

Puzzled by Policy

**Reflections on on line consultations
(October 2012-May 2013)**

**Councillor Ilda Curti
Municipality of Torino
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Analysis of Puzzled by Policy on line consultation

The Municipality of Turin participates in the EU funded Puzzled By Policy project, whose objective is the experimentation of e-Democracy tools in the framework of Italian and EU laws on immigration. Torino is one of the four “pilot” sites of the project, together with La Laguna (Spain), Greece and Hungary. The project aims at making citizens and associations discuss on laws concerning immigration, ensuring their opinion reaches those that deal with these topics from the institutional and legislative point of view. For this purposes, the Department with mandate for integration policies, and in particular Councillor Ilda Curti, was involved to give some feedback and, if possible, undertake actions that take on line consultations into account.

In the October 2012 – May 2013 period citizen participation through the Puzzled by Policy on line platform saw the involvement of almost 800 citizens and it highlighted some topics and some propositions that may be summarised as follows:

- participants showed a general tendency towards a greater recognition of rights and opportunities for immigrants, with particular attention to issues of citizenship, right to vote, and, more in general, *ius soli*;
- a significant number of participants is worried by crimes committed by irregular immigrants and declare they are in favour of policies to contrast illegal immigration and to reward those who have not committed any crime;
- the on line debate highlighted particular attention towards the issue of intercultural mediation, that saw the involvement of *stakeholders* and citizens in the discussion on the recognition of the role of mediator and on the setting up of an official register.

The analysis of these results highlights the usefulness of the tool offered by Puzzled by Policy to understand the point of view of citizens and stakeholders that are present on the territory on a specific topic, immigration, that is particularly sensitive for Torino and the whole of Italy. Legislators thus have an additional opportunity to listen to the opinion of immigrant communities, that normally do not have much room in media and traditional information channels.

Therefore, it is important to seize this opportunity, taking into consideration the result of these considerations in the design of the integration policies of the Municipality of Turin.

Reflections and possible interventions

The results of the *Puzzled by Policy* on line consultations confirm a strong interest for the issue of immigration, highlighted by participation numbers, and a good quality of discussion on the topic of integration. The awareness and the attention that are demonstrated by the consultations are a witness of a whole social community and, in particular, of an immigrant community that are particularly aware of the role and importance of 'new citizens' and even more of second generations. The extension of rights, primarily in consideration of the principle of *ius soli*, and coexistence in a legal framework are clear and strong requests emerging from those who participated in this experimentation of *e-democracy*.

In Torino, 14% of the inhabitants come from abroad, a figure that is quite significant if compared to the 7% national average. Moreover, for many years now the Municipality has invested on integration of foreign communities, providing services such as the Office for immigrants and the Intercultural Center and projects like Voluntary Civil Service for young immigrants and 'Extra-titoli in Barriera', which provides supports for the recognition in Italy of educational qualifications or professional competences acquired abroad.

The opportunity provided by *Puzzled by Policy* to bring to the institutions the contribution and the voice of the immigrant communities, and of citizens in general, is to be seized and the Municipality of Turin intends to take these requests in due consideration. However it must also be remembered that there is an intricate network of competences that are distributed between local and national institutions and that Italy is facing a particularly unfavourable economic situation. The Municipality intends to aim its integration policies to promote the safeguard and growth of services for immigrants. It is also to continue its dialogue with the immigrant communities and the stakeholders operating on the territory, to promote their integration also through a better recognition of the role of intercultural mediator, and the proposal of the creation of an official registry, which are instances that clearly emerged from the on line debate.