



5TH INTERNATIONAL MAYORS' CONFERENCE NOW

Shaping the Future – Social Cohesion in our Cities

29-30 January 2018, Vienna, Austria

The conference patron is Austrian President Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen

The 5th NOW Conference will focus on the topic of social cohesion in towns and cities – a burning issue for communities across Europe. The constant increase in social inequality in recent years, and the resulting polarisation of society, has been accentuated by the subject of integrating refugees and migrants.

The cornerstone of social cohesion is a community in which all individuals are respected to the same degree, and which ensures that human and labour rights are observed. Giving individuals a share in society's economic progress is another important aspect. This is the only way to combat unemployment, falling living standards and the increased marginalisation of socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Children and young people have a particularly significant influence on social cohesion in the community. However, they are frequently marginalised, as well as being exposed to risks such as poverty or insufficient access to education. Effective measures are required in order to protect these groups and ensure that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is enforced. This is essential to enable children and young people to participate in society from an early age and strengthen social cohesion in the long run.

In suggesting so, we will be looking at two themes:

- Social cohesion and new political narratives on a community level
- How an inter-agency approach to children's rights and protection systems can contribute to a broader social cohesion for all

The first day of the conference will focus on the discussion and development of new political visions, discourses and more impactful policies, which are crucial for strengthening social cohesion in terms of human rights. Local, regional and international programmes, networks and initiatives will be presented.

The concerns and needs of children and young people will be the topic on day two. Questions related to social cohesion will be discussed in the context of flight and migration. Using proven examples (such as "child-friendly cities"), various measures will be examined which are geared towards the comprehensive protection and implementation of human rights, including those of children, and which have realised the role of children as social actors.



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