

Neumarkt

Intercultural Profile

November 2021

This report is based upon the visit of the Council of Europe's expert team on 5 and 6 October 2021 comprising representation from the Council of Europe and independent expert Claire Rimmer. It should be read in parallel with the Council of Europe's response to Neumarkt's Intercultural Cities Index questionnaire, which contains many more recommendations and pointers to examples of good practice.

The Council of Europe has defined the intercultural city as encompassing people with different nationality, origin, language, or religion/belief, where:

- Political leaders and most citizens regard diversity positively, as a resource;
- The city actively combats discrimination and adapts its governance, institutions and services to the needs of a diverse population;
- The city has a strategy and tools to deal with diversity and cultural conflict and to enhance participation;
- The city encourages greater mixing and interaction between diverse groups in public spaces.¹

Equality, diversity, and interaction are three inter-linked values that underpin the development and sustenance of an intercultural city.²

Equality: involves a commitment by the city to ensure equality and non-discrimination (both direct and indirect) in all their actions, towards their own workforce, in their relations with partners and suppliers, including civil society organisations and enterprises; and to take positive-action measures to redress the inequalities experienced by citizens on different grounds.

Diversity: involves a commitment by the city to recognise and preserve diversity as an intrinsic feature of human communities; and to pursue the 'diversity advantage' that accrues from the presence of diversity when coupled with specific policies and strategies that enable diverse contributions to shape the cultural, economic and social fabric of the city, foster innovation, and to manage conflicts which may threaten community cohesion.

Interaction: involves the city in creating conditions for positive and constructive everyday encounters across cultural as well as gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status and other differences, where active engagement across difference, rather than benign indifference or merely tolerance, is the necessary building block of a thriving society.

This report provides an updated intercultural profile of Neumarkt following on from its first Intercultural Cities Index report completed in 2020.

¹ The Intercultural City Step by Step: Practical guide for applying the urban model of urban integration, Council of Europe, 2019, page 14.

² Bridging the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Agendas: Background paper, Intercultural Cities, Council of Europe, 2017.

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1. Introduction to Neumarkt

Neumarkt in der Oberpfalz is the capital of the Neumarkt district in the administrative region of the Upper Palatine, Bavaria, Germany. The city has a long history, first being mentioned in 1135, and developing as an industrial centre in the 19th century. Today it is home to several large companies including Pfeleiderer Deutschland, Bionorica and Eurocoles.

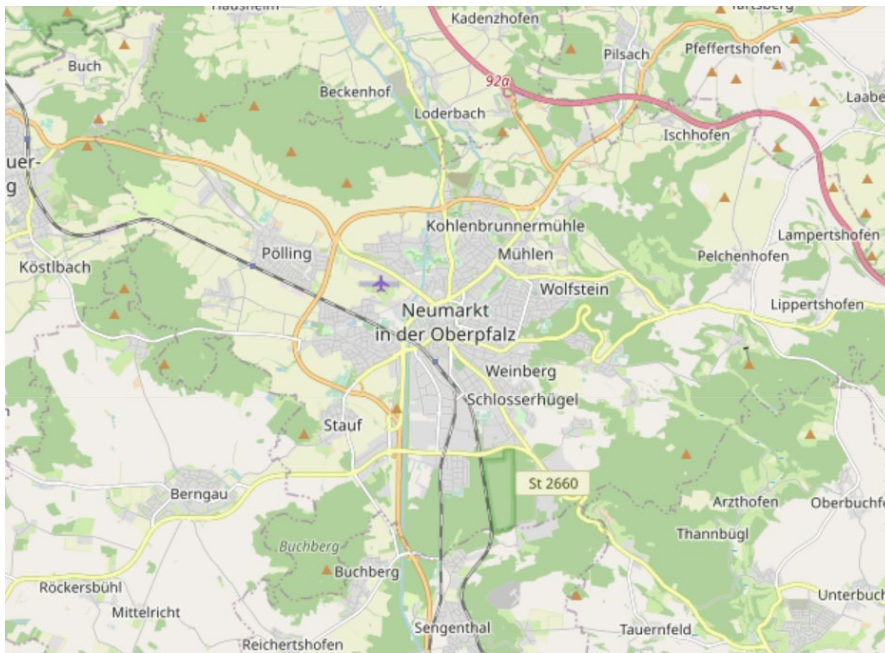
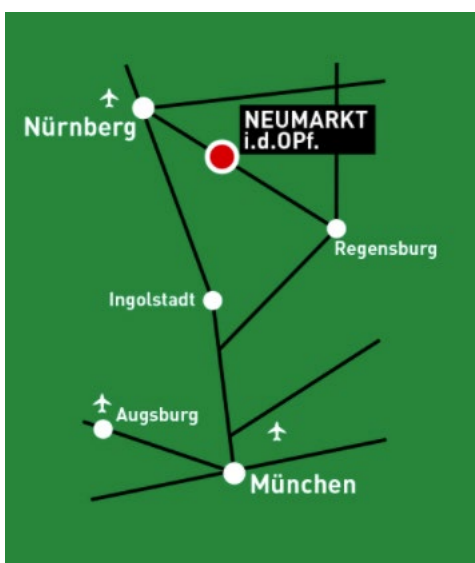


Figure 1: Map of Neumarkt (from city website)



GDP is not measured separately for the city given its size, but the GDP for the county within which it is located is €36,199.

During the visit several stakeholders noted that Neumarkt's location was particularly fortuitous being at the crossroads of several important cities and having excellent transport links. This made it a very attractive place to live and to set up a business.

Figure 2: Map of Neumarkt's location vis-à-vis local airports, from the city website.

2. National Policy Context

Germany has long been a country of migration. As early as the 1880s it attracted seasonal labour. After the second World War until the 1970s millions of labourers or ‘guestworkers’ arrived, mainly from Italy, Turkey, Spain, and Greece.³ From the 1980s and with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the picture of migration changed with new arrivals more likely to be refugees from eastern or southern Europe. There were also large numbers of ethnic Germans who resettled from the former Soviet Union.⁴ Refugees also constituted a large number of the arrivals in the 1990s with the war in the former Yugoslavia. Later the war in Syria and other conflicts had a significant affect in 2015 and 2016 when over 1 million people sought asylum in Germany.

According to IOM, Germany is now ranked number two in the world as the top destination for migrants having seen an increase from 8.9 million immigrants in 2000 to 13.1 million in 2019.⁵ Having reached a peak in 2015-2016 this is now slowing. In 2020, the number of people who immigrated to Germany exceeded the number of those who emigrated by approximately 220,000, but net immigration to Germany had decreased for the fifth year in a row.⁶

In terms of international and regional legislation, Germany is a signatory to the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the situation of Refugees, the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, a Member of the European Union, the Schengen area of free movement and the EU’s Common European Asylum System.

At the national level, despite Germany being a popular country of migration for many years, for much of the second half of the twentieth century German policymakers considered migrants as shorter-term visitors who would one day return home, and policies reflected this.⁷

This changed in the 2000s, particularly when large numbers of refugees arrived in 2015-16. At first the asylum processing system was unprepared to deal with so many applications and a series of regulations were introduced to improve the speed and efficiency of asylum procedures including prioritising specific nationalities for services. Prospective asylum seekers were shared among the different regions of Germany, using a scheme called “Königssteiner Schlüssel” or the “Königsstein key”. Many municipalities struggled initially due to a lack of infrastructure such as housing and language classes.⁸ According to this key, Bavaria should receive 15.56491% of new arrivals.⁹

As the share of asylum seekers grew, Germany faced a challenge to successfully integrate new arrivals in education and training. Building on the former National Integration Plan (2007), the Integration as

³ Victoria Rietig and Andreas Müller, The New Reality: Germany Adapts to Its Role as a Major Migrant Magnet, Migration Policy Institute, 31 August 2016, available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/new-reality-germany-adapts-its-role-major-migrant-magnet>.

⁴ Vera Hanewinkel and Jochen Oltmer, Historical and Current Development of Migration to and from Germany, 11 January 2018, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, available at: <https://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migration/laenderprofile/english-version-country-profiles/262758/historical-and-current-development-of-migration-to-and-from-germany>

⁵ IOM World Migration Report 2020, page 43. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/wmr_2020.pdf.

⁶ DeStatis, Statistisches Bundesamt, Migration 2020: strong decline in registered arrivals and departures, available at: https://www.destatis.de/EN/Press/2021/06/PE21_306_12411.html;jsessionid=71272E4B55B729FE7C7EE265FA192969.live712

⁷ Victoria Rietig and Andreas Müller, The New Reality: Germany Adapts to Its Role as a Major Migrant Magnet, Migration Policy Institute, 31 August 2016, available at: <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/new-reality-germany-adapts-its-role-major-migrant-magnet>.

⁸ <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/five-years-later-one-million-refugees-are-thriving-germany>

⁹ See the website of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, November 2021, available at: <https://www.bamf.de/EN/Themen/AsylFluechtlingsschutz/AblaufAsylverfahrens/Erstverteilung/erstverteilung-node.html>.

an Opportunity declaration (2007) and the National Action Plan on Integration (2011), the federal government and the Länder extended or introduced numerous integration initiatives. Measures to promote Vocational and Educational Training have been important and have included recognition of qualifications; language training; and preparatory courses.¹⁰

By December 2018, there were 1.8 million people with a refugee background in Germany. 75 percent were younger than 40, and many had high levels of education. Overall integration has been seen as relatively successful as by 2020 about half of those who had arrived since 2015 had found a job, training, or an internship and the number who declared having good German language skills went from 1% upon arrival to 44% in 2018.¹¹

In terms of anti-discrimination legislation, statements of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are included within the Basic Law (constitution) of the Federal Republic of Germany (Grundgesetz), which was ratified in 1949. EU anti-discrimination legislation including the Racial Equality Directive, the Framework Directive on Employment, the Equal Treatment in Goods and Services Directive and the Equal Treatment Directive, have been incorporated into German law via the General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz). The scope of the Act extends beyond the EU directives, as it applies to religion/belief, age, disability, and sexual orientation, as well as race/ethnic background.¹²

Municipal autonomy in Germany is enshrined in Article 28 of the Basic Law, which guarantees local self-government. Which matters are considered local depends on the policy area. Municipalities are legally part of the federated states (Länder), and the allocation of competences between districts and municipalities varies. Many migration policies are determined at the national level. Other fields such as housing or healthcare for refugees, are organised at the level of the Länder, so at municipal level, mandatory provision of services is determined by federal and state legislation. In other policy fields, however, such as social cohesion or the coordination of volunteers, municipalities can decide if and how to engage.¹³

3. Local Diversity and Policy Context

This report is an intercultural profile of the city of Neumarkt. As of 1 January 2021, the total population of Neumarkt was 40,561, or 42,448 when secondary residences were included. As of the same date 88.3% of inhabitants were German and 11.1% were of another nationality.¹⁴ There is a broad range to Neumarkt's diversity with the main ethnic and cultural groups in the city being from Kosovo, Romania, Croatia, Poland, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Hungary. The diverse composition of the city population has evolved significantly in recent years after the opening up of residence permits for workers from the western Balkans, migration from eastern Europe and the arrival of refugees since 2013, mainly from Syria, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Eritrea. There is a very small number of

¹⁰ OECD Education Policy Outlook, Germany, 202, page 13: <https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Germany-2020.pdf>

¹¹ Sekou Keita and Helen Dempster, Five Years Later, One Million Refugees Are Thriving in Germany, Center for Global Development, 4 December 2020, available at: <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/five-years-later-one-million-refugees-are-thriving-germany>

¹² Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency, Guide to the General Equal Treatment Act, Explanations and Examples, available at: https://www.antidiskriminierungsstelle.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/agg_wegweiser_engl_guide_to_the_general_equal_treatment_act.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

¹³ Hannes Schammann, Danielle Gluns, Christiane Heimann et al, Defining and transforming local migration policies: a conceptual approach backed by evidence from Germany, Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies Volume 47, 2021 - Issue 13, Pages 2897-2915, 19 Mar 2021.

¹⁴ See Neumarkt City website: <https://www.neumarkt.de/rathaus-buergerservice/aktuelles/neumarkt-in-zahlen/bevoelkerung/>

irregular migrants identified per year, of around 20 to 30 people.¹⁵ In 2021 58.1% of inhabitants identified as Catholic, 14.8% as Protestant and 27.1% as another religion or having no particular faith.¹⁶

During the visit several members of the city authorities and the Mayor spoke of projections of further growth for the city, which the city saw as a positive factor if managed well. The city is an attractive location for people to move to, something all stakeholders were proud of and wanted to encourage. The city seemed big enough to provide many opportunities for newcomers, yet small enough to maintain a friendly and neighbourly feel.

Neumarkt is a relatively new intercultural city. It started its journey with a commitment to intercultural principles established in the policy document “Impetus for a Sustainable City”, adopted by the City Council on 28 November 2018.¹⁷ This encompasses eight fields of action, including integration. There is also a mission statement: ‘Neumarkt – Intercultural Open City’ that was prepared as part of a citizen conference and sets out a commitment to: peaceful co-existence; mutual respect and mutual appreciation; integration as a dynamic two-way process of reciprocation and accommodation; integration as social participation for everyone; a culture of welcome; and opposition to all forms of racism.

The Neumarkt Intercultural Cities Index report helpfully provides recommendations on the current strategy including that whilst the statement emphasises interaction with some focus on diversity there is less on equality. There could also be more of a strategy for communicating the statement and to build a broad ownership for its content, across institutions or among the general public; or building capacity to champion it among elected official or senior policy officers.

The four main areas for action identified in the strategy are: to promote tolerance and acceptance; expand and stabilise structures to promote integration; create educational opportunities and everyday aids for migrants; and support integration through community activities. Some areas are identified as important, however, such as affordable housing, but are not specifically addressed.

As a strategy, the policy document usefully commits to cross-functional and cross-department cooperation and to an interagency working body for integration but with less focus on the development of institutional systems for an intercultural approach by agencies or on cross-sectoral work, involving other sectors such as employers, trade unions, or civil society. The policy document notes the intention to establish a Neumarkt alliance of integration which could be of value in this regard. A plan for evaluation could also be developed.

The Councillor for Integration identified offers important political leadership. The Department for Sustainability Support provides an administrative leadership. The role of Sustainable City Coordinator (Kordinatorin Engagierte Stadt) helps a great deal in this respect. Before Covid-19 an intercultural panel had been established to enrich intercultural exchange by initiating projects and there were plans to transform this into an integration council to advise the city government.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 there had been little opportunity for the city to develop the intercultural alliance or the intercultural panel since the initial report, as people had only recently started meeting

¹⁵ See Intercultural Cities Index report for Neumarkt, available at: <https://rm.coe.int/neumarkt-intercultural-cities-index-analysis-june-2020-/16809f031d>

¹⁶ See Neumarkt City website: <https://www.neumarkt.de/rathaus-buergerservice/aktuelles/neumarkt-in-zahlen/bevoelkerung/>

¹⁷ See, [Impulse für die nachhaltige Stadt | Bürgerhaus Neumarkt \(buergerhaus-neumarkt.de\)](https://www.neumarkt.de/buergerhaus).

again since the pandemic began. However, it was noted how many different stakeholders engaged in the visit from all spheres of city life. It was clear that Neumarkt's intercultural journey had wide-ranging support from the Mayor and senior policy officers and officials who were active participants in the events over the two days.

It was also useful to see the central role of the Bürgerhaus where much of the day-to-day work and cooperation takes place. The geographical location of the Bürgerhaus and the fact that so many departments and other stakeholders worked so closely together in one building, meant that cross-departmental and cross-agency cooperation was happening regularly.

In addition, as the Mayor remarked in his opening comments during the visit, compared with other cities, Neumarkt runs considerably more activities with the help of its large network of volunteers. Neumarkt is rightly proud of its vibrant volunteer sector and the administration tries to network as much as possible and to facilitate those in the community who have good ideas and who wish to contribute. Again, this underlines the interagency and cross sector interactions that are happening in the city and the energy and commitment of the volunteers was impressive.

Formalising more of this excellent work internally and with external stakeholders, through regular coordination meetings, meetings with an integration alliance or input from an integration panel, could be useful to ensure that areas do not fall between the gaps.

4. Commitment

It was well noted that care was taken with the agenda for the visit, for example, to highlight areas that were missing from the original Intercultural Cities Index report for Neumarkt. This showed that Neumarkt had taken the time to go through the different recommendations and create an agenda to better reflect Neumarkt's intercultural work.

As with many cities' first reports, the city had not included several areas of work that it currently undertakes. The visit highlighted several such areas of work and showed that Neumarkt values its intercultural journey and is keen to build on its strong start.

One area where work is already being done and where there is room for more linking, is with the city department working on climate and mitigation. There is an annual international film festival on the environment, for example, with 10 films from around the world. There is also a climate exchange with South Africa. Both of these initiatives could be reflected upon in future reports.

Another area where a significant amount of work is being achieved that was not reported earlier, is the city's impressive fair-trade work and its global partnerships for sustainable trade programme, including twinning with South Africa. Indeed, Neumarkt won the German award "Capital of Fair Trade" in 2019 and several programmes and grant funding opportunities for schools and others were open at the time of the visit. As with the city's intercultural journey, this had strong support from the Mayor and elected officials. More could be made of the links between this work and Neumarkt's activities as an intercultural city.

"I would like to emphasise, that it is our endeavour in Neumarkt not to regard Fair Trade and other important sustainability issues as additional tasks that run along somewhere, but as central topics of our urban development." Lord Mayor Thomas Thumann.

The city also showed a willingness to learn and to engage with other cities in the Intercultural Cities' Network. During the final meeting of the visit, the Mayor committed to discussing intercultural issues and the network with other German cities. The Mayor identified this as a good next step in the city's learning.

5. Education

Depending on the system of education in a country, cities may sometimes need to find more innovative ways to act independently. In Germany's federal education system, most decision-making is at regional or Länder level, not city level. However, sub-national actors do play a strong role including in the vocational system, for example, where employers contribute to aspects of governance and funding.¹⁸

The visit included a round table at the Bräugasse school with school directors, the local education institutions, the People's Academy (VHS) and the political speaker for education. Located in the city centre, 70% of pupils at the school have a migration background and are from 25 different countries. The school had a wealth of experience and examples of good practice and being a welcoming intercultural school. It was clear from the Director that diversity was valued and there was a wide range of inclusive strategies for the children. Students, parents, and teachers were all helped to develop intercultural competencies. There was a cheerful board in the main hall that welcomed all who came in the languages that were present in the school. Every month there was a country of the month with children working to give a presentation on their country. Art and music also included intercultural activities with an instrument of the month from around the world, a parade through the town, songs in different languages, and a peace project. There is also an annual day of intercultural meetings with games from all the countries the children represent. This empowers the children to show how they play in their home countries. Parents are also involved, and they bring in traditional dishes. Twice a year there are breakfast meetings in the world café with themes such as celebrations. This helps parents meet people they never would before and gives them an opportunity to ask the Director questions in a more informal setting.

During the round table, participants noted that teachers were in short supply particularly in secondary schools in Germany and school recruitment is undertaken centrally so it is not possible for schools to have specific criteria, for example, to increase how representative teachers are of the local population. However, it is possible in individual schools to instil a love of intercultural learning amongst staff and pupils alike. Teacher training was highlighted as an area that could be developed more. The education board knew of some training including welcoming culture. There had been one training run exclusively in Turkish to help native German speakers understand how exhausting it can be to attend events such as a parents' evening in another language.

Many schools rely on volunteers or classroom assistants to help with German language support for pupils. There can be a fear of losing the mother tongue and it is important that this is recognised and supported where possible. Learning your mother tongue can also help students study German. At the moment this is easier in cities with embassies. It was not considered realistic for parents to teach

¹⁸ OECD, Germany, Educational Profile 2020, page 4. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/country-profile-Germany-2020.pdf>

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children at the end of a long school day. Homework help can also be an issue for parents particularly during Covid-19. Direct contact was made more difficult and lessons were online which made it more

difficult again for some parents to help their children. This has led to large gaps. It can be difficult for the town to assist in this field when it is not the city's competency, however, there could be a role for the city with homework clubs. The city could also consider links and projects between schools to counter some of the segregation noted in the Intercultural Cities Index report for Neumarkt.

6. Business and the labour market

During the visit, it was clear that many people settle in Neumarkt due to the low unemployment rate and the different work opportunities that exist there. There are also several initiatives and resources, that are already ongoing or that the city could tap into, making this a very promising area of cooperation for Neumarkt.

During the visit there was a round table held at the Bionorica headquarters with representatives from the local job centre, the employment office, and other large companies in the area. Bionorica is a leading evidence-based pharmaceutical company working world-wide and exporting to over 40 countries. Bionorica takes pride in its diversity advantage and how this gives the company a competitive edge in a global market. The company has 1800 employees worldwide as well as 850 in Neumarkt. Colleagues from around the world work together every day. The company has several intercultural programmes and activities including recruitment, training, videos and books, business trips that include personal intercultural exchange, and language courses.

Pfleiderer is another large company in Neumarkt that produces wood products including panels and tables. 16 nationalities work at their site in Neumarkt and there has been a specific scheme to support refugees into employment since 2015 with two refugees taken on every year. The company received support from the city council when it started the scheme.

Both companies were keen for Neumarkt to develop as an intercultural city as a positive environment for international businesses and their staff and were happy to be involved in networking and other activities, which is very positive. It was noted that intercultural work can be more difficult for smaller companies, which is potentially an area of work or discussion that the city could facilitate.



Figure 3: Poster about the city's sustainable partnership with Drakenstein in South Africa from the Bürgerhaus.

Fair trade should also be mentioned in the context of employment and business. Neumarkt has acknowledged that it is very important for a municipality to not only achieve a better life quality on a local level, but also to try and make a difference on a global level. Part of the city's efforts in this direction is participation in a 'Climate Partnership' with the municipality of Drakenstein in South Africa. The initiative was established in 2014 under the '50 Municipal Climate Partnerships by 2015 Project', which is facilitated by Engagement Global, a German NGO funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The two cities have moved from the originally climate-specific partnership into a full sustainability partnership, where fair trade is an important component. One of the many cooperation examples is the FairTrade Partnership Wine. The wine is bought directly from a farm in Drakenstein and sold in the One World Shop in Neumarkt. Drakenstein is now the first Fair Trade Town in South Africa. Partnerships and twinning models like this can encourage investment and growth for local SMEs – on both sides of the cooperation. In the future, the city could consider other partnerships with countries where there are diaspora links within the community.

7. Welcoming

Neumarkt has worked extensively on their welcoming policies, and this was reflected in the visit too. Experts met staff and officials who dealt with the welcome packs and ceremonies and were very impressed that every new arrival had an opportunity to be welcomed personally to Neumarkt and that ceremonies had continued online throughout the pandemic. There is an annual reception, and all newcomers are invited. 2500 newcomers have been welcomed. The welcome culture has been established since 2005 and ceremonies are held four times per year. It was impossible last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic but there was a virtual reception and people were enthusiastic to attend. Welcome packs and the reception address all aspects of city life including sustainability, fair trade, and integration. Surveys are conducted for feedback as to why people move to Neumarkt and the city enjoys hearing the stories of new arrivals.

Information materials are also provided to newcomers including: flyers on the community centre; free time offers; the city newsletter with all the programmes at the community centre; School and education information; and the sustainability strategy. As Neumarkt is involved in fair trade there is information about shopping opportunities and what you can buy. There is also information on support for older newcomers from the GENiAL/genius club who help older people live for longer in their own house. After the reception there is a 1.5-hour tour of the town and a small meeting in the Bürgerhaus with snacks. This helps those who have moved to Neumarkt and do not have family or friends in the area to meet more people.

8. Language and multilingualism

As noted in the city's Intercultural Cities Index report there are many opportunities for support to learn German in Neumarkt including through support at school and in classes for adults. It was noted that despite the positive and significant action taken to enable hard-to-reach groups to learn German, steps to support minority ethnic channels of communication and to advance a celebration of linguistic diversity are still to be pursued.

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During the visit experts saw German classes in action in rooms provided by the city at the Bürgerhaus. It was also clear steps forward had been taken in celebrating other languages. At the moment

welcome packs and invitations to the welcome ceremonies are in German but there are plans to include other languages. The school the experts visited had a welcome board in different languages in the hallway. The experts were also pleased to meet some of the editorial board and authors of Neumarkt's new intercultural magazine called 'Grenzenlos' that celebrates all things intercultural in Neumarkt. The magazine includes articles from people from a migrant background in German and several other languages including Arabic, Romanian and Albanian. The articles covered topics such as an introduction to Albanian culture, the experience of moving to Germany and appreciating nature after lockdown.

In other cities libraries are often used to celebrate other languages and learning including books in other languages. There is also an international languages day on 21 February. The Bräugasse school clearly had some excellent initiatives in this area, and it was a positive that these were shared with other schools during the round table.

9. Mediation

Although there is no official mediation service for solving inter-cultural conflict in Neumarkt, there had previously been an interreligious dialogue in the city. The ICC experts were pleased to visit the Turkish Islamic Centre DITIB (mosque) to hear more about the previous dialogue and new initiatives. The discussion was attended by the Imam of the mosque as well as the local Lutheran Pastor and Catholic Priest. Previously there had been some useful conversations through the interreligious dialogue on topics of common interest including faith and the younger generation and celebrating feast days and weddings together but faith leaders had not met for several years. Discussions during the visit included learning mother tongue languages and German. It was useful for mothers to have opportunities to learn German as well as for children to have support for learning German when they spoke their mother tongue at home. Children attending the mosque also learnt Arabic in order to pray. Participants found the discussions fruitful. There could be a role for the city to facilitate more interreligious dialogue between the groups as part of its intercultural programme.

10. Civil Society

There is an extremely well-developed group of volunteers and civil society organisations in Neumarkt including a volunteer group called 'Flüchtlingshilfe' that has been active since 2015 in welcoming refugees to the city and running German classes. The Bürgerhaus is an important point of contact between the city and civil society with several organisations using the space for their activities, facilitated by the city who often provide rooms. During the visit experts met GENiAL¹⁹ an organisation that provided support to its 700 elderly members including from volunteers from a migrant background. German language lessons were also provided at the Bürgerhaus with a creche running four mornings a week. Experts also visited the G6 House for Youth, Education and Culture. This

¹⁹ Generationen helfen im Alltag e.V

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meeting place is a fantastic resource for young people in the area and aims to provide an inclusive environment for young people to grow and develop. The facilities are also used for many city events.

The Bavarian Red Cross is active with several programmes for refugees and migrants in Neumarkt. Volunteers from all backgrounds organise donations of clothing for those who need it. The donation point is open 4 days per week with volunteers from Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Ethiopia, and Azerbaijan. The Red Cross can also assist in qualifications and accompanying new arrivals to help them get the experience they need to find a job. People volunteer, practice the language, and find a community. The Red Cross has recently launched a new online platform to connect newcomers to their nearest Red Cross.

Bruckenbauer – bridge builders is another interesting programme. It is a group of people with a migrant background who provide advice for newcomers from their own countries. It is supported through a chat with a group of Germans well rooted in Neumarkt who can source furniture, carpets etc and provide a supporting hand.

CJD is the Youth migration service. It is a German wide foundation that has different programmes in education institutions, hospitals, and vocational training to accompany young migrants who have arrived and help them find a school and get settled. One project is the MINA project that accompanies people aged 12-27 until they find work. During consultations the city also discovered that young mothers who have recently moved to Germany, whose children are still at home, often cannot attend a migration course but still need basic knowledge. MINA mothers was created to respond to this need and is an active group providing activities for young mothers. Language courses are offered twice a week. There is a volunteer child carer so the mothers can take the hour to chat. They are close to their children but have an hour free to learn something and to get new information. In terms of content the group starts with introductions, children's songs, poems, and literature. They discuss what children bring home from pre-school, cook together, go to the library and the museum. They learn for example how to use public transport or to understand bank statements. There are also joint celebrations from other countries and faiths as well as celebrating other languages. For example, the group learnt how to sing a lullaby in Arabic. The group uses two rooms in the centre – one for the mothers and one for the children. 10-12 women usually attend from varied countries such as Nigeria, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, and Somalia. It is a very mixed group with a cosy atmosphere. The groups speaks in German using pictures and their hands, and it works well.

Finally, experts heard about the Town foundation which has funding open for everyone in need, including both individuals and institutions.



Figure 4: Outside art from the G6 house for youth, education, and culture.

11. Culture

Culture, particularly music, plays a large role in the intercultural life of Neumarkt. The International Master Singers' Academy (Internationale Meistersinger Akademie (IMA)) has been running for 10 years. The 10th annual event was held online due to the pandemic, but it was still a very special occasion for the city. Every year the programme includes world class events such as opera gala concerts with the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra, song recitals, a cabaret, voice lessons and coaching, as well as master classes with guest professors. It attracts students from all over the world. There are also auditions attended by leading opera directors, casting directors, agents, and organisers, offering a unique opportunity for students to make contacts and develop career path strategies.

In addition, there is an annual international youth exchange. Every two years a large delegation from eastern European countries comes to Neumarkt so young people can make music together, have fun and get to know each other's culture. Young people from Neumarkt also visit other countries every other year. The aim is that every year the young people prepare a final concert. Young people from ten countries attend and not everyone speaks English. Music is the common language and it is inspiring that within one week the participants can organise a high level musical event.

12. Communication and the media

Given the importance of traditional and social media on attitudes towards cultural diversity and other diversities there are lots of ways cities can engage in this area and to encourage a climate of public opinion more conducive to positive intercultural relations. In its communication, an Intercultural City constantly highlights the positive contribution of people with migrant/minority backgrounds to the social, cultural and economic development of the city. It also partners with local media agencies so that they can purvey a similar message and cover events occurring in the city in an objective and unbiased way.

In the Intercultural Cities Index report for Neumarkt it was noted that the city did not have a communication strategy and that the communication department did not appear to have any specific responsibility to address issues of cultural diversity. Media monitoring and engagement with local media on intercultural issues were still to be pursued as was support for minority ethnic people or organisations to engage in communication activities. It was recommended that the city could start from the city's integration mission statement and promote this to a wide range of stakeholders and to build a consensus around it.

During the visit it was clear that there had been some useful work on communication in the city that had not been previously reported. For example, the city had run an excellent photography exhibition called "Echte Neumarkter" (True Neumarkter) highlighting Neumarkt citizens with a migrant background and why they love Neumarkt. Experts met several of the people who featured in the photograph exhibition and who were dedicated and enthusiastic ambassadors for the city.

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Figure 5: some of the photographs from the “Echte Neumarkter” exhibition.

Several online newspapers had also run stories on intercultural events in 2021 such as on the plans for an intercultural garden in Neumarkt.²⁰ The city invited members of the media to attend a round table during the visit from the main two newspapers. The journalists were interested in intercultural issues and there was a useful debate about social media, hatespeech and how to report without spreading prejudices or cliches. The newspapers also had interesting experience of policies and monitoring online hate speech in the comments section of their publications. The Council of Europe expert visit was in turn covered by the local press.²¹ This shows that relations with the press are there already. With learning from other cities and a more concrete communication strategy Neumarkt could quickly make significant steps forward in this area.

²⁰ See, for example: Neumarkt Aktuell, Das Projekt „Interkulturelle Gärten in Neumarkt“ soll umgesetzt werden 24.06.2021, available at: <https://www.neumarktaktuell.de/news/das-projekt-interkulturelle-gaerten-in-neumarkt-soll-umgesetzt-werden-40584/24-06-2021>.

²¹ See: Mittelbayerische, Experten überprüfen Bewerbung der Stadt, 7 October 2021, <https://www.mittelbayerische.de/region/neumarkt-nachrichten/experten-ueberpruefen-bewerbung-der-stadt-21102-art2048963.html>

13. Conclusions and Recommendations

Neumarkt is a growing city that takes pride in being a desirable place for migration. It works hard to be a welcoming city and wants to take more steps to maximise the diversity advantage that migration can bring. A strong motivation, together with the willingness to learn, is the key to keep developing and strengthening intercultural policies and Neumarkt has both in abundance. There were several gaps in the original Intercultural Cities Index report for Neumarkt, which can often be the case when a city provides information for its first report. The expert visit in October 2021 enabled all the participants to reflect on other areas of intercultural work that are already taking place and where there may be gaps that need strengthening. This report hopefully reflects that process and adds more substance to the city's report on its work with civil society and volunteers; business and the labour market; on education; media and on language. It also highlights areas that participants wanted to explore further and potential next steps.

It is very positive that Neumarkt managed to arrange such a balanced and well-considered programme with so many stakeholders for experts to meet. It is important to note that like all cities, Neumarkt has been dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic for the past two years and this has made certain meetings and public engagement more difficult or meant that ways of working have changed.

It was also striking how much cooperation and interagency work is happening in Neumarkt. This seemed in part due to the small size of the city, the fact that many stakeholders knew each other and cooperated. The strength of the volunteer community and the support to this community from the city was also impressive.

Nevertheless, there are some areas that the city could develop more and that would ensure that no area of work falls between the gaps. The main two recommendations for the report are to:

1. Ensure the city's intercultural strategy covers all the areas of intercultural work that a city needs to engage in, including media and communications; housing; public space and employment. This will help to ensure no areas of work fall between the gaps and that information is collected for future reviews, analysis and evaluation.
2. In addition, the city could benefit from formalising some internal and external structures to capture the excellent work that is already happening, if this is not already in place.
 - Internally, there could be training and communication on the mission statement. Regular internal cross departmental meetings or introducing items on interculturality into the meetings of other departments would strengthen links and encourage all stakeholders to use the intercultural lens more across the city's work.
 - The Intercultural Cities Index report speaks of an interagency working body for integration to encourage cross-sectoral work. This idea could be further explored.
 - A procedure for receiving input and exchanging ideas with a broad range of external stakeholders would be very useful. In the Intercultural Cities Index report there is mention of an integration council to provide input into the city's work. The city also benefits from a wide group of volunteers with a migrant background who seemed to be extremely active and positive ambassadors for the city.

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- Formalise the structures working with the many volunteers of the city, ensuring the joint work with the city, lessons learned and benefits are sustainable on the long term.

Given the impact of Covid-19 it may be that the format for cooperation from the Intercultural Cities Index report such as the integration council are no longer as relevant or need revisiting. However, it is hoped that the good will and inspiration generated between stakeholders during the expert visit, will revitalise thinking on cooperation internally and with external actors.

The following additional recommendations are anchored in the different needs and possibilities identified in dialogue with the Municipality. They intend to be useful in future developments in the intercultural domain and vary from short-term to long-term processes.

Neumarkt should aim to:

- Promote internal and external awareness-raising activities or training courses, as opportunities to deepen the understanding of the intercultural potential of Neumarkt. These activities should include regular reflection moments for the teams working daily on the ground, as learning also happens by having quality time to analyse and look critically at daily work.;
- Organise technical visits to other cities in order to learn from the practice of others is also an effective way of promoting intercultural competence;
- Ensure that there is a communication strategy in place, engagement with and monitoring of the press and interculturality;
- Diversity in public services was not really addressed during the visit. The city could start to monitor diversity in public services and then promote a local conversation about why more diversity is needed. This measure could also encourage a more balanced representation in the ethnic background of the elected politicians;
- Continue links with larger companies with experience, resources and a wish to engage more with Neumarkt as an intercultural city. Explore what support smaller companies may need and if there is a role for business organisations or chambers of commerce.
- Consider how the city can facilitate learning or support initiatives in fields where it has less competency such as education and where segregation has been reported. It could also revisit areas where there are currently gaps such as in mediation and interreligious dialogue. The Intercultural Cities' database²² has a wealth of creative good practice examples from other cities.
- The city could also consider continuing the discussion on inter-religious dialogue started during the expert visit, potentially coordinating the dialogue if there is interest to continue the forum;
- Maximize links and cross-sectoral learning with other areas of work that Neumarkt excels in, such as climate change mitigation, sustainable development, and fair trade.

²² Available at: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/interculturalcities/good-practice>.

Visit of the experts of Council of Europe to Neumarkt

5-6 October 2021

Tuesday 5 October

- 09.30-10.00 Introduction/welcome
- 10.00-11.30 Introduction to the Intercultural Cities programme, Neumarkt and its Intercultural Cities Index report
- 11.45-12.30 Exhibition “Echte Neumarkter“ and get together with the portrayed models
- 12.30-14.00 Buffet “Neumarkt under a diverse perspective“
- 14.00-16.00 Bräugasse school visit plus meeting with other school directors, the local education institutions and the political speaker for education
- 16.00-18.00 Visit to Bionorica and round table with the local job centre, employment office, and representatives from other companies, self-employed with migrant background
- 18.30 Dinner

Wednesday 6 October

- 09.00-11.00 Presentation of the Bürgerhaus, unique selling projects and get together with the team and associations
- 11.15-12.30 Visit to G6 (house for youth, education and culture) and round table with the media representatives „Diversity and Prejudices“
- 12.45-14.15 Visit to DITIB (mosque) including international lunch, and interreligious talk with representatives from all the religious groups
- 14.30-15.30 Discussion of outcomes with the mayor, the planning group and different political speakers