

Good practices aimed at eradicating inequalities on the grounds of religious beliefs or ethical convictions

European Capitals of Inclusion and Diversity Award



2026

Good Practice: Inclusive Public Celebration of Ramadan in Arrecife (Lanzarote)



In line with its institutional commitment to equality, inclusion and intercultural coexistence, the City Council of Arrecife, in cooperation with the Island Council of Lanzarote, supported the organisation of an inclusive public celebration to mark Ramadan, held on 21 March in a central and accessible urban space.

The initiative, *Ramadan Kareem Lanzarote*, was organised by the Union of Islamic Communities of Spain on the island, in collaboration with the civil society organisation Acciones Unidas, and received institutional support from the Citizen Participation departments of both administrations. This collaborative governance model highlights the active involvement of minority communities in the design and implementation of public initiatives, ensuring representation, ownership and equal participation.

The event was conceived as an open and welcoming space for all residents, with the aim of promoting intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among people of diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. By bringing the celebration of Ramadan — one of the most significant periods in the Islamic calendar — into the public sphere, the initiative fostered shared values such as reflection, solidarity, respect and social cohesion.

Special emphasis was placed on accessibility and inclusivity. The choice of a central public venue, the Arrecife Fairgrounds, ensured visibility, ease of access and symbolic recognition of cultural and religious diversity within the city's public space. This contributed to normalising diversity and reinforcing a sense of belonging among communities that are often underrepresented in public life.

This initiative demonstrates how local authorities can actively promote equality and non-discrimination through symbolic recognition, inclusive use of public space and structured collaboration with community-based organisations. It represents a transferable good practice aligned with European values, strengthening social cohesion and contributing to the development of a diverse, plural and inclusive local society.

<https://cadenaser.com/canarias/2025/03/14/ayuntamiento-de-arrecife-y-cabildo-anuncian-una-fiesta-por-el-ramadan-en-lanzarote-ser-lanzarote/>

Good Practice: Halal Animal Slaughter Training Promoting Inclusion and Regulatory Compliance in Lanzarote



The Island Council of Lanzarote has launched the first specialised training course on animal slaughter in accordance with the halal rite on the island, through the Lanzarote Experimental Agricultural Farm and the Island Agricultural Service. The initiative, held at the facilities of the Experimental Farm, received full institutional support from the Island Council.

The training programme is primarily aimed at the Muslim community residing in Lanzarote and responds to a previously unmet need for accessible, locally delivered training that reconciles religious practices with European legal standards. Its objective is to ensure full respect for religious freedom while guaranteeing compliance with EU requirements on animal welfare and food safety.

The course focuses on Animal Welfare at the Time of Slaughter and Related Operations and has generated significant interest, with all available places filled within a few days. Participants are eligible to obtain the Certificate of Recognition of Competence and Level of Skills in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 1099/2009 on the protection of animals at the time of killing. The training is officially certified by the competent regional authority for agriculture and livestock.

The Island Council highlights that this initiative forms part of a broader strategy to promote inclusive, cohesive and diversity-respectful territories in Lanzarote and La Graciosa. Recent improvements to the Island Slaughterhouse facilities have made it possible to expand their use and provide more modern, safe and versatile public services adapted to the needs of a diverse population.

Course content integrates technical, legal and ethical dimensions, covering halal procedures, appropriate animal handling, applicable regulations and the specific conditions required for slaughter in accordance with Islamic tradition. Through this initiative, the Island Council strengthens institutional support for integration, equality and respectful coexistence among the different communities that shape the social reality of Lanzarote and La Graciosa.

<https://www.canarias7.es/canarias/lanzarote/primer-curso-sobre-sacrificio-animales-rito-halal-20251127001623-nt.html>

Good Practice : Freedom of Religion in Lanzarote: Evidence of an Inclusive and Plural Territory



The island of Lanzarote provides a meaningful example of the effective exercise of freedom of religion as a fundamental right, reflecting a model of coexistence based on respect, diversity and inclusion. This principle, recognised in the Spanish Constitution and in European human rights frameworks, is manifested on the island through the stable and normalised presence of different religious denominations, including Evangelical churches.

According to available data from the Institute for Comprehensive Evangelism in Spain (EVAF), Lanzarote hosts Evangelical churches in five of its seven municipalities, positioning the island among the territories with the strongest Evangelical presence in the Canary Islands. This is particularly significant given that, at regional level, many municipalities still lack any Evangelical presence, reinforcing Lanzarote's open and plural social context.

The sustained growth of the Evangelical population in the Canary Islands — exceeding 100% since the late 1990s — has found in Lanzarote a social and institutional environment that enables the free exercise of faith, community organisation and the establishment of places of worship without significant barriers. The geographical distribution of these churches across several municipalities demonstrates that freedom of religion is not confined to specific areas, but is exercised in an accessible and decentralised manner.

From a public policy perspective focused on equality, diversity and inclusion, Lanzarote shows effective compliance with the principle of freedom of religion not only at a normative level, but also in its practical implementation. Peaceful coexistence between different beliefs, the visibility of minority religious communities and their integration into the social fabric contribute to a cohesive, diverse and respectful society, aligned with European values of fundamental rights and non-discrimination.

<https://www.facebook.com/ICSiguiendoelCamino/>

Good Practice: The Romería of Los Dolores: Faith, Identity and Social Cohesion



The Romería of Our Lady of Los Dolores, held every September in Mancha Blanca, is the most significant Catholic religious celebration in Lanzarote and one of the most important in the Canary Islands. Beyond its devotional dimension, it represents a broad social and cultural phenomenon that brings together popular religiosity, historical memory, territorial identity, community values and intangible cultural heritage.

The origins of the pilgrimage date back to 1736, following the volcanic eruptions of Timanfaya. The local population attributed the end of the volcanic activity to the intercession of Our Lady of Los Dolores, who was subsequently proclaimed Patron Saint of Lanzarote. Since then, the Romería has symbolised protection in the face of adversity, collective gratitude and a deep spiritual connection with the land, reflecting the resilience of the island community.

From a fundamental rights perspective, the Romería of Los Dolores constitutes a long-standing example of the legitimate exercise of freedom of religion in the public space. Thousands of people walk the pilgrimage routes to the sanctuary, carrying religious symbols, singing traditional chants and engaging in devotional practices in a context of social consensus, respect and peaceful coexistence. The temporary use of public space takes place without conflict, demonstrating a balanced relationship between beliefs, citizenship and the environment.

Although rooted in Catholic tradition, the Romería transcends its confessional nature and is widely recognised as a living cultural heritage of the island. Believers, non-believers and visitors alike participate, sharing traditional dress, folk music, popular gastronomy and practices of mutual support that reinforce universal values such as hospitality, solidarity and collective responsibility.

Island and municipal public authorities support the Romería from a cultural and heritage-based approach, ensuring safety, mobility and environmental protection. This reflects a model of active neutrality: while no specific religion is promoted, the collective right to religious and cultural expression is protected. In an increasingly diverse social context, the Romería of Los Dolores demonstrates how religious traditions can coexist with other beliefs, strengthening social cohesion and shared identity.

<https://www.biosferadigital.com/articulo/lanzarote/miles-peregrinos-acompanan-virgen-dolores-romeria-marcada-devocion-tradicion/20250914140430152432.html>