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## **THE METROPOLITAN CITY OF BOLOGNA AND ITS COMMITMENT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION**

The territorial authority Metropolitan City of Bologna was created in 2015 following an institutional reform. What is currently called the Metropolitan City previously was the Province of Bologna, an intermediate territorial body between the Municipality and the Region. In 2009, it was already part of a protocol between the Emilia-Romagna Region and UNAR (National Anti-Racial Discrimination Office) for the creation of territorial networks to fight against discrimination that were the result of an alliance between public bodies, civil society bodies, trade associations, non-profit associations and religious bodies.

After the transformation of the above mentioned authority, their activity has continued thanks to the General Framework Agreement signed between the Region and the Metropolitan City of Bologna on 13th January 2016<sup>1</sup>, in which the latter is recognized as having a strategic role in the implementation of policies and interventions aimed at promoting welfare policies and supporting social development, also through actions to fight discrimination and inequalities in the fields of education and training. The Metropolitan City is also recognized as a facilitator and accelerator of planning and innovation, helping to increase the effectiveness of regional policies and territorial coordination with regard to the implementation of educational, social and labor policies, seen as indispensable tools for guaranteeing people's rights, cohesion, innovation and the development of the economy and society.

In keeping with this role assigned to it by the Emilia-Romagna Region, the Metropolitan Council meeting of 27th April 2022 approved the 2021-2026 mandate guidelines *The Greater Bologna, to leave no one behind*.

The mandate lines of Metropolitan Bologna are organized into five macro-areas of intervention, centered around key objectives and projects:

1. Bologna growing for everyone
2. Bologna for the right to health and frailty
3. Green and sustainable Bologna
4. Bologna educational, cultural and sporting
5. Bologna near and connected

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<sup>1</sup>In implementation of Article 5 of Regional Law No. 13 of 30 July 2015 on Institutional Reorganisation.

As a part of the 2021-2026 mandate programme, the *Plan for Equality* was created, to address the growing inequalities further highlighted by the pandemic. It consists of five main objectives, where the fifth objective concerns *Countering Multiple, Additive and Intersectional Discrimination*.

### **Statistic data**

According to the latest data dating back to 2023, the metropolitan area of Bologna has a total population of 1,018,346 inhabitants, of whom 124,557 are foreigners (12.2% of the population). The majority of the foreign population is made up of women (53%) and the average age is 36.2 years old.<sup>2</sup> The three most common countries of origin are Romania (21.9%), Morocco (10%) Pakistan (6.9%).<sup>3</sup>

The Metropolitan City of Bologna is governed by a centre-left coalition, whose current mayor Matteo Lepore, was also the mayor of the Municipality of Bologna, elected in the 2021 elections.

### **Activities in which the Metropolitan City is engaged against discrimination**

Since 2016, the Metropolitan City of Bologna has played the role of coordinator of the entities that are part of the '**Metropolitan Anti-Discrimination Network of the Bologna Territory**'.

The Metropolitan Anti-Discrimination Network of the Bolognese territory is organized as follows:

- territorial hub with the function to connect the anti-discrimination center of the Emilia Romagna Region and the realities which are part of the network, carried out by the **Municipality of Bologna**;
- help-centers with case reception function, carried out by associations and other bodies;
- information antennas with a signalling function, carried out by associations and other bodies;
- coordination of network members headed by the **Metropolitan City of Bologna**.

The tasks of the territorial network are to:

- listen, counsel and guide the victims of discrimination;
- promotion of equal opportunities and prevention of potential disadvantages;
- phenomenon observation, monitoring and verification.

### **Awareness-raising campaigns against discrimination**

In 2016 and 2017, implementation of an awareness-raising event called *Diversamente uguali* (Differently Equal) with events, workshops, meetings, etc.

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<sup>2</sup>Data processed from the Metropolitan Atlas available at <https://inumeridibolognametropolitana.it/atlantemetropolitano/home>

<sup>3</sup>Data on nationalities refer to 2022 and are processed from the Metropolitan Atlas available at <https://inumeridibolognametropolitana.it/atlantemetropolitano/home>

In 2021, the exhibition *Building the future by recalling traces: recognition, participation and new narratives* with various activities carried out directly by the Metropolitan City.

### **Handbook for Anti-Discrimination Activists**

Since 2017, after accepting suggestions from a number of subjects in the metropolitan anti-discrimination network, the Metropolitan City has created the *Handbook for anti-discrimination activists*, a project that takes place in secondary schools and vocational institutes in the metropolitan area, this year being its 7th edition.

The *Handbook for Anti-Discrimination Activists* is a multi-action project that includes a **regulation route, a route to the places of memory, debates and an artistic route**

In order to give other schools the opportunity to devise similar paths, a document entitled *Anti-Discrimination Pedagogy* was produced in 2022 with indications and good practices for teachers who would like to implement paths in their own classrooms.

### **Other Activities**

Alongside these activities, there are further projects, which aim at enhancing differences by creating spaces for a greater community cohesion, with special attention to the younger generations.

Since 2018, **cross-cultural parenting support pathways have been** implemented. These pathways, during the COVID-19 period, were crucial for families facing the lockdown.

The *Every language counts* project was launched to get to know and value linguistic diversity in childcare facilities and schools of all levels. The target group and protagonists of the project were the teachers, who were offered cognitive and operational tools to make the multilingualism of individual pupils and the linguistic diversity of the classroom a resource from which everyone can benefit.

Interculture and gender: cineforum with intercultural films followed by meetings with activists

### **SPAD – The Anti-Discrimination Help-Center of the Municipality of Bologna**

Until 2021, the Bolognese Metropolitan Anti-Discrimination Network handled reported discrimination mainly by acting as a conflict mediator, as it lacked adequate tools. This led to a lack of confidence that turned into underreporting. Observing this critical situation, the Municipality of Bologna set up the SPAD (Anti-discrimination Help-Center) in 2021.

The Help-Center welcomes, listens, orients and supports people who are either victims, direct or indirect witnesses, of discrimination, also through legal action in defense of victims of discrimination.

The Metropolitan City, as coordinating body of the network, and as a partner of the Municipality of Bologna in anti-discrimination activities, aims at informing as well as training the metropolitan area realities, of the existence of the SPAD, and to contribute to the training of the local authority staff, so that they can be information antennas with the function of reporting and informing in order to protect victims of discrimination

The Mayor of the Metropolitan City of Bologna  
Matteo Lepore

