market and in society as quickly as possible, enjoying equal living standards and opportunities to those of native citizens.

The most significant basis for this legislation came in 2001 (simultaneous with the Hamamatsu City First Comprehensive Plan with striking parallel recommendations) when the Oslo City Council following a shocking racist murder, agreed to launch the OXLO Oslo Extra Large initiative as the city governments expression of values and a political commitment to work for an inclusive city. The review document summarizes the principles set forth in the declaration:

- The municipality shall cooperate broadly with institutions of higher education, business, NGOs and other actors in civil society.
- Districts and schools shall facilitate meeting places for people to intermix.
- Measures against racism and discrimination shall be given higher priority in the allocation of grant funds.
- Public services shall take into account minorities’ needs and preferences. Municipal employees shall reflect the diversity of the city’s population.
- Immigrant organizations shall be consulted.
- City districts and agencies shall mainstream a diversity perspective in their place of action, organizational structure, and management steering documents.

One of the aims of the reviewers was to monitor the mood of the city and the new legislation following the 2011 racist atrocities. It became clear from experiences in other European cities that the Oslo City Government needed to address the underlying causes of ethnic violence first and foremost through initiating a program of job creation for immigrant youths. The new statutes of 2012 making the Eurocity Charter on Integrating Cities the basis for integration and diversity work in Oslo also contains a policy to fight all forms of racism, bullying and discrimination and establish a contingency network against hate speech and harassment of minorities on the internet.

The question that activists must ask is: Will these measures hold up against the new threats to our cities and nations posed by radicalization and increased ethnic tensions? Can we succeed without delegating a far greater role to intercultural education in and out of school in line with the Hamamatsu plans? It should also be remembered that the first research project supported by the Norwegian fund for culture to explore the effect of an intercultural arts program built around the music and dance traditions of immigrants in Oslo schools (the Resonant Community Project (1989 -92) demonstrated a significant decrease in incidents of race related conflicts in participating classes and schools.

So the Tale of Two Cities is an ongoing story of two city councils embracing the idea of the Intercultural City, but likewise the story of the men and women of the arts communities who first embraced the vision of a resonant community.