



# About the Project

**The project “INNOVATIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & INCLUSION STRATEGIES FOR EUROPEAN TOWNS” – INDIMAE is funded by the Europe for Citizens Program of the EU, strand 2.2. "European Networks of Towns"**

The INDIMAE project is a European network of towns, coordinated by the Municipality of Simitli, Bulgaria in cooperation with 11 partners from 10 countries – 8 EU members (Bulgaria, Italy, Poland, France, Lithuania, Portugal, Austria and Ireland) , and 2 EU neighboring countries (Albania and North Macedonia) .

The project activities take place between 2020 and 2023 (with a delay because of the COVID19 Pandemic) and include a number of local and international events.

The INDIMAE project is a participative and innovative one, anchored in the cultural, social, economic and political reality of the EU, seeking to establish a pan-European network of towns, working together on improving diversity management, inclusion and human rights protection in European towns, addressing the challenges of all European communities and most-specifically – the ones vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation in the local societies across Europe.

Involving a wide range of citizens from different social and professional backgrounds, underrepresented minority and migrant communities, the INDIMAE Network facilitates a dialogue between public bodies, twinning committees and civil society organisations, acting to develop sustainable public-private partnerships to counter discrimination and promote cultural diversity and inclusion in Europe. Fostering participatory democracy and human rights, the INDIMAE project involves a series of joint towns-citizens' actions.

Within the INDIMAE Network European citizens are working together with towns, civic society organisations, academia and local institutions on inclusive strategies for further development and implementation of local policies for innovative diversity management and inclusion in European towns.

# INNOVATIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT & INCLUSION IN EUROPEAN TOWNS

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF TOWNS  
TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY



## Project Context & Focus

The European Union views diversity as a driver for growth and social progress, indeed a number of authorities perceive diversity as an asset in attracting the creative class. And while many national governments react to the perceived threat to social cohesion by enforcing stricter immigration policies and adopting an assimilation agenda, European towns are inclined to adopt more inclusive forms of integration policies and employ a more positive discourse where diversity is concerned. The "Innovative Diversity Management and Inclusive Strategies in European Towns" project provides a discussion platform for European local authority representatives; regional leaders, members of academia and civil society organizations to showcase positive examples of integration, inclusion and diversity management, share relevant information and promote diversity as an added value to building inclusive European towns and ensuring social cohesion.

The local communities are where integration happens. Therefore the INDIMAE Network members take very seriously the need to focus on all vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation local groups; putting individual rights at the center of local public policies and empowering local communities to take the lead and challenge the European municipalities in fulfilling their responsibilities. The joint efforts of the INDIMAE network members seek to create an international platform for debates, comparative analyses, and intense mutual inspiration and learning, based on productive exchange of ideas and good practices on successful and innovative diversity management and inclusion in Europe. This networking process allows large and medium-sized European cities to not just share good practices but also mentor smaller towns on diversity management, inclusion and integration practices.

The policy lessons taken in the INDIMAE network will be very concrete and specifically drawn from the INDIMAE local communities in all network partner countries, taking into account the shared local and national good practices, searching to influence local, national and European policy debates.

INDIMAE networking sets up a governance model that promote participation and power-sharing, involving diverse local communities in decision-making in urban institutions, be they political, educational, social, economic or cultural. It opens up spaces and opportunities for deep interaction and cocreation between European citizens of different cultural origins and backgrounds, to build trust, cohesion and solidarity, and thus realise the creative potential of diversity in European towns.



# INDIMAE Project Partners



Co-funded by the  
Europe for Citizens Programme  
of the European Union

**INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF TOWNS  
TOGETHER FOR PEACE & PROSPERITY**



**INNOVATIVE DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT  
& INCLUSION STRATEGIES  
in European towns**

**10 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

**11 ORGANISATIONS**

**4 NETWORKING EVENTS**

**11 LOCAL MEETINGS**





# Project Leader:

## Municipality of Simitli, BULGARIA

**Population:** 15.800

**Main characteristics:** Territory - 529 sq. Km, Number of settlements – 17

### Minorities and migrants:

- Ethnic groups - Bulgarians, Turks, Roma and others (some 20% are refusing to self-identify)
- Religions - Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism, Sunni Islam, Shiite Islam; Other religions; Atheists, agnostics.

### Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:

Peaceful management of its ethnic diversity, despite real difficulties, has been vital to our municipality. All minority groups are relatively equally integrated in the social, cultural and economic life of the community, except for the Roma groups that are still facing some challenges due to educational and social disparities with the other communities, living in the municipality. The Romaphobia is contributing to the marginalization and exclusion of some Roma citizens, posing challenges that urgently need to be addressed.

**Web:** <http://www.simitli.bg>



### CONTACT PERSON:



**Name:**  
MARUSIA FILATOVA  
**Position:**  
HEAD OF PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT UNIT

## European Network of Towns for Diversity Management & Inclusion

Together for peace and prosperity in Europe



**INDIMAE NETWORK**



**TOGETHER WE ARE  
STRONGER**

**JOIN US**

[inclusivecities.eu](http://inclusivecities.eu)



# Gain & Sustain, Graz, AUSTRIA

**Population:** 339,810 In 2021

**Main characteristics:** Capital of Bundesland (federal state) Steiermark, southeastern Austria. The country's second largest city, it lies on the Mur River between the Styrian Alps and a wide, fertile basin, the Grazerfeld, about 155 km south-southwest of Vienna.

**Minorities and migrants:** According to the 2001 population census, 88.6% are native German speakers (96% Austro-Bavarian language and 4% Alemannic language) while the remaining 11.4% speak several minority languages that can be divided into two groups: traditional minorities, who are related to territories formerly part of the Habsburg monarchy, and new minorities, resulting from recent immigration.

**Challenges to diversity management inclusion:** unemployment rate of migrants is higher than the one of Austrian citizens; lack of German language proficiency and comparable professional skills; discrimination

## CONTACT PERSON:

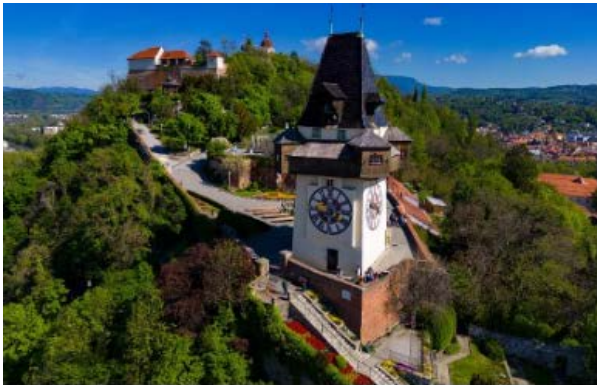


**Name:**

Mag. iur. MARTINA  
MARIA LINZER

**Position:**

DIRECTOR



**Web:** [www.gainandsustain.eu](http://www.gainandsustain.eu)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/GainandSustainEurope](https://www.facebook.com/GainandSustainEurope)

# Aleksandrów Łódzki Municipality, POLAND

**Population:** 34 000 inhabitants

**Main characteristics:** Urban-rural commune in the centre of Poland. Łódź's satellite city with a history of three-nation (Germans, Polish, Jews) in strictly connection with Łódź. Nowadays just a good the place to live. Close to the third biggest city in Poland and with many professional opportunities. Aleksandrow Lodzki has highly developed education, sport, culture and healthcare facilities. (We are also known because of our music events and great animal policy)

**Minorities and migrants:** Ukrainians, Filipinos, Romanians

**Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:** Avoiding social exclusion, adapting immigrant families to the social structure of the commune, providing them with adequate social support and education. Building a modern civil society where there is a place for different nationalities. Drawing on cultural diversity to enrich the worldview of native residents.

## CONTACT PERSON:



**Name:**

TOMASZ BARSZCZ

**Position:**

HEAD OF PROMOTION  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
COOPERATION  
DEPARTMENT



**Web:** <https://aleksandrow-lodzki.pl>

**Facebook:** [AleksandrówŁódzki](#)



# Albanian Association of Municipalities, Tirana, ALBANIA

**Population:** 2,862,427 inhabitants, (1,461,326 million males and 1,424,700 females.)

**Area:** 28.748 km<sup>2</sup>, land 97.7 %, water 2.3. %

**Main characteristics:** For a small country, Albania is characterized for its biological diversity and abundance of contrasting ecosystems and habitats. Administrative division: 61 Municipalities and 12 Regions. Warm hospitality etc.

**Minorities and migrants:** Albania is inhabited mostly by Albanians (82.58%). It recognizes nine national minorities. These include Aromanians, Balkan Egyptians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs and Roma

**Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:** Albania after 1999: every day changing, becoming more culturally diverse in the respect of democracy, culture, heritage, integration to the EU, globalization, immigration and religions and traditions.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

AGRON HAXHIMALI

### Position:

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Web:** [www.aam.org.al](http://www.aam.org.al)



# CEIPES, Palermo, ITALY

**Population:** In 2018, there were 1.8 million people living in the greater Palermo area, 855,875 of which resided in the City boundaries, of whom 47.4% were male and 52.6% were female.

**Main characteristics:** Palermo is a bridge between Africa and Europe and one of the first destinations where migrants and refugees arrive in Europe. Once characterized as the Mafia's hometown, it is now a striving to become a capital of rights, welcoming, tolerance, and culture.

## Minorities and migrants:

As of 2020, 91.79% of the population was of Italian descent. The largest immigrant group came from South Asia (mostly from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Mostly Tamils), other European countries (mostly from Albania, Romania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Ukraine) and North Africa (mostly from Tunisia and Morocco).

**Challenges of intercultural dialogue:** strengthen its engagement in spreading through citizenship a greater European awareness, starting with the most important part of its population: young people.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

ALESSIA DI  
FRANCESCA

### Position:

VICE DIRECTOR,  
PROJECT OFFICE  
MANAGER

# CEIPES

CENTRO INTERNAZIONALE PER LA PROMOZIONE  
DELL'EDUCAZIONE E LO SVILUPPO



**Web:** [www.ceipes.org](http://www.ceipes.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/CEIPESETS](https://www.facebook.com/CEIPESETS)



# Human Rights in Action, Dublin, Ireland

**Population:** 1,285 million

**Main characteristics:** Situated at the head of a beautiful bay, the city straddles the River Liffey where it breaks eastward through a hill-ringed plain to the shores of the Irish Sea.

**Minorities and migrants:** In the 2022 census non-Irish citizens in Dublin accounted for 17% of the population. Among the non-Irish residents in Dublin City, the largest groups were Brazilians (11K+) followed by Indian citizens (10K+). There were almost 5k Indian citizens and over 3.5K UK citizens. In Fingal, the largest group were Romanian (8.5K+), followed by Polish (7.8K+). The largest groups in South Dublin were Polish (5.7K+) and Romanian (almost 5K). Nationally there were more than 631,000 non-Irish citizens, which was 12% of the population.

**Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:** Rise in far-right populism, political polarization, raise of racism, social inclusion.

## CONTACT PERSON:

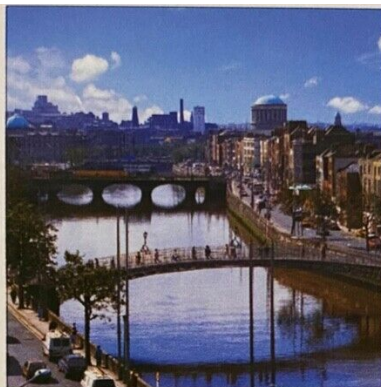


**Name:**

SEAMUS COLLINS

**Position:**

MANAGER



**Web:** [www.humanrightsaction.eu](http://www.humanrightsaction.eu)

**Facebook:** [HRActionIE](https://www.facebook.com/HRActionIE)

# Mogila Municipality, NORTH MACEDONIA

**Population:** According to the last national census from 2002, has 6,710 inhabitants populated in 23 villages.

**Main characteristics:** Municipality of Mogila established in 1996. It is situated in the south-central part of Macedonia, in the Pelagonija Valley, 10 km northeast from Bitola. The area of the Municipality occupies 255 km<sup>2</sup> and is a part of the Pelagonija Planning Region. The main source of income is from agricultural production, including garlic, tobacco, tomatoes, peppers and cow breeding and milk production. On the Municipal land there are around 40 different archaeological sites from different historical time.

**Minorities and migrants:** Turks, Serb's, Albanians national minorities, no migrants.

**Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:** Cultural heritage protection, the ways and procedures to make the protection in the Municipality, educate the inhabitants.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

GORDANA  
LOZANOVSKA STEFANOVSKA

### Position:

COUNCELOR FOR PROJECTS  
AND LOCAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT



**Web:** [www.mogila.gov.mk](http://www.mogila.gov.mk)



# Cafebabel, Paris, FRANCE

**Population:** 2.17 millions

**Main characteristics:** Paris is situated in the north-central part of the country. People were living on the site of the present-day city, located along the Seine River 375 km upstream from the river's mouth on the La Manche by about 7600 BCE. It is by far the country's most important center of commerce and culture.

**Minorities and migrants:** Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are the main countries of origin for immigrants into Paris in 2020. The Paris metropolitan region or "aire urbaine" is estimated to be home to some 1.7 million Muslims, making up between 10–15 per cent of the area's population. An estimated 460 000 Asians; 245 000 Eastern Europeans and 310,000 Jews also live in Paris and the surrounding Île-de-France region, an area with a population of 11.7 million inhabitants.

**Challenges to diversity management and inclusion:** The French colonial heritage has emerged as a prominent issue in the analysis of migrant and minority social inclusion. The relationships between France's colonial legacy, the marginalization of ethnic and racial minorities and collective perceptions of 'identity', have become a major concern. The French approach that gives prominence to the urban territorialization of social inequalities over the ethnic categorization approach remains firmly based on republican ideals. Such a policy is innovative in the French context, as it differs from the French traditional assimilationist model and takes into account social and cultural diversity in large metropolitan areas.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

ANNA  
TANTCHEVA-  
TARDITS

### Position:

COORDINATOR

# CAFÉ BABEL



**Web:** [www.cafe-babel.eu](http://www.cafe-babel.eu)



# MUNICIPIO DE SANTA MARIA DA FEIRA, PORTUGAL

**Population:** 19,792 inhabitants in 2021, It is the seat of the municipality of Santa Maria da Feira , 136,720 inhabitants

**Main characteristics:** Located in the sub-region of the Porto Metropolitan Area , belonging to the Norte region and the district of Aveiro. Santa Maria is an industrial city, in which intra-EU trade has a significant importance, but also the exportations to extra-EU regions.

**Minorities and migrants:** The majority ethnic groups are Brazilians and Ukrainians; migrants from African countries of Portuguese language; Roma. The city received an important inflow of migrants during the late 90s and 2000s, but many have left during the economic crisis.

**Challenges of intercultural dialogue:** inclusion of different minorities, communication between different communities, lack of understanding from the majority population, changes in demographic composition of the region.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

JORGE SALGADO  
SIMÕES

### Position:

COORDINATOR



**Web:** <https://mediotejo.pt>



# Rhodopes Center for Community Development, Plovdiv, BULGARIA

**Population of Plovdiv Province:** 702.000 inhabitants

**Main characteristics:** based in central southern Bulgaria; comprises 18 municipalities on a territory of 5,972.9 km<sup>2</sup>. The province is named after its administrative and industrial centre — the city of Plovdiv.

**Minorities and migrants:** Roma, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Russians, Jews, Arabs, EU expats. **Religious communities:** Greek Orthodox; Armeno-Gregorians, Roman Catholic, Protestant; Other Christian (Bogomils, Danovism); Shiya Muslim; Sunni Muslim; Jewish; Pagan; Agnostic; Atheist.

**Challenges of intercultural dialogue:** Roma segregation; new wave of conservatism and right wing populism, creating artificial inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions.

## CONTACT PERSON:



### Name:

VALERI  
KYROLINSKI

### Position:

COORDINATOR



**Web:** <http://www.rccd-bg.org>

**Facebook:** [Rhodopes Center for Community Development](#)



# Kaunas Regional Development Agency, Kaunas, LITHUANIA

**Population of Kaunas region:** 561 508 (2020). Center of the region - Kaunas City - population of 391,153 (as of 2021).

**Main characteristics:** Kaunas is the second-largest city in Lithuania, the fourth largest city in the Baltic States and an important centre of Lithuanian economic, academic, and cultural life. Kaunas region is subdivided into 8 municipalities of Birštonas (resort), Jonava District, Kaišiadorys District, Kaunas City, Kaunas District, Kėdainiai District, Prienai and Raseiniai Districts. Located in the centre of Lithuania.

**Minorities and migrants:** Ethnic composition: Lithuanians – 94.4%; National minorities: Russians (3,2 %), Polish (0,46 %), Ukrainians (0,34 %), Belarusians (0,24 %), Germans, Jews, Roma. Biggest religious communities: Roman Catholics (77 %), Orthodox (4 %), Old Believers (0,77 %), Evangelical Lutherans (0,6 %). In 2019 there were 9024 citizens of foreign countries living in Kaunas Region.

**Challenges of intercultural dialogue:** negative attitude towards migrants, stereotypical thinking about immigrants, creation of artificial tensions between Lithuanians and the largest national minorities.

## CONTACT PERSON:



**Name:**

GAILA TULUŠIENĖ

**Position:**

SENIOR PROJECT MANAGER



KAUNO REGIONAS  
KAUNAS REGION

KAUNO REGIONO  
KAUNAS REGIONAL



PLĖTROS AGENTŪRA  
DEVELOPMENT AGENCY



**Web:** [www.krda.lt](http://www.krda.lt)

**Facebook:** [Kauno regiono plėtros agentūra](https://www.facebook.com/Kauno regiono plėtros agentūra)

# Project managers



**Name:**

MARUSIA FILATOVA, MA

**Position:**

HEAD OF PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT UNIT  
MUNICIPALITY OF SIMITLI



**Name:**

BORISLAVA DASKALOVA, PhD

**Position:**

INTERNATIONAL PROJECT  
MANAGER, TRAINER; EC  
PROJECT EVALUATOR

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## European Network of Towns *for diversity and inclusion*

TOGETHER FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY

[www.inclusivecities.eu](http://www.inclusivecities.eu)