



## Bologna Declaration

Experience of the past years has demonstrated clearly that racism and discrimination are still rife and that their inhumane effects can again increasingly be seen in many parts of the world. Europe is no exception: radically right wing attitudes, and extreme right wing ideologies insisting on the inequality of human beings are no longer a marginal phenomenon, but by now have become deeply rooted in increasing parts of European society. Everyday racism and racially motivated violence in various forms - from verbal attacks and harassment to physical attacks, arson and even murder - have become bitter reality in most European countries. The victims are predominantly asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and member of ethnic or religious minorities. Discrimination in European cities also takes new forms and expressions: exclusions, restrictions and preference in the fields of employment, housing, education, social security and health, on grounds of colour, ethnic or national origin.

Cities play a particularly important role in effectively combating this alarming development. Because it is in the cities that people from various national, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds live together in close proximity, and it is mainly the cities which are challenged by deep economic and social changes in this globalised and increasingly complex world, changes which have led to many and divers forms of fear of strangers, racism and discrimination.

Recognising this, and following a UNESCO initiative, the "European Coalition of Cities against Racism" was founded in December 2004 in order to take practical steps at municipal level to push back the frontiers of racism and discrimination and to contribute to the development of urban societies in Europe based on equality and solidarity.

Racism and discrimination concern all of us. We can only be successful in the struggle against these evils if we succeed in our societies in strengthening the consensus against any kind of cynical attitude in contempt of human beings. However, we will only achieve this goal if we closely work together.

The "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", whose 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary we celebrate on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, worded a vision of future when all human beings may live free and equal in dignity and rights, and act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> General Conference of the "European Coalition of Cities against Racism" held in the City of Bologna from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> September 2008, therefore, calls upon all European municipalities and their representatives to join the Coalition and thus strive together with civil society organisations for an urban society honouring the principles of equality and non-discrimination, not merely in words, but in deeds.