

Speech Orhan Kaya

Integrating cities II

Milaan - Monday 5 November 2007

Workshop 2 :working together to support migrant children: co-operation between family groups, networks and schools

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is both an honour and a pleasure to be here and to give you a short introduction to Rotterdam policy on citizenship. My name is Orhan Kaya. I am politically responsible for the management of cultural affairs and integration issues in the city of Rotterdam. As far as my European work concerns, I am chairing the Social Affairs Forum of Eurocities to keep continuing the dialogue within the European context on integration issues.

Since time is limited, in my contribution to this workshop I will only shortly cite some of our most important policies and good practices in Rotterdam in the field of integration, which we call participation now, and migrant children.

Let me first make clear that although there are many migration challenges we all face together, like social tension in our European cities, poverty, lack of education, unemployment etc, Rotterdam views its diversity as an asset and certainly as an advantage: Rotterdam aims at being the **leading intercultural city** of Europe.

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My city is an open city, open for its own citizens and open for people from outside its boundaries. The city of Rotterdam with 600,000 inhabitants and 169 different nationalities is a meeting place for people, opinions and cultures. Our international orientation focuses therefore on linking these different cultures together.

To link these different cultures Immigration and integration policies in Rotterdam are seen as part of a broader Social program. This program is NOT only aimed at migrants or their children. It is my strongest believe that the key to successful participation is employment. Children have to be either at school or at work....(or in jail when they show acts of violence).

Rotterdam city council has explicitly changed the old idea of “migrants versus native dutch” into a new inclusive philosophy that is aimed at emancipation and participation of all Rotterdammers: we call this policy **URBAN CITIZENSHIP; The slogan is Participation.**

I would like to highlight some elements of my policy and would like to hear your reactions on this in relation to the situation in your cities.

Integration and participation is the number one priority of the Rotterdam City Council. “The participation of all Rotterdammers” is the focus. Our important task is to give Rotterdammers opportunities and call upon everyone to participate. The main themes were that inhabitants of Rotterdam should participate in Rotterdam society by speaking the Dutch language, by making a contribution to society by working or in some other way and by valuing and observing social standards.

In the many discussions that we have held about integration, participation and emancipation, we see in these activities that social aspects predominate. The five most important ones are:

- o Pride in the city
- o Reciprocity
- o Identity
- o Participation
- o A moral sense.

We are further developing this *Urban Citizenship* concept. With this, we hope to create an integrated framework for all activities in Rotterdam during this Council's period of office in the areas of integration, participation, emancipation and citizenship.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I have tried to make clear that the philosophy of Rotterdam policy is not focused on what background people have, but on a shared future to be built together. This philosophy also applies for programs aimed at improving the situation of migrant children. So, dealing with migrant children is just a part of the main programs for ALL YOUTH in Rotterdam.

We have far too many projects to summarize them all, but I really would like to mention the following:

1. family coaches

By early intervention and intensive supervision, aim of this program is to remove or reduce the social obstacles within a family which make the gap between the labour market and the parents/children unbridgeable. This program

means to break through the chaotic family situation and to improve family responsibilities with intensive attention for education.

2. Extended schools

The program “extended schools” (brede school) of the municipality of Rotterdam is implemented at almost all primary schools in Rotterdam now and will be extended to secondary schools also. In the Extensive school, the schools, parents, social workers, etc. co-operate closely together to create a stimulating environment for the children to grow up and develop. In these schools parental commitment is also promoted. And different trainings for parents are offered in the schools.

3. Communities that care

This is a program aimed at creating a safe and healthy environment for children. Neighborhood scaled interventions are used to connect different institutions of the municipality (ie. Policy, social workers) and create a child friendly environment.

4. Every Child wins

This extensive youth program is just being launched to make sure no child in Rotterdam will be left behind. Intervention at the field of safety, health and so on are co-ordinated and a personal approach will make sure that multiple problems will be dealt with.

5. Finally, and maybe most importantly, I would like to mention **Rotterdam European Youth Capital**, which aims at strengthening the international position of Rotterdam as a city of arts and culture, for young people and by young people.

In 2006, The Rotterdam City Council formulated its ambition for Rotterdam to be: **European Youth Capital 2009**. The City Council is committed to invest in actively involving young people by providing opportunities to develop and improve the environment in which young people grow up. In the face of new challenges of polarisation and fragmentation the City Council will adopt an inclusive youth policy aiming to promote civil society and to fight exclusion and alienation.

Rotterdam Youth Capital will have a strong European dimension. Events with a European character receive a prominent place in the program. We have the intention to invite more than 25.000 young people from all over Europe to Rotterdam in 2009.

Concluding:

As you have heard, we have a lot of ambitions and concrete policies to reach those ambitions. I mentioned a few in this workshop. I am very much interested in hearing yours.

Thank you for your attention.