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White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

'Living Together As Equals'

Draft version of 10 September 2007

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Executive summary

Managing Europe's growing cultural diversity—rooted in Europe's history and enhanced by globalisation—in a democratic manner has been a growing concern for the international community in recent years and there has been an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help value diversity while sustaining social cohesion. This White Paper seeks to provide a conceptual framework and a guide for policy-makers and practitioners.

The document arises from an extensive and widespread consultation, in which the stakeholders emphasised the need for intercultural dialogue to be premised on the universal principles of democracy, the rule of law and human rights embodied in the Council of Europe and its *acquis*, and a number of secondary considerations.

Intercultural dialogue, as conceived in this document, comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse worldviews and practices, to increase participation and the freedom to make choices, to foster equality and human dignity, to enhance creative processes and to promote the ability of individuals and societies to grow and transform themselves through respectful dialogue with others.

To encourage intercultural dialogue and to create the conditions that make dialogue possible is a key responsibility of public authorities at all levels, civil society and other non-state actors, private enterprise and individual citizens. The intercultural approach offers a new and potentially more fruitful model for managing cultural diversity than earlier approaches, assimilation or multiculturalism.

The White Paper translates this concept into reality by identifying five tasks:

- Developing the democratic *governance* of cultural diversity
- Strengthening democratic *citizenship and participation*
- Learning and teaching intercultural *competences*
- Creating *spaces* for intercultural dialogue
- Developing intercultural dialogue in *international relations*

These tasks imply commitments for the entire range of stakeholders. The White Paper formulates these, in each of the five dimensions as recommendations and guidelines. However, a host of responsibilities necessarily fall on the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe is committed to the principle of mainstreaming intercultural dialogue throughout its entire range of activities. It will develop several flagship projects in a number of fields, ranging from human rights to media policy, education, cultural and youth policy. Co-operation with other international institutions active in the field will continue, including partnership with UNESCO on the 'Faro Open Platform', the European Union in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) and the 'Alliance of Civilisations' initiative of the United Nations, with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO), the Anna Lindh Euromediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Cultures and the OSCE.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council of Europe in intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is one of the key missions of the Council of Europe, along with fostering democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The First Summit of Heads of State and Government of member states (1993), which affirmed that cultural diversity characterised Europe's rich heritage and that tolerance was the guarantee of an open society, resulted in a number of initiatives, including the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), the establishment of the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance and the launching of the European Youth Campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance ('All Different - All Equal').

In the new millennium, the events of 'September 11' and subsequent incidents across Europe continued to raise the troubling question of how to marry cultural diversity and social cohesion, and avoid the establishment of ever more separated life worlds. The Third Summit of the Heads of State and Government (2005) identified intercultural (including interreligious) dialogue as a key answer and adopted a set of guidelines for future action in this field. The accompanying strategy was laid down in more detail in the 'Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue', adopted by the ministers of culture later that year; the 'Faro Declaration' also suggested preparing a White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

1.2 The purpose of the White Paper

The basic concept of a White Paper derives from UK governmental experience, where it represents the setting out of a developed official, longer-term approach to a policy domain.

The Committee of Ministers, meeting in May 2006, specified that the White Paper would identify ways and means to respond to the need for intensified intercultural dialogue within and between European societies and for structured dialogue between Europe and its neighbours. It was understood that the White Paper should also provide policy makers at international, national, regional and local levels, as well as civil society organisations, with guidelines for the development and implementation of intercultural dialogue, and with the necessary analytical and methodological tools and standards indispensable for successful practice.

1.3 The consultation process

Following a decision of the Committee of Ministers, a wide-scale consultation on intercultural dialogue ensued between January and June 2007. This embraced, *inter alia*, all relevant steering committees, the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and other bodies of the Council of Europe. Questionnaires were sent to all member states, the members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, to representatives of religious communities, selected migrant communities and cultural and other non-governmental organisations. Additionally, the Council of Europe secretariat organised (or co-organised) a range of consultative events with non-governmental organisations of migrants, women, young people, journalists and media organisations as well as international institutions.

This process indicated considerable enthusiasm for the production of the White Paper, and the Council of Europe is greatly indebted to all those who contributed so generously. The consultation proved particularly valuable in two ways. First, it revealed a confidence that the Council of Europe, because of its normative foundation and its wealth of experience, was

ideally placed to take what was seen as a timely initiative. Secondly, the process generated a rich repertoire of suggestions as to the content of the White Paper itself.

What follows is built on the solid foundations of the Council of Europe *acquis* and the rich material from the consultation. In that sense, it is in many ways a product of the democratic deliberation which is at the heart of intercultural dialogue itself. For the sake of readability and because many points were made by several organisations, the document does not attribute particular ideas to particular consultees.

1.4 Accompanying documents

This White Paper sets out the Council of Europe's vision of intercultural dialogue and formulates the main policy principles, recommendations and commitments for future action; it does not reflect in detail the results of the consultation process or the specific political and legal standards and recommendations laid down by the Council of Europe over the years.

However, the huge volume of documents associated with the White Paper process is available on the Council of Europe website[1] and in a series of accompanying volumes to be published by the Council, which shall include analyses of the responses provided by the governments of Council of Europe member states, by non-governmental organisations and religious communities to the questionnaire on intercultural dialogue, as well as a series of thematic monographs on intercultural dialogue under different aspects (education, media) and with a view to specific stakeholders (youth, migrants).

Additional documents—including a set of 'Frequently Asked Questions' and press material—are available in print and on the website.

1.5 Terminology and definitions

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which generally follows the terminology developed by the Council of Europe and other international institutions, presents some concepts that need to be defined.

- *Intercultural dialogue* is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage *(cf. page 11)*.
- *Multiculturalism* (like assimilationism) is understood as a specific policy approach *(cf. page 12)*, whereas the term *multiculturality* denotes the empirical fact that different cultures exist and interact within a given space and social organisation.
- *Social cohesion* denotes the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.
- *Stakeholders* are all those groups and individuals that play a role and have interests (a 'stake') in intercultural dialogue—most prominently policy makers in governments and parliaments at all levels, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and religious communities, cultural and media organisations, journalists, social partners, members of minorities and majorities.

[1] **www.coe.int/dialogue**

2. Acting on the consultation: addressing the major concerns

One of the recurrent themes of the consultation was a sense that old approaches to the management of cultural diversity were no longer adequate to contemporary societies, in which the degree of that diversity (rather than its existence) was unprecedented and ever-growing. The responses to the questionnaires sent to member states, in particular, revealed a belief that what had until recently been a preferred policy approach, conveyed in shorthand as 'multiculturalism', had been found to be inadequate for various reasons. On the other hand, there did not seem to be a desire to return to an older emphasis on assimilation. There was a sense that achieving integrated societies needed a new approach, and that intercultural dialogue was the route to follow. The White Paper tries to clarify why and how.

There was, however, a notable lack of clarity as to what that portmanteau phrase 'intercultural dialogue' might mean. The consultation document produced by the Council of Europe secretariat invited respondents to give a definition, and there was a marked reluctance to do so. In part, this is because intercultural dialogue is not a new tablet of stone, amenable to a simple definition which can be applied without mediation in all concrete situations. In part, however, this indicated a genuine uncertainty as to what intercultural dialogue meant in practice. Much of this document, therefore, is about putting flesh on these bones.

Respondents to the consultation nevertheless were united in stating that universal principles, as upheld and developed by the Council of Europe since its foundation, offered a moral compass to navigate this previously largely uncharted territory. They were seen as providing the framework for a culture of tolerance, and made clear its limits—notably *vis-à-vis* any form of discrimination or acts of *in*tolerance. There was clarity that cultural traditions, whether they be 'majority' or 'minority' traditions, could not be held to trump such principles and values, reflected in the European Convention on Human Rights and a host of subsequent human-rights standards. Specifically, it was stressed that gender equality was a non-negotiable premise of intercultural dialogue, which must draw on the experience of both women and men. The European Court of Human Rights has generated illuminating case-law and the European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance valuable policy recommendations in this area, on which the White Paper draws.

Indeed, equality was a recurrent theme of the consultation more generally. There was a clear understanding that the challenge of living together in a diverse society can only be met if we can live together as equals. This concern, strongly articulated by NGOs in general and associations representing migrant communities in particular, means that this White Paper inevitably ventures beyond the cultural into the economic and social domains. Here the experience of the Council of Europe in the field of social rights, built on the European Social Charter, will be utilised.

The consultation threw up a bewildering array of sites of intercultural dialogues and of actors whom it ineluctably engaged. In fact, it emerged that no social sphere is immune from the obligation of intercultural dialogue—be it the neighbourhood, the workplace, the education system and associated institutions, civil society and particularly the youth sector, the media, the arts world or the political arena. Every social actor—whether NGOs, religious communities, the social partners or political parties—is implicated, as indeed are individuals. Specific interlocutors in the consultation added parts, from their knowledge and experience, of the mosaic of action which this White Paper endeavours to collate. And, apart from the commitments it offers on behalf of the Council of Europe, in turn it offers a wide range of recommendations which these many other actors could take up.

Dealing with such complexity requires holistic efforts. The consultation again made clear that every level of governance—from local to regional to national to transnational—is drawn into

the democratic management of cultural diversity. The White Paper accordingly spells out the potential of national integration plans, on which a number of member states have embarked, as well as initiatives at municipal level, such as integration councils, where co-ordination may be easier. And, on the international canvas, it addresses the relationships involving the Council of Europe and the other transnational public actors, to deal with what is clear from the consultation is a global rather than merely European challenge.

Finally, and most concretely, the consultation highlighted that a vast amount of good practice has already been accumulated by all the actors involved. What is needed is for this to be distilled and then disseminated, so that reticence can be overcome and positive experiences can be replicated. This White Paper is not the place to detail the wealth of good practice that is out there: the Council of Europe web site has a recurrently updated database. But it does address the need for a structured approach to ensure that this process of learning by doing is not *ad hoc*.

For, if there is one overall lesson of the consultation, it is that the need for intercultural dialogue is not going to go away. On the contrary, it is going to be one of the biggest challenges of this century. But this need not be a daunting conclusion—it may even be a positive one. Conceptually and practically, the responses to these challenges are becoming, as this White Paper tries to show, more and more clear.

3. Facing cultural diversity

3.1 Pluralism, tolerance and intercultural dialogue

Cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon. The European canvas is marked by the sediments of intra-continental migrations, redrawing of borders, colonialism and multinational empires. Over recent centuries, societies have responded by developing two mechanisms in particular, enabling us to live with diversity without creating unacceptable risks for social cohesion: political pluralism and tolerance. They underpin the very architecture of the political and legal structures surrounding us.

In recent decades, the process of cultural diversification has gained considerable momentum. Europe has attracted migrants and asylum-seekers from across the world in search of a better life. Contemporary globalisation creates a world marked by a compression of space and time on a scale that is unprecedented. The revolutions in telecommunications, media and transport have rendered national cultural systems increasingly porous. On the global scale, intercultural conflicts are played out in this new compressed world; 'September 11' alerted everyone to this action-at-a-distance effect.

In this situation, pluralism and tolerance are more important than ever; however, they may not be sufficient to face the new challenges successfully. A more active, a better-structured and more widely shared effort in managing cultural diversity is needed. The reflections in this White Paper start from the premise that intercultural dialogue is a major tool to achieve this very aim. The Council of Europe is convinced that without engaging in intercultural dialogue it will be difficult to safeguard in the future the freedom and well-being of all individuals living on our continent.

3.2 Europe's challenges in the face of difference

Diversity does not only contribute to the vitality of cultural life but also to social and economic development in Europe. Indeed diversity, creativity and innovation provide a virtuous circle, whereas inequalities may also be mutually reinforcing, creating conflicts dangerous to human dignity and social welfare. What is the 'glue', then, that can bind together the people who share the continent?

The democratic values underpinning the Council of Europe are universal; they are not distinctively European. Yet Europe's 20th-century experience of inhumanity has driven a particular belief in the foundational value of individual human dignity. Since the Second World War, the European system of nation-states has thus been overlaid by ever more complete and transnational human rights protections, available to everyone, not just national citizens, and with reciprocity. This rights regime constitutes a *ius humanitatis*: it is a recognition of the dignity of every human being, over and above the entitlements enjoyed by citizens of particular states.

There is here the germ of a transcendent civic identity, a recognition that our common humanity as Europeans can embrace the unique individuality of all. Assimilation to a unity without diversity would mean an enforced homogenisation and loss of vitality, while diversity without any overarching solidarity would make social integration impossible. If there is a European identity, then, to be realised, it is an ethos of tolerance and hospitality. Intrinsic to such an ethos must be the privileging of dialogue: we must constantly interact with others, if we want them to be neighbours we trust rather than strangers we fear.

3.3 Standards and tools: the achievements of the Council of Europe over five decades

Reconciling respect for different identities with fostering social cohesion can only succeed if it is based on universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. The robust European consensus on values is demonstrated by the accumulated, and increasingly focused, instruments of the Council of Europe in this sphere.

The *European Convention on Human Rights* (1950) embodied the post-war commitment to human dignity, and created the European Court of Human Rights, which in its case-law interprets the Convention in the light of present-day conditions. The *European Social Charter* (adopted in 1961 and revised in 1996) made clear that the social rights which it set out applied to all without discrimination. The *European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers* (1997) stipulated that migrant workers be treated no less favourably than nationals of member states.

The *European Cultural Convention* (1954) affirmed the continent's 'common cultural heritage' and the associated need for intercultural learning, while the *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005) identified how knowledge of this heritage could encourage trust and understanding. Promoting and protecting diversity in a spirit of tolerance was the theme of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992) and of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities* (1995).

Regarding cultural diversity at the local level, the *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level* (1992) and the *European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life* (2003, revised) must be mentioned, together with the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, notably its *Stuttgart Declaration* on the integration of 'foreigners' (2003).

Prior to the *Faro Declaration* (2005), intercultural dialogue itself became a theme for ministers responsible for culture in the *Opatija Declaration* (2003), while their educational counterparts addressed the exigencies of intercultural education in the *Athens Declaration* (2003). The European ministers responsible for Youth accorded priority to human rights education, global solidarity, conflict transformation and interreligious co-operation when meeting in Budapest in 2005. Meanwhile, since the 1980s, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has contributed an array of recommendations, resolutions, hearings and debates on aspects of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

The Council of Europe also influences the member states and the wider world through monitoring mechanisms, action programmes, policy advocacy and co-operation with transnational partners. An important vehicle in this regard is the *European Commission against Racism and Intolerance* (ECRI), which monitors manifestations of racism and racial discrimination in member states, elaborates General Policy Recommendations and works with civil society to disseminate information and raise awareness. More generally, the *Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe* plays a valuable role in promoting education in, awareness of and respect for human rights.

3.4 The risks of non-dialogue

Is there an alternative to intercultural dialogue? In order to gauge the risks—and costs—of 'non-dialogue', the Council of Europe will soon undertake an in-depth study. The biggest risk of non-dialogue, it seems, is a loss of social trust. A process of stereotyping and stigmatisation may easily result in communal segregation, draining social tensions and a loss of vitality and

[4] *Gorzelik and Others v. Poland* [GC], no. 44158/98, 17 February 2004

creativity. The instrumentalisation of cultural diversity as allegedly irreconcilable difference and antagonism threatens human rights, political stability and peace itself. Intercultural dialogue, including on the international plane, is indispensable if neighbours are to avoid being turned into enemies, capable thereby of inflicting great inhumanity on one another.

4. The conceptual bases of intercultural dialogue

4.1 Scope and context

For the purpose of this White Paper, intercultural dialogue is understood as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage. It requires the freedom and ability to express oneself as well as the willingness and capacity to listen to the views of others. Intercultural dialogue aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse worldviews and practices, to increase participation (or the freedom to make choices), to foster equality and human dignity, to enhance creative processes and to promote the ability of individuals and societies to grow and transform themselves through respectful dialogue with others.

Intercultural dialogue may serve several purposes. It is important to prevent and de-escalate conflicts, to combat prejudice and stereotypes in public and political discourse and to facilitate coalition-building across diverse cultural and religious communities. It is a powerful instrument of mediation and reconciliation. It is an essential feature of inclusive societies, which leave no one feeling marginalised or being defined as outsiders.

Tolerance and respect for human dignity must serve as guiding principles in this context. The European Court of Human Rights has recognised that 'pluralism is also built on the genuine recognition of, and respect for, diversity and the dynamics of cultural traditions, ethnic and cultural identities, religious beliefs, artistic, literary and socio-economic ideas and concepts', and that 'the harmonious interaction of persons and groups with varied identities is essential for achieving social cohesion'.[4]

Successful intercultural dialogue requires many of the attitudes fostered by a democratic culture—including open-mindedness, ability to listen as well as to speak, a capacity to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and a recognition that others may be right and that we may be wrong.

There is no question of easy solutions. Intercultural dialogue is not a cure for all evils and an answer to all questions, and one has to recognise that its scope can be limited. It is often pointed out, rightly, that dialogue with those who refuse dialogue is impossible, although this does not relieve open and democratic societies of their obligation to constantly offer opportunities for dialogue. On the other hand, dialogue with those who are ready to dialogue but do not—or do not fully—share 'our' values may be the starting point of a longer process of interaction, at the end of which an agreement on the significance and contextual interpretation of the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law may very well be reached.

4.2 Identity, multiple affiliation and the management of cultural diversity

The European belief in individual human dignity means the individual must be the unit of society. The individual, however, is not a homogeneous social actor. Our identity, by definition, is not what makes us the same as others but what makes us unique. Identity is a complex and contextually sensitive combination of elements.

The cultural dimension is a fundamental part of democracy; living with cultural diversity is a key feature of our times. In contemporary modern democracies, everyone is free to identify, or not to identify, with one or several cultural communities, and to modify that choice. There is no going back from this new world. A bewildering array of identity role models are offered by the global media. It is not hard to see how, faced with such complexity, applying to 'the other' a

simplifying stereotype—on to which all the ills of the world can be projected—can be insidiously seductive. Managing democratically this ever-growing cultural and social diversity is an enormous challenge. It is a delicate work of social steering, which should not heavy-handedly put dialogue in a straitjacket nor through lack of leadership allow it to become inchoate.

4.3 Beyond assimilation and multiculturalism: current policy approaches to cultural diversity

At the height of the Europe of the nation-state, from around 1870 to 1945, it was widely assumed that all those who lived within a particular state boundary should assimilate to its predominant ethos, into which successive generations were socialised—via, *inter alia*, mass schooling and national, sometimes nationalistic, rituals. That system allowed the entry of previously disenfranchised publics on to the political stage, but it was to culminate in global war between the 'imagined communities' so conceived.

In what became the western part of a divided post-war Europe, the decline of deference and the experience of immigration crystallised in a new concept of social order known as multiculturalism. This advocated political recognition of what was perceived as the distinct ethos of minority communities on a par with the 'host' majority. While this was ostensibly a radical departure from assimilationism, in fact multiculturalism frequently shared the same, majority/minority conception of society, differing only in endorsing separation of the minority from the majority rather than subordination to it. The Opatija Declaration (2003) rejected this paradigm. Defining cultural diversity, it argued that 'this principle cannot be applied exclusively in terms of "majority" or "minority", for this pattern singles out cultures and communities, and categorises and stigmatises them in a static position, to the point at which social behaviour and cultural stereotypes are assumed on the basis of groups' respective status'. Identities that partly overlap are no contradiction. Rather, they are a source of strength and far preferable to segmented identities that often lead to confrontation and a lack of will to search for common ground.

While driven by benign intentions, multiculturalism is now seen as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as conniving through indifference in the suppression of the rights of individuals—and, in particular, women—within minority communities, perceived as if these were single collective actors. The multiculturality of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirial fact. However, a recurrent theme of the responses from member states received during the White Paper consultation was a sense that multiculturalism as a policy was one with which they no longer felt at ease—a sentiment that was echoed by many civil society organisations.

4.4 The inherent principles of intercultural dialogue

4.4.1 The value base: human rights, democracy and the rule of law

Recognition of the values and principles upheld by the Council of Europe is the necessary condition for intercultural dialogue. They guarantee the principle of non-domination and are thus essential for ensuring that dialogue is governed by the force of argument rather than the argument of force. No dialogue can take place in the absence of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings, human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles.

Since competing human rights may be advanced, a fair balance must be struck when faced with an intercultural problem. The case-law of the European Court of Human Rights and the practice of monitoring bodies such as the European Commission against Racism and

Intolerance or the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities provide examples of how such balance can be achieved in practice. While the case-law may not provide ready-made solutions for every situation, it has formulated conditions regarding both the substance and the procedure to be followed when the human rights of some are restricted to protect the rights of others or to pursue legitimate aims in the interest of society as a whole.

Ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic traditions cannot be invoked to prevent individuals from exercising their basic rights or from participating in society. This is particularly important regarding the prohibition of gender-based or other forms of discrimination, the rights and interests of children and young people, and the freedom to practise or not to practise a particular religion. Practices amounting to human rights abuses, such as forced marriages, so-called 'honour crimes' or genital mutilations, can never be justified.[6] Equally, the rules of a—real or imagined—'dominant culture' cannot be used to justify discrimination, hate speech or other manifestations of racism.

4.4.2 Knowledge and understanding

Just as every person needs to be numerate and literate, at minimum, to function in today's society, of equally universal necessity is thus a basic intercultural competence. There are clear implications here for integrated and intercultural education if knowledge and understanding are to be enhanced, reliance on stereotypes is to be minimised and the associated frictions of daily life are to be avoided.

Mutual understanding, however, is more than knowing *about* the 'other'. It is about a relationship *to* the other, which is developed through the experience of intercultural dialogue. There is no substitute for face-to-face dialogue in this regard, though many of our intercultural encounters are virtual: they take place indirectly through the media. This highlights how the media can be a force for understanding or how, through degenerate spirals of communication, they can propagate the enemy images that lead to violent conflict.

4.4.3 Equal dignity and mutual respect

The climate which provides the sufficient condition for intercultural dialogue can be described as one of 'broad-mindedness'.[7] It is founded on the twin principles of freedom and non-discrimination. It entails a reflexive disposition, capable of relativising one's own form of life and being able to see oneself from the perspective of others. This needs a particular form of democratic shell to thrive, one defined by egalitarian individualism (where humankind is regarded as belonging to a single moral realm), reciprocal recognition (in which this status of equal worth is recognised by all), and impartial treatment (where all claims arising are subject to rules that all can share).

This demarcates the intercultural approach more clearly from preceding models for managing cultural diversity. Unlike assimilation, it recognises that public authorities must be impartial, rather than accepting a majority ethos only, if communalist tensions are to be avoided. Unlike multiculturalism, however, it vindicates a shared and common core which leaves no room for moral relativism. Unlike both, it recognises a key role for the associational sphere of civic society where, premised on reciprocal recognition, intercultural dialogue can resolve the problems of daily life in a way that governments alone cannot.

Equality is one of the important building blocks of intercultural dialogue. Where shelter or work are more pressing issues, or where citizenship is out of reach, the very idea of intercultural

[6] On female genital mutilation, see *Collins and Akaziebie v. Sweden*, n°23944/05 decision of 8 March 2007
[7] *Handyside v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 7 December 1976, Series A no. 24, § 49

dialogue can seem an ethereal consideration. Where equality is lacking, social tensions may manifest themselves in the cultural arena, even if the root causes lie elsewhere, and specific cultural identities themselves may be used as stigmas.

4.5 Gender aspects

Equality between women and men is an integral part of human rights and sex-related discrimination is an impediment to the enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and an obstacle to their recognition. Gender equality is a crucial element of democracy and a human rights objective. Indeed, one of the clearest messages from the White Paper consultation is that gender equality and respect for women's human rights are a non-negotiable foundation of any discussion of cultural diversity.

However, gender inequality is itself vulnerable to insidious stereotyping. It is important to stress the illegitimacy of coded equations between 'minority communities' and 'gender inequality', as if all in the 'host' community was perfect. Common gender experiences can overlap communal divides precisely because no community has a monopoly of gender equality or inequality.

Gender equality can also inject a positive dimension into intercultural dialogue. The complexity of individual identity allows of overlapping affinities, even solidarities, which are inconceivable within a stereotyped, communalist perspective. The very fact that gender inequality is a cross-cutting issue means that intercultural projects engaging women from 'minority' and 'host' backgrounds may be able to build upon experiential commonalities.

The Council of Europe has endorsed gender mainstreaming as one of the main strategies to achieve effective equality between women and men. The Revised Strategy on Social Cohesion makes clear that equality between women and men is a fundamental and highly relevant commitment. It urges a 'gender mainstreaming perspective' in the arena of social cohesion, and in intercultural dialogue this should equally be present throughout.

4.6 The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue

The Council of Europe has recognised since the outset that intercultural dialogue embraces interreligious dialogue. Like everyone else, an individual who professes religious faith has a complex identity, which is not (outside of fundamentalist sub-cultures) defined by their faith alone. Interreligious dialogue is thus best not compartmentalised from other aspects of intercultural dialogue and should be characterised by the same spirit of tolerance and open-mindedness; every religion, in any event, is subject to a range of interpretations.

Part of Europe's rich cultural heritage is a range of religious, as well as secular, conceptions of the purpose of life. Europe would not be the Europe that it is if Islam, Judaism and other faiths were not to be deemed to be components of it, along with the various denominations of Christianity. Yet conflicts where faith has provided a communal marker have been a feature of both Europe's old and more recent past. How these world religions are expressed in Europe will, and should, inevitably be marked by the common values described above.

The 'Volga Forum Declaration' (2006)[8] called for the Council of Europe to enter 'an open, transparent and regular dialogue' with religious organisations, while recognising that this must be underpinned by universal values and principles. This could replicate the round-table approach which individual member states have taken to dialogue with religious communities.

[8] Final document of the International Conference 'Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Cooperation' (Volga Forum), Nizhniy Novgorod/Russian Federation, 7-9 September 2006 (available at **www.coe.int/dialogue**)

The 'San Marino Declaration' (2007)[9] on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue affirmed that religions could elevate and enhance dialogue. It identified the context as a shared ambition to protect individual human dignity, including equality between women and men, to strengthen social cohesion and to foster mutual understanding.

The consultation on this White Paper was marked by a high degree of consensus among representatives of religious communities. There are considerable overlaps between the Council of Europe's agenda and the concerns of religious communities: the promotion of values, human rights, democratic citizenship, peace, dialogue, education and solidarity. Like the Council of Europe, religious communities seek to transcend diversity of cultures with reference to a universal dimension. The consensus also included a recognition that it was the responsibility of the religious communities themselves, through interreligious dialogue, to contribute to an increased understanding between different cultures. But while the broad intercultural approach attracted widespread support, there were diverse views on how far the Council of Europe should engage in religious matters, given that the requirement of impartiality applies to international organisations as well.

Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights is one of the foundations of democratic society; it is in its religious dimension one of the most vital elements referring to the identity of believers and their conception of life, but it is also a precious asset for atheists, agnostics, sceptics and the unconcerned. While guaranteeing freedom of religion (as well as freedom of thought and conscience), Article 9 does allow that the manifestations of religious expression can be restricted in specified contexts under defined conditions. The issue of religious symbols in the public sphere, particularly in the education system, has been raised in a number of cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights.[12] Because of the relative lack of consensus on matters of religion across the member states, the Court has tended to give a large—though not unlimited—'margin of appreciation' (i.e. discretion) to states in this arena.

Europe is in dire need of improved dialogue between religious communities and public authorities. Religious practice is a fact of contemporary human life, and it therefore cannot and should not be outside of the sphere of interest of public authorities. In the 'San Marino Declaration', the religious and civil society representatives welcomed the interest of the Council of Europe in this field; they recognised that the Council of Europe would remain neutral towards the various religions, and that it would respect freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the rights and duties of *all* citizens, and the respective autonomy of state and religions. There is a need for appropriate fora to consider the impact of religious practice on other areas of public policies, such as health and education, without discrimination and with due respect of the rights of non-believers. Those holding non-religious worldviews have an equal right to contribute, alongside religious representatives, to debates on the moral foundations of society and to be engaged in forums for intercultural dialogue.

[9] Final Declaration of the European Conference on 'The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue', San Marino, 23 and 24 April 2007 (available at **www.coe.int/dialogue**)

[12] *Kurtulmuş v. Turkey*, No. 65500/01, decision of 24 January 2006; *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey*, judgment of 10 November 2005 (Grand Chamber); *Dahlab v. Switzerland*, decision of 15 February 2001

5. Five policy approaches to the promotion of intercultural dialogue

The Council of Europe policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue addresses five distinct yet interrelated dimensions and involves the full range of stakeholders. Intercultural dialogue depends on the good democratic governance of cultural diversity. It requires participation and democratic citizenship. It demands the acquisition of intercultural competences through informal, non-formal and formal education. It necessitates the establishment of non-threatening spaces for dialogue. Finally, it must take intercultural dialogue on to the transnational scale.

Initiatives in these five dimensions are far from being mere abstractions; they are tried and tested policy approaches, as the few selected examples of good practice and promising initiatives mentioned in this chapter show.[13]

5.1 Developing the democratic governance of cultural diversity

In diverse and open societies, intercultural dialogue, democratic deliberation and the development of an appropriate governance structure go hand in hand.

5.1.1 Building a political culture of diversity

The cornerstones of a political culture of diversity are the common values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance and non-discrimination, which are rooted in Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage.

A culture of diversity can only develop if democracy reconciles majority rule and minority rights. 'Radical democracy'—imposing the will of the majority on the minority through an all-powerful assembly—is incompatible with the principles of the common European constitutional heritage, which are an important basis for intercultural dialogue. A European society committed to marrying unity and diversity cannot be a 'winner takes all' society, but must suffuse the political arena with values of equality and mutual respect.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A High Commissioner for Intercultural Dialogue

Helping immigrants to integrate and to overcome the 'interminable bureaucratic calvary to which immigrants are subjected', combating the social exclusion of the most vulnerable; and sensibilising public opinion towards a spirit of welcoming and tolerance—this is the mission of the new Portuguese 'High Commission for Immigrants and Intercultural Dialogue' (ACIDI). It replaces the High Commission for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities. ***www.acime.gov.pt***

Developing a political culture conducive cultural diversity is a demanding task. It entails an education system which generates capacities for criticism and innovation, and spaces in which particularly young people are allowed to participate and to express themselves. Law enforcement officials, teachers and other professional groups must be trained to fulfil their tasks in culturally diverse communities. Culture must be dynamic and free to experiment. The media must circulate objective information and fresh thinking, and not reproduce conventional stereotypes. There must be a multiplicity of initiatives and committed stakeholders, particularly by a robust civil society.

5.1.2 Safeguarding human rights and fundamental freedoms

Human rights are the founding principle of European democracies and provide an essential yardstick for the framing of intercultural dialogue. Among the most relevant provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights are the rights to freedom of thought and expression,

[13] The full collection of examples of good practice proposed during the consultations is published on the internet at **www.coe.int/dialogue**

to freedom of religion, to free assembly and association, as well as the rights to privacy and family life. The rights set out in the Convention must be enjoyed without discrimination.

The rights portfolio also includes, for example, the socio-economic rights arising from the European Social Charter, which addresses many of the issues which bear particularly heavily on members of minorities (access to employment, education, social protection, health and housing), and the cultural rights identified in various Charters and Conventions. These rights, which also take in the right of everyone to participate in cultural life affirmed in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), may not provide a detailed blueprint for intercultural dialogue but do offer a common legal basis.[14]

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

A High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality

Created in 2005, the 'High Authority for the Fight against Discrimination and for Equality' (HALDE, France) provides assistance to victims of all forms of discrimination, playing a role of both legal advisor and mediator. The institution advises public authorities and issues opinions on the drafting of all legislation related to the fight against discrimination. The High Authority plays also an important role in researching, promoting and recognising good practices in the field of equality.
www.halde.fr

A focus inevitably falls on freedom of expression, as this is clearly a *sine qua non* of participation in intercultural dialogue. Freedom of expression is not absolute; its exercise comes with duties and responsibilities. Some expressions are so intolerant as to threaten a culture of tolerance itself—indeed, they may inflict not only unconscionable indignity on members of minority communities but also expose them to intimidation and threat. 'Hate speech' has been an increasing concern for the European Court of Human Rights in recent years, and in its jurisprudence the Court has sought to draw the boundary, case by case, beyond which rights to freedom of expression are forfeited.

The European Court of Human Rights has set a high bar against restrictions on free expression, indicating that it is not enough to justify curbs that such expression should 'offend, shock or disturb'.[16] This means, for example, a certain licence to criticise another's religion (as a system of ideas which they can choose to embrace). It also allows scope for limited exemptions from common provisions on religious grounds, such as special arrangements for prayers and diet.

Similar considerations apply to the media. The basic principle is the defence of freedom of expression. There is however also a responsibility on the part of the media themselves to promote a climate of tolerance.

5.1.3 From equality of opportunity to equal enjoyment of rights

What kind of equality can legitimately be sought? 'Equality of opportunity', while hugely preferable to *inequality* of opportunity, has been criticised as fostering only individual social mobility rather than overall social justice. It has done little to help those confined to the ghettoes of despair; hence the need for positive action and reasonable measures to accommodate members of minority communities.

The 'European social model', referred to in the Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, seeks to secure a more profound equality of life chances. Those who most need their rights to be

[14] The European Committee of Social Rights, whose task it is to examine the national reports and to decide whether or not the situations in the countries concerned are in conformity with the European Social Charter, has repeatedly asked for a specific attention to the situation of foreign workers, immigrants and national minorities. Cf. European Social Charter. European Committee of Social Rights: *Conclusions XVIII-1, Volume 1*. Strasbourg 2006, pp. 59, 102, 212, 261, 293

[16] *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, judgment of 7 December 1976, Series A no. 24, § 49

protected are often least well equipped to claim them. Legal protection of rights has to be accompanied by determined social policy measures to ensure that everyone in practice has access to their rights. Thus, the European Social Charter and the European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers stress that migrant workers and their families should be entitled to treatment no less favourable than signatory-state nationals in a range of social and economic contexts.

Over and above the principle of non-discrimination, states are also encouraged to take positive-action measures to redress the inequalities experienced by members of minority communities. In the public sphere, state authorities must strictly respect the prohibition of discrimination, which is an expression of the state's neutrality in cultural and religious matters. Yet, formal equality is not always sufficient because it can result in indirect discrimination when states, without an objective and reasonable justification, fail to treat differently persons whose situations are significantly different.[17] It follows that the state may, under certain circumstances, be under an obligation to allow for a differential treatment to ensure in fact equal enjoyment of rights by all individuals. This is of vital importance in a diverse society.

In order to avoid a policy of forced assimilation, it may be necessary to take, within certain limits, practical measures to accommodate for diversity. Such measures should of course not infringe the rights of others or result in disproportionate organisational difficulties or excessive costs.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Strategic Plan on Citizenship and Integration

Based on the principles of equality, non-discrimination, citizenship and interculturality, the national integration plan adopted by the Spanish government in February 2007 addresses 12 areas of action, including education, employment, housing, social services, health, youth, equal treatment, women, participation and co-development. The Plan comes with a budget of € 2,000 million over four years.

5.2 Strengthening democratic citizenship and participation

Several of the member states, and many other stakeholders, emphasised in their responses to the consultation that they saw intercultural dialogue as founded on equality of citizenship. Citizenship, in the widest (non-legal) sense, is a right and indeed a responsibility to participate in the life of the community together with others. This is key to intercultural dialogue, because it invites us to think of others not in a stereotypical way—as 'the other'—but as our fellow citizens and as equals. Facilitating access to citizenship is an educational as much as a regulatory and legal task. Citizenship enhances civic participation and so contributes to the added value newcomers bring to any society. It facilitates a 'constitutional patriotism', which can provide the cement of social cohesion.

As regards the access of foreign residents to citizenship, the Council of Europe is convinced that their active participation in the life of the local community contributes to the development of its prosperity, and improves their social integration. One aspect of a policy promoting their participation, albeit a particularly important one, is the right of all those legally resident in the municipality or region to participate in local and regional elections.

Legal migration raises the issue of naturalisation of migrants. In this context, the European Convention on Nationality (1997) commits signatory states to provide for the naturalisation of persons lawfully and habitually resident on their territory, with a maximum ten-year threshold before a nationality application can be made. This need not require the abrogation of the nationality of the country of origin. The right of foreign children to acquire the nationality of the country where they were born and reside may further encourage and stimulate their integration.

[17] *Thlimmenos v. Greece*, judgment of 6 April 2000 (Grand Chamber), para. 44

The interculturalist approach sees the acquisition of nationality and an associated civic allegiance to democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law in the country of arrival as a positive *desideratum* in the management of cultural diversity. We are now, however, living in an era which lends support to a concept of plural citizenship embracing European and even global dimensions. The concept of a transcendent 'European-ness', founded on a *ius humanitatis,* defines a normative conception which is based on individual human dignity, rather than national specificities, and embraces a sense of our common humanity and common destiny.

The Committee of Ministers has expressed its concern at growing levels of political and civic apathy and lack of confidence in democratic institutions, and a growing threat of racism and xenophobia. Yet there have been mixed trends in Europe. Strong levels of social trust and engagement in civil society organisations, to be observed in a number of member states, have been linked to a system of democratic governance, with impartial public authority buttressed by the rule of law, which promotes participation. There is thus a symbiotic relationship between intercultural dialogue in the public sphere and democratic renewal. By contributing to social trust and enhancing the participation of otherwise marginalised members of minority communities, intercultural dialogue can make democracy more meaningful to the citizen.

The Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level urges that such participation be enhanced. But care is needed on the part of those in authority to avoid the temptation to look only to first-generation, male minority leaders as convenient interlocutors. It is important to recognise the diversity and social relationships within minority communities themselves, and to involve particularly young people.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Resource Centre for Attention to Cultural Diversity in Education

The Centre (CREADE) in Madrid is a specialist institution that offers resources relating to interculturality and education. It provides a place for dialogue and reflection where educators and students can find reference works and educational material, ICT tools, bibliographies, research and other resources for educational action or social intervention from an intercultural perspective. Through its website, CREADE offers various systematized databases on bibliographies, documentaries, new technologies, directories, etc. The portal at ***www.mec.es/creade*** *is accessible in 13 languages.*

5.3 Learning and teaching intercultural competences

The competences necessary for intercultural dialogue—citizenship competence, plurilingual competence, social commitment, a solidarity-based outlook and multiperspectivity—are not automatically acquired: they need to be learned, and then maintained. The role of parents and the wider family environment in this respect is very important; these actors need to be involved fully in changing mentalities and perceptions.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

National Centre on the History of Immigration

The 'Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'immigration' (CNHI) in Paris collects exhibits, organises scientific research and runs training programmes for teachers and students, with the aim of assisting the teaching of cultural diversity in France. ***www.histoire-immigration.fr***

The school has no monopoly on knowledge, but its role has risen in enabling the student to find and assess knowledge, as much as, if not more than, in transmitting facts. What can, and must, be inculcated in each succeeding generation is democratic culture. The school must also address social challenges previously left outside its doors and recognise that children and young people are now the subject of rights. The school must prepare pupils for lifelong learning, develop their capacity for political socialisation and provide practice in human rights and democracy. The school must teach methodology as well as knowledge and understanding. It must also be fully conscious of the fact that knowledge without understanding may be counterproductive and dangerous. It must

develop as a learning organisation itself and be open to communities and the social environment.

A more socially oriented school will not only have more room within the curriculum for the social world but will make space for practical projects which engage pupils with it, and with each other. Experiential learning is also critical in terms of representation of young people within the school, and the associated acquisition of the skills of democratic deliberation.

Within the formal curriculum, intercultural demands straddle all subjects. Education for democratic citizenship is not an optional extra or a distraction from the pedagogical task. But clearly most at stake are how we understand where we have come from, how we communicate with others and what moral value system we apply—in other words, history, citizenship, language acquisition and religion.[18] The Committee of Ministers addressed this in a recommendation on history teaching in 21st-century Europe (2001), where it stressed the need to develop in pupils the intellectual ability to analyse and interpret information critically and responsibly, through dialogue, through the search for historical evidence and through open debate based on multiperspectivity.

Language is often a barrier to conducting intercultural conversations. Here again the interculturalist approach offers a way out of dilemmas associated with other models. Unlike assimilation, it recognises the value of the languages used by members of minority communities. Unlike assimilation, it recognises the value, including in transcultural contexts, of the languages used by members of minority communities, including *vis-à-vis* family life or in communication with the country of origin. Yet, unlike multiculturalism, it sees it as essential that minority members acquire the language which predominates in the state, so that they can act as full citizens. This chimes with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which argues that lesser-spoken languages should be protected from the danger of eventual extinction as they contribute to the cultural wealth of Europe, and that use of such languages is an inalienable right. At the same time, it stresses the value of multilingualism and insists that the protection of languages which enjoy minority usage in a particular state should not be to the detriment of official languages and the need to learn them.

Religious education in an intercultural context makes available knowledge about *all* the world religions and their history, and enables the individual to make an informed choice as to whether to endorse any one of them themselves. This approach has also been taken by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.[20]

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

'The EuroIslam Project'

Since 2003, the European Students' Forum AEGEE has been organising this project fostering dialogue between religions and cultures, and providing information on religions and traditions. The project, which associates religious youth NGOs, is composed of international workshops, conferences, cultural events, exchange, research programmes and competitions. ***www.aegee.org*** *and* ***www.projects.aegee.org/euroislam/***

Informal and non-formal learning in out-of-school education, particularly in youth work activities, plays an equally prominent role in this context. The Council of Europe has urged member states to promote and

[18] The Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities underlined in a recent "Commentary on Education under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities" (adopted in March 2006) that the provisions on education were to be kept in mind 'in all planning and action in the area of intercultural education, which has the ambition to facilitate mutual understanding, contacts and interaction among different groups living within a society.'

[20] Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1720 on education and religion (2005); *Folgerø and Others v. Norway* [GC], no. 15472/02, 29 June 2007, § 84; ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, 2006, § II.2.b

recognise non-formal education and to encourage young people's commitment and contribution to the promotion of the values underpinning intercultural dialogue.

5.4 Creating spaces for intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue can appear threatening to some; promotion of intercultural dialogue, then, requires the engendering of non-threatening spaces for dialogue. Successful intercultural governance, at any level, is largely a matter of cultivating such spaces.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

The University as a Site of Citizenship

Queen's University Belfast provides a particularly poignant example of the link between institutional practice and the role of the university as a democratic actor in broader society. Over several years, Queen's University made very conscious efforts to make members of both major groups involved in longstanding conflict feel at home on campus and included in the university community. Queen's University pioneered some of the measures that afterwards played an important part in the peace process in Northern Ireland.
www.qub.ac.uk

Town planning is an obvious example: urban space can be organised in a 'single-minded' fashion or more 'open-minded' ways. The former include the conventional suburb, housing estate, industrial zone, car park or ring road. The latter embrace the busy square, the park, the lively street, the pavement café or the market. If single-minded areas favour an atomised, consumerist existence, open-minded places can bring diverse sections of society together and breed a sense of tolerance. It is critically important in this context that migrant populations do not find themselves, as so often, concentrated on soulless and stigmatised housing estates, remote from other city residents, experiencing only exclusion and alienation.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

'Strengthening the intercultural self-perception of the city'

This multi-layer project aiming at developing integration, participation and cultural diversity at municipal level has been developed since 2001 by the German city of Stuttgart. The programme has strong urban planning aspects, but also promotes integration at the workplace, intercultural education and language training, interreligious dialogue, culture and the arts. The city has been initiator of the 'Cities for local integration policy of migrants' network, and has received the UNESCO "Cities for Peace" Prize.
www.stuttgart.de/integrationspolitik

Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to mutual understanding and tolerance. Cultural creativity offers important potential for enhancing the respect of otherness. The arts are also a playground of contradiction and symbolic confrontation, allowing for individual expression, critical self-reflection and mediation. They thus naturally cross borders and connect and speak directly to people's emotions. Creative citizens, engaged in cultural activity, produce new spaces and potentials for dialogue.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

"Likeminds"

The theatre group "Likeminds" was born out of a co-operation of the [FRASCATI] Theatre and a drama group of young people from immigrant communities in Amsterdam. The group presented their first production in 2001. Since then, "Likeminds" has become an independent group, performing regularly on stage and providing theatre workshops in multicultural neighbourhoods.
www.likeminds.nl

Museums and heritage sites have the potential to challenge, in the name of a common humanity, selective narratives reflecting the historical dominance of one or other ethnic or national group, and to offer scope for mutual recognition by individuals from diverse backgrounds. Exploring Europe's cultural heritage can provide the backdrop to the plural European citizenship required in contemporary times.

Schools, youth clubs and youth activities in general are key sites for intercultural dialogue. For this to be true, however, children must be educated in integrated rather than segregated contexts and intercultural education must stimulate participation and discussion.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

TV and radio for intercultural dialogue

TV and radio companies throughout the Russian Federation broadcast in regional languages. The State Television and Radio Company (STRC) broadcasts programmes for instance in Bashkir, Tatar, Mari, Udmurt, Chuvash, Mordvin, Karelian, Veps, Avar, Dargin, Lezgi, Lak, Tabasaran, Evenk, Sakha, Ket, Samoyedic, Komi and Khanty. ***www.vgtrk.com***

The media present critical spaces for indirect dialogue. They can provide platforms for new and diverse perspectives with which their readers, viewers or listeners may not come into contact day to day. To do so, they must ensure their own workforces are diverse and trained to engage with diversity. The new media allow the members of otherwise passive media audiences to participate in mediated intercultural dialogue, particularly via web-based forums and 'wiki' collaborations.

Sport is an important potential arena for intercultural dialogue, which connects it directly to everyday (if male-dominated) life. But football in particular, as a universal game, has been the subject of many anti-racist initiatives in recent years, supported in a European context by UEFA, which has identified a 10-point plan and issued associated guidance to clubs. Playing together under impartial and universal rules and a governing notion of fair play can frame an intercultural experience.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

'Charter of Diversity'

Established in 2004 at the initiative of a French entrepreneur and signed by over forty large French enterprises, the Charter of Diversity commits its signatories to promoting access to employment for immigrant workers and the fight against discrimination in the working place, supporting equality of treatment of all workers. A steering committee representing entrepreneurs and public authorities was set up with a view to developing concrete measures to support this initiative.

The workplace should not be ignored as a site for intercultural dialogue. Diversity is a factor for innovation, as evidenced by the hubs of the knowledge economy such as Silicon Valley. Diverse workforces can spark fresh approaches via teamwork and employee participation. Tolerance has been found to be a significant factor in attracting the talent to develop the technology that is key to competitive success. Many minority members, however, are concentrated in low-paid and insecure jobs. Trade unions can play a critical role here, not only in improving conditions but also in offering sites for intercultural solidarity which can counter the potentially damaging effects of labour-market segmentation, which racist organisations may be keen to exploit.

EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

Religious communities providing spaces of dialogue

Among the many examples of interreligious dialogue proposed by religious communities and national governments, one could mention the initiative of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for a regular interreligious dialogue with Jewish and Muslim representatives, as well as their biannual 'national dialogue meeting' with Finnish Muslims.

The 'Shalav' programme of the Evangelical Church of Germany enables students of theology to spend one year at the Hebrew University (Jerusalem), studying with Israeli students and meeting Jewish and Palestinian families.

The Muslim Community of Lisbon organises regular visits to the Grand Mosque for students of different faiths.

The Holy See regularly associates the different faith groups to the work of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue.

The daily life of public services, non-governmental organisations and religious communities offers many occasions for intercultural dialogue, as against mere encounters. For example, health, youth and education services engage members of minority communities on a daily basis. Their staff must be competent, in terms of access to interpretation where required, and they must be trained so that such encounters become productive engagements. In health, for instance, maternity and mental health may be particularly sensitive areas. The recruitment of minority members in public services can add to the range of intercultural competences which may assist dealing with diverse service users, on a basis of mutuality and dignity.

5.5 Developing intercultural dialogue in international relations

It is clearly impossible to achieve what might be called 'interculturalism in one country'. While the task devolves down to the neighbourhood and to the street, it takes

place in a globalising environment in terms of physical migration, the media and the internet. Intercultural dialogue, then, must operate in an international context, particularly if it is to offer an alternative to the 'clash of civilisations'.

A key goal of intercultural dialogue in a European context is to develop a Europe-wide public sphere characterised by the same 'solidarity among strangers' on which the Council of Europe's member states rely for peaceful daily life. Europe has learned that its strength lies in the exercise of 'soft' power, not military might. Its marrying of unity and diversity provides an alternative model for globalisation.

Different member states and regions within Europe will, for historical reasons, have bilateral affinities with particular parts of the globe. Within Europe itself there will be trans-border connections which have an intercultural character, engaging local and regional authorities. Such connections can not only make minority members feel more 'at home' but also can enrich the wider society of which they are a part.

Internationally organised non-state actors play a key role in transnational intercultural dialogue—indeed, they may be innovators in the field. Such organisations have been working for a long time with the challenges of cultural diversity within their own ranks. They may also make network connections between communities that intergovernmental arrangements may not so easily secure.

A role emerges here for individuals too. Those who are used to living and working in an intercultural context, particularly those from migrant backgrounds, can make multiple connections across state boundaries. They can act as vectors of development, stimulating innovation and the cross-fertilisation of ideas. They graphically embody the notion of cultural identity as complex and contextual. A nuisance to those who would advocate assimilation or a tidy multiculturalism, they can be pioneers of intercultural dialogue.

This perspective privileges the transnational role the Council of Europe can play, including institutions like the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (the 'North-South Centre', Lisbon), the European Centre for Modern Languages (Graz) and the two European Youth Centres (Strasbourg and Budapest).

The Council of Europe acknowledges the importance of initiatives taken by other international institutions and highlights the value of the international partnerships which have developed between the Council of Europe and cognate organisations, including the European Union, the OSCE and UNESCO, as well as the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures. The Council of Europe contributes to the 'Alliance of Civilisations' launched by the United Nations Secretary General and sponsored by Spain and Turkey. The Council of Europe is also developing co-operation with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and some of its subsidiary organs and institutions.

6. Recommendations and commitments: the shared responsibility of the core actors

Promoting intercultural dialogue is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders. Only the active involvement of all in the five policy areas identified in the preceding chapter will allow us to benefit from our rich cultural heritage and presence. What can be done to motivate all stakeholders to engage themselves in intercultural dialogue? Based on its conception of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, based also on its longstanding experience, the Council of Europe can formulate the following general recommendations and guidelines, and develop its own commitments.[21]

To make the best use of its resources, the Council of Europe will take steps to mainstream intercultural dialogue throughout its programme of activities, associating to this task particularly the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. Promotion of intercultural dialogue may thus become a sustained priority area of the Council of Europe, complementing democracy, human rights and the rule of law, with which it is intimately linked.

Mainstreaming intercultural dialogue
The Council of Europe will (re)organise and further develop its policy processes with the aim of incorporating an intercultural dialogue perspective in all policies at all levels and at all stages.

In mainstreaming intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe will insist on the principle of non-discrimination—with its corollary, as required, of positive action. The Council of Europe will also ensure that gender equality is integral to all of its work in the arena of intercultural dialogue.

To advance intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe will seek to raise public awareness of the positive potential of 'living together as equals'. It will also disseminate concrete information, particularly examples of successful practice.

In parallel with a mainstreaming approach, and in order to solicit and support mainstreaming efforts at national and local levels, the Council of Europe will undertake a key study on the risks and costs of non-dialogue.

6.1 Developing the democratic governance of cultural diversity

For cultural diversity to thrive, democratic governance has to be developed at each level. A number of general recommendations, addressed primarily to national policy makers and other public authorities, can be formulated in this context.

➔ **Intercultural dialogue needs an institutional and legal framework of impartial authority, in line with the human rights standards of the Council of Europe and based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law.**

There must in particular be clear constitutional provisions and effective legislation against discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or

[21] In this chapter, major recommendations are highlighted by the "➔" symbol. Flagship commitments of the Council of Europe are highlighted by the Council of Europe logo.

other status. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has provided extensive and detailed guidance on the content of such legislation.[22]

As part of this, religion and state need to be separated effectively, to ensure that everyone has equal rights and responsibilities regardless of his or her thought, conscience or religion.

➔ **An inner coherence between the different policies that promote, or risk obstructing, intercultural dialogue must be ensured.**

One way to achieve this is by adopting a 'joined-up' approach crossing conventional departmental boundaries in the form of an interdepartmental committee, a special ministry of integration or a unit in the office of the Prime Minister. A 'National Integration Plan' can provide further coherence, endorsing the vision of an integrated society safeguarding the diversity of its members, setting down objectives which can be translated into programmes and which are open to public monitoring. Political leadership at the highest level is essential. Individual member states have responded to this challenge by locating responsibility in the office of the prime minister, setting up a special ministry for integration or having an existing department exercise lead responsibility across government. It is critical that civil society in general, and minority associations in particular, are fully and formally engaged.

➔ **Public authorities must ensure that the provision of services respects the legitimate claims of a culturally diverse population.**

This requirement, flowing from the principles of non-discrimination and equality, is particularly important in the areas of public security (police), health, youth, education, culture and heritage, housing, social support systems and access to the labour market. The systematic involvement of cultural minorities in the formulation of service delivery policies and the decisions on the allocation of resources, as well as the recruitment of individuals belonging to cultural minorities in the service delivery workforce, are important steps.

➔ **Public debate has to be marked by respect for cultural diversity**.

Public displays of racism, xenophobia and intolerance must be discouraged, rejected and sanctioned, irrespective of whether they originate with bearers of public office or civil society. Every form of stigmatisation of cultural minorities in public discourse needs to be excluded. The media can make a positive contribution to the fight against intolerance, especially where they foster a culture of understanding between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups in society. Media professionals should reflect on the problem of intolerance in the increasingly multicultural and multi-ethnic environment of the member states and on the measures which they might take to promote tolerance and understanding.

A particular responsibility falls on the shoulders of political leaders. Their stances influence public views on intercultural issues, potentially tempering or exacerbating tensions. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance has addressed these dangers and their translation into practice, and formulated a number of practical measures that can be taken to counter the use of racist and xenophobic political discourse.[23]

States need to have robust legislation to outlaw racist expression and members of the criminal justice system must be well trained to implement and uphold it. Independent national anti-

[22] ECRI General Policy Recommendation N°7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, 2002.
[23] 'Declaration on the use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse (March 2005)', **www.coe.int/T/E/Com/Files/Themes/racism/20050317_declaration.asp**

racist monitoring bodies should also be in place, to scrutinise the effectiveness of such legislation, conduct the relevant training and support victims of racist expression. ECRI also recommends that public financing be denied political parties that promote racism, for which the evolving definition of 'hate speech' provides the benchmark.

There is also clear potential here for action at the municipal level. Municipal leaders can do much by the exercise of civic leadership to ensure intercommunal peace.

➔ **Public authorities must take, where necessary, positive action in support of the access of persons belonging to cultural minorities to positions of responsibility within professional life, associations, politics and local and regional authorities.**

The principle that states must take adequate measures to promote full and effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those belonging to the majority should be recognised by all national constitutions, with the explicit proviso that such measures do not constitute impermissible discrimination.[24]

The Council of Europe is committed to supporting these steps. Action will be taken to disseminate the Council of Europe's legal standards, benchmarks and guidelines in new, attractive forms to relevant target groups such as public authorities and decision-makers directly involved in their daily work. This includes, for instance, the production of wide-circulation material on human rights in a multicultural society as well as manuals on 'hate speech' and on the wearing of religious symbols in public areas, providing guidance in the light of the European Convention of Human Rights. Such initiatives should also go further and aim at reaching a broader audience, in particular the young generation.

Facilitate access to the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights on intercultural dialogue
The Council of Europe will publish an in-depth review of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human rights pertaining to the Convention's articles dealing with issues relating to intercultural dialogue.

The Steering Committee for Human Rights will pursue its examination of a range of issues concerning respect for human rights in a multicultural society; this work may lead to the adoption of a Council of Europe policy text on this area. It will also examine the question of a further development of cultural rights.

Additionally, there needs to be more dialogue about intercultural dialogue, if the roles of the Council of Europe outlined in this document are to be fulfilled properly.

Turning the Council of Europe into a regular forum for intercultural dialogue
Through its programme of activities, the Council of Europe will organise the dialogue between member states, civil society–including representatives of cultural minorities–media and other stakeholders about the present state of intercultural dialogue and future action at international, national and local level.

The Council of Europe's programme of activities offers numerous possibilities for a sustained and intensified dialogue. Examples have been set by previous 'Intercultural Fora' organised by the Council of Europe[25], which have proved very helpful in providing important insights and

[24] Article 4 § 2 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities
[25] Sarajevo in 2003, Troina in 2004 and Bucharest in 2006

conclusions, many feeding into this White Paper. The next step could be to make this a more formal arrangement.

Another example is the planned conference with government experts and various stakeholders from civil society, such as journalists and members of religious communities; its aim is to tease out some of the difficult human rights issues raised in culturally diverse societies, in particular regarding questions of freedom of speech and freedom of religion.

In the field of cultural policies, the Council of Europe will develop its existing systems for standard setting and the documentation of examples of good practice, so as to encourage cultural policies facilitating access and encouraging participation by all social groups. The information and monitoring system 'Compendium on cultural policies' will continue to be updated and developed.[26] In addition, the Council of Europe will work closely with other European and international institutions to continue to enhance the gathering and analysis of systematic and credible data concerning the practice of intercultural dialogue in member states, and therefore be a primary source of such information.

6.2 Strengthening democratic citizenship and participation

Democratic citizenship and participation need an appropriate political and legal framework, a sustained educational effort—in all parts of formal education, but also in non-formal and informal settings—and practical arrangements conducive to the free exercise of civic rights and responsibilities. In this regard, the Council of Europe is able to make the following general recommendations.

First, democracy depends on the active involvement of the individual in public affairs. Exclusion of cultural minorities from the life of the community cannot be justified and would indeed constitute a serious obstacle to intercultural dialogue.

➔ **Public authorities and all social forces must develop the necessary governance structures, educational initiatives and practical arrangements to involve majorities and minorities in a common framework of dialogue.**

Institutionalised, sustainable forms of dialogue—e.g. the consultative bodies to represent members of cultural minorities *vis-à-vis* public authorities and 'local integration committees' as advocated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities[27]—can make significant contributions.

Given the universal character of human rights, of which minority rights—*inter alia* cultural, linguistic and participatory rights—are an integral part, it is of utmost importance to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by everyone.

➔ **No undue restriction must be placed on the exercise of human rights, including by non-citizens.**

[26] The "Compendium" has specific entries under cultural diversity policy and intercultural dialogue, and more broadly provides a Europe-wide resource for benchmarking and innovation on the part of governmental and non-governmental actors alike. **www.culturalpolicies.net**

[27] Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, *Local Consultative Bodies for Foreign Residents: Handbook* (Strasbourg: CLRAE, 2003)

This consideration has been particularly emphasised by the Venice Commission.[28] Members of minorities in particular must be able to enjoy the freedoms of expression, of assembly and association and of religion at every level.

Insofar as democratic citizenship is limited by the status of a national citizen, public authorities should establish arrangements for the acquisition of legal citizenship which are governed by an ethos of hospitality, in line with the principles enshrined in the European Convention on Nationality.

➔ **The right to vote in local and regional elections, provided by a number of member states already, allowing all those legally resident in their jurisdiction to participate in this type of elections, is a form of quasi-citizenship at local level and an important bridge to integration.**

All member states are enjoined also to implement this section of the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.

Democratic citizenship and participation is frequently exercised through civil society organisations:

➔ **Public authorities must support effectively the work of civil society organisations promoting participation and democratic citizenship, particularly those representing or working with youth and cultural minorities.**

It is important to recognise and enhance the role played by associations and groups of citizens as key partners in developing and sustaining a culture of participation and as a driving force in the practical application of democratic principles. Civil society organisations must be enabled to play their particularly important role in multicultural societies, be it as service providers attending to the needs of persons belonging to a specific cultural group, as advocates of diversity and the rights of minorities, or as vehicles of social integration and cohesion. In the arena of intercultural dialogue, representatives of specific cultural groups and intercultural associations are critical interlocutors.

The development of a national integration plan, the design and delivery of projects and programmes, and their subsequent evaluation are tasks in which such associations can be and should feel centrally involved. Participation of individuals from minority backgrounds in the activities of civil society organisations should be systematically encouraged.

➔ **Local government particularly is strongly encouraged to develop initiatives in order to strengthen civic involvement and participation.**

Local authorities have a critical role to play in intercultural dialogue. A proven good practice here is a municipal integration or 'foreigners' council, offering a mechanism for minority representatives to engage with the local political leadership. This has the big advantage that issues, which could otherwise become the source of huge cultural conflicts, can be turned into practical problems, which can be resolved with the necessary resources and good will, via committees or working groups. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities has provided detailed guidance on how such advisory bodies should operate.

[28] European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), Report on non-citizens and minority rights, CDL-AD(2007)001, ad §144

The Council of Europe is convinced that effective democracy and good governance at all levels are essential for preventing conflicts, promoting stability, facilitating economic and social progress. This requires the active involvement of citizens and civil society. Member states must maintain and develop effective, transparent and accountable democratic institutions, responsive to the needs and aspirations of all. Developing attitudes of citizenship and participation must be an essential purpose of education at all levels. With this aim in mind, the Council of Europe will take steps at European level to develop democratic citizenship and participation.

A Europe-wide campaign in favour of participation and against discrimination
The Council of Europe will launch in 2008 a Europe-wide awareness-raising campaign, promoting participation and fighting discrimination in all its forms.

The new campaign will build upon the 'All Different, All Equal' youth campaigns, but will target the wider public. It will address the various forms of discrimination inhibiting citizenship and participation, including discrimination based on ethnicity, minority status, religious affiliation, gender and sexual orientation. The campaign will be one of the specific contributions of the Council of Europe to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), proclaimed by the European Union. In the context of the campaign, the Council of Europe will also develop a new concept for supporting civil society organisations in their efforts to promote intercultural dialogue. One option to be considered is the setting up of a special fund for financial support of civil society action in this area.

6.3 Learning and teaching intercultural competences

The learning and teaching of intercultural competence is an important aspect of the acquisition of key competences for democratic culture and social cohesion. Providing an inclusive quality education for all is a way to promote the active involvement and civic commitment of everyone, and to prevent educational disadvantage. This policy approach can be translated into a number of basic recommendations and guidelines, addressed to public authorities and institutions of formal education, but also to civil society—including minority and youth organisations—the media, social and cultural partners and religious communities engaged in non-formal or informal education.

➔ **Public authorities and all education providers should make the development of intercultural dialogue and understanding a main objective of education at all levels.**

Intercultural competences should be a full part of citizenship and human rights education. Competent public authorities and education institutions should make full use of the descriptors of key competences for intercultural communication in designing and implementing curricula and study programmes at all levels of education. Complementary tools should be developed to encourage students to reflect critically on their own responses and attitudes to experiences of other cultures. All students should be given the opportunity to develop their plurilingual competence. Intercultural learning and practice need to be introduced in the initial and in-service training of teachers. School and family-based exchanges should be made a regular feature of the curriculum of secondary school pupils.

Human rights education, learning for active citizenship and intercultural dialogue can greatly benefit from a wealth of existing support material, including 'Compass', a manual on human rights education with young people provided by the Council of Europe.

Knowledge of the past is essential to understanding today's society. History teaching needs to reflect the exigencies of intercultural dialogue:

➔ **Educational establishments and all other stakeholders engaged in educational activities should ensure that the learning and teaching of history focus not only on the history of one's own country, but include learning the history of other countries and cultures, as well as discovering how others have looked at our own society.**

Competent public authorities and education institutions are invited to prepare and observe an annual 'Remembrance Day', drawing on the Council of Europe's project on 'Teaching remembrance—Education for prevention of crimes against humanity'.

Another important aim is to instil in young people an appreciation of the social and cultural diversity of Europe, encompassing its recent immigrant communities as well as those whose European roots extend through centuries.

➔ **An appreciation of our diverse cultural background should include knowledge and understanding of the main religions present in Europe and of the role of religion in society, i.e. an awareness of religious facts.**

In addition, understanding and appreciation of different expressions of creativity, which might take the form of artefacts, symbols, texts, objects, dress and food should be incorporated into the processes of learning about one another. Music, art and dance can be powerful tools for intercultural education.

Competent public authorities should furthermore ensure that formal rules and requirements facilitate intercultural exchanges:

➔ **Visa and other regulations and public policies—including, where relevant, work and residence permits for academic staff, artists and performers—must be designed so as to promote intercultural dialogue through educational and cultural exchanges at all appropriate levels.**

The Council of Europe itself is particularly strongly committed to the transmission of intercultural competences through education.

The Council of Europe aims to become the leading European organisation for the teaching and learning of intercultural competences.
To attain this goal, the Council of Europe will promote the definition, development, dissemination and transmission of intercultural competences, and develop related initiatives in the field of language policies.

As regards formal education, the Council of Europe will develop a framework of reference describing competences for intercultural communication and intercultural literacy and will compile a Guide to Good Practice covering a range of educational experiences at all levels. The Organisation will work to make the promotion of democratic culture and intercultural dialogue a key component of the European Higher Education Area in its further development after 2010. The Council of Europe Resource Centre on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Intercultural Education, which is being set up in Oslo, will strongly focus on transmitting intercultural competences to educators. Through 'Schools for Intercultural Dialogue', the

Council of Europe will provide training opportunities that complement and transcend training offered at national level, drawing on the strengths and experience of the 49 States party to the European Cultural Convention.

The current project 'The image of the Other in history teaching' will be further developed.
The project scope will be broadened particularly through co-operation with UNESCO, ALECSO and the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA).

In particular, the Council of Europe will continue to develop instruments to improve and strengthen intercultural dialogue and social cohesion in Europe by introducing policies, strategies and methods in history teaching based on multiperspectivity, cultural diversity, mutual respect and tolerance.

As regards language policies for intercultural dialogue, the Council of Europe will provide assistance and recommendations to competent authorities in reviewing their education policies for all languages in the education system and produce consultative guidelines and tools for describing common European standards of language competence.

Other initiatives will be taken in the areas of art teaching and the teaching of religious facts, as part of a programme to promote intercultural education and dialogue through developing common references for the management of culturally diverse classrooms as well as support for the integration of intercultural education in educational programmes.

In terms of non-formal and informal education, the Council of Europe will pursue its efforts to support the activities of civil society organisations—particularly youth organisations—aimed at responding to cultural diversity in a positive and creative way. The training courses for multipliers on European citizenship and human rights education activities, conducted in the framework of the 'Youth Partnership' with the European Commission, will be expanded. New opportunities for training in intercultural competences will be offered particularly to civil society organisations, religious communities and journalists. The Council of Europe will continue its action in favour of media literacy for human rights and democracy.

These activities will be complemented by cultural and heritage initiatives. When considering all its field activities, the Council of Europe will place increased emphasis on the notion of intercultural understanding. Through its involvement in Heritage Days, special events and exhibitions, in its assistance programmes to policy makers and involvement in networks and with cultural and educational organisations, the Council of Europe will promote the aim of broadening intercultural understanding.

6.4 Creating spaces for intercultural dialogue

Creating spaces for intercultural dialogue is a collective task. Without appropriate, accessible and attractive spaces, intercultural dialogue will just not happen, let alone prosper. In this regard, the Council of Europe can again make a number of recommendations.

Spaces of dialogue need to be created and expanded in all spheres of life. Just as intercultural dialogue has many stakeholders, there are also an unlimited number of possibilities for creating such spaces:

➔ **Public authorities and all social actors are invited to develop the infinite potential for intercultural dialogue as an everyday exercise of physical spaces like streets, markets, houses, schools and universities, cultural and social centres, youth clubs, churches, synagogues and mosques, company meeting rooms and workplaces, museums, libraries and other leisure facilities.**

Public authorities are responsible for organising civic life and urban space in such a way that no ethnic, religious or cultural ghettos develop, and opportunities for dialogue proliferate. Physical places and the built environment are a strategic element of social life. Particular attention needs to be given to the design and management of public spaces, like parks, civic squares, airports and train stations and other spaces of gathering. Urban planners are encouraged to create 'open towns' with sufficient public space for encounters. Such spaces, ideally constructed with an open mind—planned for a variety of uses, that is—can help generate a shared sense of place, a civic sense of space, cultivating an intercultural commitment.

Other spaces for intercultural dialogue are socially constructed and transient:

➔ **Civil society organisations and religious communities in particular are invited to provide the organisational framework for intercultural and interreligious encounters. The private sector and the social partners should ensure that the cultural diversity of the workforce does not generate conflicts, but leads to creative synergies and complementarity.**

The media play a crucial role in shaping our perception of diversity. They can help build attitudes conducive to intercultural dialogue, tolerance and social cohesion:

➔ **Responsible journalism, promoted especially through codes of ethics as advanced within the media industry itself and a culture-sensitive training of journalists, will provide new, attractive spaces for intercultural dialogue accessible to the public. Media organisations are invited to adopt a voluntary policy promoting minorities in the staffing of media organisations, in order to reflect society's diverse composition.**

The Council of Europe sees this as the responsibility not only of public broadcasters, but also of the media in general. The entire media spectrum is needed to engender the vibrancy on which minority voices and intercultural dialogue depend. All media must be encouraged to examine how they can promote a culture of tolerance.

➔ **Public authorities and non-state actors are encouraged to promote culture, the arts and heritage, which provide particularly important spaces of dialogue.**

The cultural heritage, 'classical' cultural activities, contemporary art forms, popular and street culture, the culture transmitted by the media and the internet quite naturally cross borders and connect cultures. Art and culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, where they can act as mediators. Wide participation in cultural and artistic activities should be encouraged by all stakeholders. Cultural activities can play a key role in transforming a territory into a shared public space, and in working against the trend towards segregated social life.

The Council of Europe is committed to supporting these steps with several flagship initiatives. New and larger spaces for intercultural dialogue must be opened particularly in the media, which to a large extent shape the perception of a multicultural reality.

Council of Europe Media Award for Intercultural Dialogue
The Council of Europe will recognise through an annual award the media which have made an outstanding contribution to conflict prevention or resolution, understanding and dialogue and set up a web-based information network on the contribution of the media to intercultural dialogue

In the area of mass media policy, another main initiative will be a forum to address the rights and responsibilities of the media and the working conditions of journalists in times of crisis.

Cultural diversity in urban areas will be another priority theme of the Council of Europe. Successful cities—and societies—of the future will be intercultural. They will be capable of managing and exploring the potential of their cultural diversity, to stimulate creativity and innovation and thus to generate economic prosperity, community cohesion and a better quality of life.

Promoting 'intercultural cities'
The Council of Europe will launch in 2008 a programme to assist cities to excel as spaces of intercultural dialogue, through peer review and the exchange of good practice on governance, media, mediation and cultural policy.

The project will study successful experiences in the areas of municipal governance, public debate and the role of local media, mediation and cultural policy. The project is a capacity-building and policy development programme.

The Council of Europe will furthermore develop a new initiative to address the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue.

Addressing the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue
In 2008, the Council of Europe will organise a first exchange of views between religious communities, civil society organisations and public authorities active in the field of intercultural dialogue.

The purpose of this exchange of views will neither be theological debate nor inter-confessional dialogue, but closer co-operation for the benefit of everyone in full respect of the specific responsibilities of all concerned. The Council of Europe will also ensure that atheist, agnostic and sceptical currents are represented. If successful, the dialogue may be made an annual event.

6.5 Developing intercultural dialogue in international relations

International institutions and organisations play a fundamental role indeed in the promotion of intercultural dialogue. However, most other stakeholders of intercultural dialogue can make important contributions in this dimension too.

➔ **Local and regional authorities should engage in co-operation with partner institutions in other parts of Europe, particularly as developed under the Madrid Convention, which is an essential component of good neighbourliness between states and can help to strengthen democracy and democratic stability in Europe.**

They can organise regular and institutionalised consultations with the competent authorities of neighbouring states on matters of common interest, jointly determine solutions, identify legal and practical obstacles to transfrontier and interterritorial co-operation and take appropriate remedial action. They can develop different types of training, including language training, for those involved locally in transfrontier and interterritorial co-operation.

➔ **Civil society organisations and religious communities should contribute to intercultural dialogue in an international context, e.g. through participation in European non-governmental structures, cross-border partnership arrangements and international mobility and exchange schemes particularly for young people, or through the simple distribution of information on Europe and other world regions.**

It is the responsibility of international institutions like the Council of Europe to support civil society in this task.

➔ **The media are encouraged to develop arrangements for sharing, at the regional, national or European level, programme material which has proven its value in mobilising public opinion against the evils of intolerance or in contributing towards promoting community relations in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies.**

The Council of Europe will actively promote international co-operation with other organisations active in the field of intercultural dialogue. Our partners include the United Nations (particularly UNESCO and the 'Alliance of Civilizations' initiative), the OSCE, the European Union and the 'Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures'. The Council of Europe attaches a specific importance to co-operation with other regional organisations, such as the Arab League and its educational, cultural and scientific organisation, ALECSO, representing a neighbouring world region with many ties to Europe and a distinct cultural tradition. Projects of tangible co-operation with all these institutions will continue and expand. The Council of Europe is open to closer co-operation with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and its appropriate subsidiary organs and institutions.

The regional focus of this co-operation will be the interaction between Europe and its neighbouring regions, specifically the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia.

Enlarging and invigorating the 'Faro Open Platform'
The Council of Europe will—in consultation with UNESCO—take initiatives to enlarge the 'Faro Open Platform' for the co-ordination of intercultural dialogue action between international institutions, and to render it fully operational.

In forthcoming months, the Council of Europe will take new initiatives to bring about a closer co-operation among these and new partners. One of the instruments is the 'Faro Open Platform', which the Council of Europe established together with UNESCO in 2005 in order to promote inter-institutional co-operation in the area of intercultural dialogue.

Other priority activities in this context include the following:

- The European Union has designated 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The Council of Europe will provide specific contributions to the Union's activity programme and to a dynamic debate about long-term policy perspectives for intercultural dialogue.

- The Council of Europe will also strengthen its support for the 'European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity' (the 'North-South Centre'), which is uniquely placed to take forward intercultural dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions.

- 'Artists for Dialogue' is the title of a new cultural and heritage programme that will be launched in 2008 to enhance the practice of intercultural dialogue among artists, cultural actors and operators including the Mediterranean region.

- The Venice Commission will continue its outreach to other regions which share the basic principles of the Council of Europe. The co-operation of the Venice Commission with constitutional courts and equivalent bodies in Africa, Asia and the Americas, and with Arab countries, is an exemplary form of intercultural dialogue.

- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is set to continue its work with partners in the Mediterranean region, particularly in the framework of Israel-Palestine collaboration and the co-operation with Arab cities on issues such as tourism, good governance at local level and questions related to migration.

7. Outlook

The Council of Europe presents this White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which reflects both the results and suggestions emanating from a wide consultation process conducted in early 2007 as well as its own experience and the *acquis* gathered during the almost 60 years of the existence of the Organisation, as a contribution to the international discussion which is steadily gaining momentum.

The challenge of living together amid growing cultural diversity has become one of the major demands of our times and is set to remain so in the century ahead.

Against this background, it would be futile to regard this White Paper as providing definitive answers to ever-changing questions. This document is rather an attempt to mark the state of development that the conceptual reflections of the major stakeholders have reached by now, to denote the common ground on which most of them can agree, and to chart the way ahead for the medium-term future.

The publication of the White Paper, therefore, is one step on a longer way. Its conclusions and recommendations need to be monitored, and adapted if necessary, in dialogue with the other stakeholders. The practical commitments presented here—committing the Council of Europe as an intergovernmental institution to a number of programme initiatives—need to be implemented and evaluated.

The Council of Europe invites all other stakeholders to continue what has sometimes been described as the 'White Paper process', which began some months ago and brought the Council of Europe into contact with countless partners, from international institutions to civil society organisations, religious leaders, journalists, academic experts and committed grass-roots activists.

All our partners are encouraged to use the available channels of communication to continue advising the Council of Europe which course to steer in terms of intercultural dialogue, to suggest programmes and projects, and to alert the Organisation to social developments that may endanger cultural diversity, obstruct the exercise of human rights, jeopardise democracy or run counter to the rule of law.

Strasbourg, December 2007