



ST. PETERSBURG UNITES PEOPLE



St. Petersburg Government
Programme on Tolerance





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«The ability to understand people and to take them with all their specific features is the main secret of the famous St. Petersburg culture...»

Governor of St. Petersburg
Valentina Matvienko

Introduction


The city of St. Petersburg was founded and has been developing as a multinational city. For over two centuries, it was the capital city of a huge poly-ethnic state. It has become a truly multicultural metropolitan area where people of different cultures, religions and languages live and work together. Nowadays, St. Petersburg is home for more than one hundred ethnic minority communities, which represent some 15 % of the total population. Their interests are represented by numerous non-governmental organisations and associations.

Social surveys indicate the high frequency of interethnic contacts within the city community: 91% of citizens communicate with rep-

resentatives of other nationalities on regular basis, and more than 48% of the population regularly interacts in multinational groups of people.

At the same time, experts say that national identity is an important issue in the perception and behaviour of St. Petersburg residents; many people (40%) display reserved and separated national approach. At the same time, an essential part of the population (66 %) shows interest in interethnic contacts, and 91% consider that the authorities should respond to challenges caused by the ethno-demographic structure of the city.

Considering the numbers it is important to emphasize that the



variety of St. Petersburg's social structures, traditions of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between different ethnic groups have always provided successful development of the northern capital of Russia.

Recognizing intercultural challenges which a modern city and the global society face, the Government of St. Petersburg had launched in 2006 a comprehensive project targeted at assisting residents of St. Petersburg with acquiring the knowledge and abilities of dealing with a more open and more complex intercultural environment.

This project got the name of the Programme of Promoting Harmony of Interethnic and Inter-

cultural Relations, Preventing Ultra-Nationalist Tendencies and Strengthening Tolerance for Everyone in St. Petersburg in 2006-2010 (Tolerance Programme).

The Programme and all activities in this sphere take place within the overall framework of the declaration accepted by the Government of St. Petersburg in 2006: "Harmony in Diversity for the Great City." The legal basis was made by the Concept of the National Policy of the Russian Federation, the Russian Federation Law "On the National-Cultural Autonomy", the St. Petersburg Law "On Interethnic Relations in St. Petersburg".

Main objective of the Tolerance Programme



The main objective of the Tolerance Programme is to promote intercultural and interethnic dialogue, to inculcate tolerance, mutual understanding and respect of cultural diversity, based on common St. Petersburg and Russian history, traditions and values.

The program aims to raise the awareness of the society on the issue that St. Petersburg is inhabited not by the representatives of different ethnic groups, but by the citizens of a various nationality, equally responsible for the city's destiny. Consequently slogan of the program – «Petersburg unites people».

Key messages



Tolerance Programme is targeted at:



- maintaining ethno-political stability as the vital element of the social and economic welfare of the city;
- creating a platform for discussing the cultural diversity and promoting civil society initiatives on strengthening tolerance and preventing racial intolerance;
- raising awareness of St. Petersburg residents on the importance of mutual understanding, interethnic respect and cooperation between various nations and ethnic groups;
- fostering a sense of belonging to the city community and of an active St. Petersburg identity, responsibility for the city's destiny and for preservation of its cultural profile and traditions.

Elaboration of the Programme



The Programme is developed with active participation of authorities, civil society institutions and scientific organizations.

Major programme developers are:

- St. Petersburg Government Advisory Council on the Affairs of National and Cultural Associations;
- Commission on the Human Rights in St. Petersburg;
- St. Petersburg State University;
- Herten State Pedagogical University of Russia;
- Russian Museum of Ethnography;
- St. Petersburg House of Nationalities;
- Center of Independent Sociological Researches;
- organisations of ethnic minorities;
- other public organizations and associations.

Target groups

The Tolerance Programme addresses the needs of both those living in the city and those visiting it – people of different nationalities, views, beliefs and denominations.

Budget of the Programme

The Tolerance programme is funded from different sources:

- St. Petersburg local budget with total amount of about €9 million.
- Private capital is mobilized for realisation of various projects.

Activities of the Tolerance Programme



The Tolerance Programme is a large-scale action plan, featuring a complete set of preventive measures for a 5-year period. It encompasses multiple spheres of life: education and youth policies, culture, training and research, mass media and security, intercultural and inter-confessional dialogues.

This plan does not work as just an administrative module with participation of ten government committees and city districts. It also involves resources of the civil society: educational and scientific institutions, culture establishments, the security branch, municipal structures, mass media, religious organisations, ethnic minorities' organisations, sport clubs, and fans' associations.

Plan is divided into 8 sections. The most significant activities are following:

Section 1. Fostering the culture of tolerance through the educational system



- introducing a training course and an educational module “The Multinational St. Petersburg” for high schools; a system of extracurricular education on the cultural heritage of peoples of Russia and the world;
- working out a system of adaptation and integration of foreign students at the higher school institutions; a special programme of social adaptation of migrants’ children;
- developing practical recommendations, annual workshops and professional training on intercultural communications for employees of the educational system;
- carrying out competitions, conferences, festivals at St. Petersburg educational institutions, including contests of research works and social partnership projects, festivals of the youth public press associations;
- functioning of the Council on the Foreign Students’ Affairs;

Section 2. Strengthening of tolerance and preventing extremism among the youth

- carrying out surveys and preparing recommendations against spreading of negative ethnic stereotypes among youth; preventing recruitment of the youth into informal associations of extremist orientation;
- carrying out festivals of St. Petersburg national associations’ youth projects, sport events, exhibitions, information campaigns and educational programmes for youth;
- organizing workshops and trainings with the leaders of

public and political youth associations on interethnic and inter-confessional dialogue in St. Petersburg;

- developing programs of social/cultural adaptation and training for young ethnic migrants for their further employment;

Section 3. Raising awareness of the society on the issues of tolerance and cultural diversity through the mass media



- analytical overview of the media materials on interethnic tolerance issues;
- training seminars, round tables and workshops for journalists;
- public service advertising, series of television and radio

broadcasts, print and network media projects for promoting harmony in the interethnic relations;

- special press club providing information on interethnic and intercultural issues

Section 4. Promoting intercultural dialogue in the St. Petersburg society

- annual celebrations of the International Day for Tolerance in St. Petersburg, various ethnic holidays and events;
- surveys on the cultural needs of representatives of various nationalities in St. Petersburg;
- regional, city and international festivals and exhibits at the museums and other cultural institutions;
- annual reference book “Ethnic Calendar for St. Petersburg;”

Section 5. Maintaining inter-confessional peace and accord in St. Petersburg

- seminars, round tables, workshops for improvement of mutual cooperation between governmental and religious organizations;



- short educational documentaries, including those for children and youth, for strengthening religious and ethno-cultural tolerance;
- series of exhibits dedicated to the role and place of various religions in the culture of Russia;

Section 6. Perfection of St. Petersburg law in the field of interethnic relations. Assisting to adaptation and integration of migrants into the cultural and social life of St. Petersburg.

- training courses for law enforcement officers;
- complex programme of support and rehabilitation of the racial, ethnic and religious crime victims, publishing of recommendations on “How not to become a victim of crime;”
- work of national public associations with groups of recent migrants for their adaptation and integration;

- centers of legal, medical/social and cultural support to refugees and forced migrants;

Section 7. Cooperation and exchange of experience with international and inter-regional partners on the issues of tolerance.

- cooperation on interethnic and intercultural dialogue with cities of the world, including St. Petersburg twin cities;
- cooperation with the international organizations on the issues of tolerance;
- supporting work of public organizations on promotion of the history, culture, and national traditions of foreign countries.

The Tolerance Programme monitoring and expertise

Section 8 of the Programme “Monitoring and analysis of the Programme’s implementation”

represents expert support as an essential part of the Tolerance Programme elaboration and implementation. All events of the Programme are in the focus of the scientific community. Involvement of the expert cooperation is a guarantee of the scientific relevance, complex approach and conceptual integrity of the Programme.



The efficiency of the Programme as whole and its particular activities are analyzed and evaluated semiannually. As a result, the Programme measures are modified in order to satisfy trends of the flexible environment and the needs of society.

Assessment methods:

- annual analytical surveys on interethnic relations in St. Petersburg;

- continuous content monitoring of mass-media (city, country, world);
- analysis of correlation between different data;
- sociological surveys (one or more per year), polls, research results and conclusions of leading experts;
- analysis of the reports of the different Programme's actors (every quarter).

The Tolerance Programme's major results



Every year, thanks to joint efforts and target financing, the agenda of the Tolerance Programme's activities becomes more and more intensive: it incorporated about 3000 actions in 2007, more than 4500 in 2008, and already has 3700 events during the first half of 2009.

Awareness of the population about the Programme and, respectively, on the issues of tolerance and intercultural diversity has grown. Surveys show that the Programme is known to about 25 % percent of city residents. According to experts, that is a high indicator.

More than 3000 versatile and multilevel actions were held within the educational

framework. The number and variety of events keep growing; the surveys' results show that 91% of society considers educational programmes at schools as the most effective.

An innovative project was worked out and introduced into the educational process in St. Petersburg: this was a special set of materials entitled "An Ethnic Calendar for St. Petersburg;"

it is focused on the diversity of the city's citizens' cultural traditions. This set includes a reference book, a collection of wall charts and methodical materials for teachers. It provides information on the dates of important events in the history of social life, religion and arts of the different ethnic groups living in Russia and enlightens contributions to the city development made by representatives of different ethnic communities.



Various expert researches have confirmed effectiveness of the materials in the teaching process. The set was adapted for the levels of pre-school, elementary, and secondary school education and for institutions of primary vocational training. It became the major component of the ethno-cultural education at 1021 kindergartens, 682 schools. From 2010 it will be also introduced at

79 elementary professional institutions. Alongside with this publication, numerous documentaries, television and radio broadcasts have been made.

Work with youth goes through a large number of activities and in various directions, e.g., sports actions, workshops, trainings, exhibitions, competitions, and discussion.



Every year, "**The Culture of Peace for the Cultural Capital of Russia**" Festival for secondary school students is taking place in the city in May – December. It includes various contests revealing knowledge and understanding of the history of the multinational city of St. Petersburg and its national traditions. Special monitoring confirmed efficiency of this action, as well as its popularity

among students. Since 2009, the Festival has the status of a city-wide action.

Lots of activities are organized in order to cope with trou-



bled teenagers. There are many positive examples: from assistance with employment to close interaction and work with their families. Moreover, sports organisations work with their fans in order to prevent xenophobia and discrimination (for example, the action of a city soccer team “Zenith” – «Show racism the red card»).

The fact that the overwhelming majority of the population has strong negative attitude towards nationalist groupings experts recognise as one of the very important and positive effects of the Programme. **One of the significant results of the actions in this sphere is that the rate of juvenile delinquency and youth crime has decreased as compared to previous years.**

A large part of the activities is focused on the **training work** with journalists, teachers, and experts from complementary training centers, civil servants, and law-enforcement officers in the sphere of intercultural tolerance. Experts consider results of this work as successful.

Lots of attention is drawn to the **awareness-raising campaigns** on issues of tolerance, mutual understanding and interethnic respect. A public advertisement campaign under the general name of “St. Petersburg: manners, customs, traditions,” highly appreciated by city residents, has been successfully implemented. Series of television and radio shows were broadcast, and print and network media projects carried out for promoting harmony in interethnic relations.



Researches indicate that 42% of the population monitors the press materials dedicated to intercultural events and activities. Broad coverage of the issues of tolerance in

mass media adds to the general knowledge of the society and creates substantial interest to the multinational character of St. Petersburg.

Information on all activities and their results is included in the integrated database of the Tolerance Programme. It is obvious that better access to the information on the Programme makes its ideas and principles more popular. The Internet site of the Programme provides actual information on its activities and research results; it helps to spread news on intercultural events and serves as a platform for discussions (www.spbtolerance.ru, www.kvs.spb.ru). According to experts, in the 2,5 years of implementation of the Programme, citizens



have demonstrated high interest in national cultures; most of them are convinced in the necessity and importance of intercultural dialogue. More than 2500 actions have been held in the sphere of **intercultural interaction**. These were ethno-cultural holidays, competitions, excursions, performances, concerts, and exhibitions. According to polls, 44% of respondents share the opinion that the multinationality

enriches the cultural life of the city; 71% of respondents declared interest in national traditions of various peoples.

The city is engaged in intensive **cooperation at the international level**, which provides numerous points of reference. It develops comprehensive partnership relations, including twin-city activities, programmes with the Council of the



Baltic Sea States, the Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation. Since 2007, St. Petersburg has joined the European Coalition of **Cities against Racism**. The Tolerance Programme's activities were highly appreciated by the Steering Committee of the European Coalition of Cities against Racism during its session in St. Petersburg in May 2009.

The St. Petersburg's experience of dealing with the problem of ethnic intolerance is used by other regions of the Russian Federation. This can be seen from the numerous requests for information and assistance from the regions and from the inter-regional conference on Cooperation of Regions of the Russian Federation in the Sphere of Strengthening Tolerance which took place in St. Petersburg in November 2008. Representatives from 25 regions of Russia participated in the conference activities.



On October, 20th, 2009 the General director of UNESCO Koitira Matsuura following the recommendation of independent international jury has made the decision to award an honorary mention of UNESCO-MADAND-JEET prize for promotion of tolerance and nonviolence in 2009 to the St. Petersburg Government Tolerance Programme.

St. Petersburg was awarded for its constructive efforts to inculcate mutual respect and tolerance in a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society and to prevent and eradicate all forms of discrimination.



The award acknowledges contribution of the nominee to the promotion of the ideals of human dignity, solidarity and mutual respect in multi-cultural, multi-confessional and multi-ethnic societies. The numerous activities are fully in line with UNESCO's goals and programmes and serve as an encouragement for similar activities in other countries.



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Committee for external relations of St. Petersburg
191060, St. Petersburg, Smolny
Phone: +7(812) 576-72-04, +7(812) 576-71-13
Fax: +7(812) 576-76-33
E-mail: spbtolerance@kvs.gov.spb.ru

www.spbtolerance.ru

