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## THE MAINSTREAMING OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE, OSCE AND UNESCO

### ABSTRACT

*The paper intends to contribute useful information facilitating interaction of this specific research project with other present and future initiatives in the field of intercultural dialogue. The contribution contains a brief repertory and evaluation of the recent initiatives taken in the area of intercultural dialogue by UNESCO, OSCE and the Council of Europe. As regards CoE, intercultural dialogue has become increasingly an essential tool for an effective respect of human rights, strengthening of social cohesion, with particular attention to vulnerable groups. The CoE is preparing a «White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue». Intercultural dialogue has also become one of the major component in all UNESCO activities dealing with cultural pluralism, intercultural education and diversity. Under the UNESCO's strategic objective 8, a specific set of activities are deemed to help promoting intercultural dialogue. In an attempt to give cultural rights more universal recognition, UNESCO adopted the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. OSCE activities specifically devoted to intercultural dialogue are mainly concentrated, in addition to OSCE field operations, in the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media, the High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The papers highlights three common denominators in the mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue of CoE, UNESCO and OSCE: an increased focus of their activities on the topic, including those apparently not closely related to intercultural dialogue, an improvement of internal and external coordination, an attempt to involve all sectors of society in their activities. The paper concludes that it is very difficult for international organisations to counter a situation where tensions across cultures have spread beyond the political level into*

*the hearts and minds of individuals: any action to favour intercultural dialogue will bear fruit only if it will come up with concrete solutions that can be put into practice in favour of these individuals.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Promoting intercultural dialogue has been a priority for most international organisations for quite some time and recent developments have only underlined its importance, bringing a new emphasis on the subject. This paper would like to provide a brief repertory and evaluation of recent initiatives in the area of intercultural dialogue, taken by a chosen number of international organisations, other than EU institutions<sup>1</sup>. This contribution intends, therefore, to provide useful information facilitating interaction between this specific research project and other similar initiatives in the field of intercultural dialogue. Taking into account the complexity and the multidisciplinary nature of the topic, the paper reports also of a number of activities apparently not closely related to intercultural dialogue, but which have a clear relevance on its promotion and strengthening, such as activities related to promotion of human rights, inter-religious dialogue, conflict prevention and social cohesion.

While pertinent activities of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will be listed and briefly reviewed, a particular focus will be given to intercultural dialogue initiatives of the Council of Europe (CoE), which is a privileged institutional partner of the European Union.

## 2. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The Council of Europe (CoE) is the oldest European political organisation, which, set up in 1949, works to promote democracy, human rights and rule of law in its 46 member states. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges continent-wide. In this general CoE remit, intercultural dialogue has become an essential tool for participatory democracy and strengthening of social cohesion, with particular attention to

vulnerable groups. It could be said that all CoE activities promoting intercultural dialogue are set to ensure the equal dignity of everybody, based on the principles of universality and indivisibility of human rights.

### 2.1. *Repertory of Activities*

Before examining the content and the novelty of recent initiatives in the field of intercultural dialogue, it is to be noted that virtually all components of CoE contributed and contributes to cooperation and reduction of tensions among its member states, in particular through its:

- *Legal instruments*, which set up and monitor human rights and cultural standards for the interaction between majority and minority, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The European Cultural Convention is also an essential legal instrument establishing a valid framework for the inter-governmental cooperation of all countries in Europe dealing with intercultural dialogue<sup>2</sup>;

- *The case law of the European Court of Human Rights*, which has dealt in many occasions with the weighing of competing interests, such as the exercise of the right to respect for freedom to communicate ideas and the right to respect for freedom of religion<sup>3</sup>;

- *The reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)*, examining phenomena of racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance in the CoE member states and containing specific recommendations for solving these problems. One of the major challenges ECRI has been confronted with is how to strike the right balance between the repression of racist discourse and the respect for the right to freedom of expression<sup>4</sup>;

- *The recommendations of the Committee of Ministers* addressed to member states are also relevant contribution, such as Recommendation R(97)21 on «the Media and promotion of a culture of tolerance» which offers examples of practices conducive to the promotion of a culture of tolerance and thus meriting more general application in the various media sectors<sup>5</sup>.

Intercultural dialogue has undoubtedly deserved the attention also of the Parliamentary Assembly, which has made an important contribution to the process of drafting the general strategy of the

Council of Europe in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, now incorporated in the decisions taken by the Third Summit of the Council of Europe<sup>6</sup>.

There are also a number of distinct activities of clear relevance to inter-religious dialogue, such as the initiatives of the Commissioner for Human Rights, who is mandated to promote education, awareness and respect for human rights standards, as embodied in the above-mentioned CoE human rights instruments<sup>7</sup>.

Concerning activities more specifically related to intercultural dialogue, the CoE began in 2002 its «Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention Project» to help policy-makers (at local, regional, and national levels), civil society and all who play a part in culture to devise a policy of dialogue which respects every aspect of cultural diversity. One of the many outcome of this specific project, which ended in 2006, is the collection of data on projects undertaken within the European Cultural Convention countries at the local, regional and national levels, by public authorities or civil society. The data collected were published within the framework of the «Compendium» project<sup>8</sup>.

More recently, the urgent need to provide adequate tools to deal with cultural diversity in a more comprehensive way has prompted the CoE to give a renovated political impetus to and a better coordination of its activities in this area. This is the reason why in May 2005, intercultural dialogue was set as a main priority of the organisation in the Third Summit of the Heads of State in Warsaw, Poland<sup>9</sup>. One of the organisation's aim is now to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue not only for a better understanding among cultures, but also cohesion and stability in the European societies, on the basis of the principle of accepting others with their differences (i.e. the equal dignity of everybody) and the principle of freedom of expression<sup>10</sup>. Following the Warsaw Summit, important initiatives were taken, such as:

- in October 2005, the European Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs met in Faro, Portugal, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the European Cultural Convention and adopted the CoE strategy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. This «Faro Strategy» clearly spells out the main features of CoE action for intercultural dialogue, detailing its political basis and aims («vision»), lines of action («action»), and instruments, already existing and new ones, of its policy («instruments»)<sup>11</sup>;

- in late 2005, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe appointed a coordinator for intercultural dialogue<sup>12</sup>;
- in April 2006, the Committee of Ministers of the CoE agreed to prepare a «White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue», which will be ready in autumn 2007<sup>13</sup>;
- in September 2006, the CoE, at the initiative of the Russian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, organised an international conference on «Dialogue of Cultures and Interfaith Cooperation», in Nizhniy Novgorod, Russian Federation. The conference was an occasion to debate the religious dimensions of intercultural dialogue in a country, Russia, which is the host of probably the most various cultural, spiritual and ethnical mosaics of all CoE member states<sup>14</sup>;
- in November 2006, a conference on «Local Authorities and Religions, Strategies to Consolidate Inter-Religious Dialogue» was organised in Montchanin (France) by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, to stress that local authorities has to take the difficult step to establishing a dialogue between communities in respect of cultural and religious identities.

All these activities are linked to the above-mentioned action plan, adopted at the Third Summit, inviting the CoE to build a more human and inclusive Europe. In particular, the «White Paper» will be an important tool to better define the role of the CoE and its specific contribution in the field of intercultural dialogue. A close look at the preparation phase of this «White Paper» and its working methods indicates a transversal approach aiming at ensuring mutual reinforcement and close coordination with other relevant on-going activities of the CoE in similar areas. In other words, the aim is to adopt a horizontal priority for intercultural dialogue in all policies and activities of the organisation and not to relegate, or delegate it exclusively to the cultural field. Moreover, the working methods for the preparation of the «White Paper» pledge for the most open and inclusive approach also externally to the CoE, so as to enable all relevant CoE partners to contribute effectively to the elaboration of the document.

As regards to *coordination with other international organisations*, in line with the «Faro Strategy» the following steps have been taken by the CoE so far.

Bilateral agreements were concluded with the Arab League

Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue Between Culture<sup>15</sup>.

The «Faro Platform»<sup>16</sup> was agreed in October 2005 between the CoE and UNESCO in order to step up cooperation in the area of intercultural dialogue between the two organisations, as well as with the aim of associating to the platform other international organisations and the civil society.

Intercultural dialogue is also included among the four priority areas of cooperation<sup>17</sup> between the CoE and OSCE, in the context of promotion of tolerance. This cooperation is particularly intense between CoE-ECRI and OSCE-ODHIR. The preparation of the Council of Europe «White Paper» on intercultural dialogue could be an opportunity for enhanced cooperation between the CoE and the OSCE in this area.

Last but not least, the CoE has firmly pledged its intention to contribute actively to the «alliance of civilisations» initiative of the SG of the United Nations<sup>18</sup> as well as to the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue 2008 proposed by the European Commission<sup>19</sup>.

### 3. UNESCO

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the oldest specialised agency of the United Nations founded in November 1945, sees education, social and natural science, culture and communication as the means to a far more ambitious goal: «to build peace in the minds of men»<sup>20</sup>. In this context, the promotion of intercultural dialogue is one of the most pressing concerns of the organisation. Similarly to CoE and OSCE, intercultural dialogue has inevitably become one of the major components in all UNESCO activities dealing with cultural pluralism, intercultural education and diversity. UNESCO is greatly concerned about the emergence of new contemporary challenges and threats to humankind, thus making the need for dialogue among peoples ever more important. Therefore, one of the UNESCO's chief missions is to ensure space for and freedom of expression to all the world's cultures. Moreover, globalisation highlights the need to redefine a set of policies based on cultural diversity and its safeguarding.

### 3.1. *Repertory of Activities*

Under the UNESCO's strategic objective 8 (Safeguarding cultural diversity and encouraging dialogue among cultures and civilisations) a specific set of activities are deemed to help promoting intercultural dialogue. In this field, UNESCO aims to improve knowledge of the relationship between cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the context of globalisation. To that end a better grasp of traditional mechanisms for the transmission and exchange of knowledge is needed. UNESCO relevant activities in this field are the following.

*The intercultural Routes project*, which includes the Silk Roads, Faith Roads, Iron Roads and Slave Routes, aimed at enabling new curricula to be developed and the skills of decision-makers to be strengthened. Throughout history, peoples have exchanged cultural experience, ideas, values and goods through art, trade and migrations. These encounters, in which individual travellers or communities have conveyed their ideas and customs across continents and oceans, are the peculiarity of these series of UNESCO projects<sup>21</sup>.

*The promotion of interfaith* (rather than inter-religious) *dialogue* is a «flagship activity» of the current UNESCO work programme. This is seen as dialogue between leaders of different religions, faiths and convictions with a view to increasing mutual knowledge about spiritual traditions and their underlying values.

Further to the adoption of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in November 2001, the General Assembly of the United Nations has proclaimed 21 May, as «World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development». The Day is intended to provide individuals and groups world-wide with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the values of cultural diversity and to learn how to «live together» better<sup>22</sup>.

UNESCO also uses intercultural and interfaith dialogue tools in the field of *post-conflict mediation*. Examples of this activity are the following.

*Its programme on intercultural mediation in the Balkans*, which is described as a project that «aspires to create the conditions for a better acknowledgement of the plurality of cultural traditions and for a more peaceful cohabitation amongst communities in a zone that has suffered from conflicts»<sup>23</sup>. Among the different dimensions

of the project, it is worth mentioning the development of a UNESCO chair for intercultural and inter-ethnic studies in the Balkans. The final objective is to foster the emergence of a cultural identity, which will integrate the variety of cultural traditions present in this region.

The development of the Sarajevo Museum of Contemporary Art is another project of assistance in the Balkan area aiming to develop the proper environment for arts and creativity, in a spirit of freedom and intercultural dialogue. In the case of Sarajevo, the project has aimed to unite the different communities towards the construction of a common future, and so giving the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina an important role as a cultural crossroad<sup>24</sup>.

A data-base listing more than 700 best practices in urban harmony has now been drawn up on the basis of a «Cities for Peace» network. The «culture in the neighbourhood» is another relevant project highlighting the attempt of intercultural dialogue in the urban environment, based on partnerships between African and European countries, and placing emphasis on the social integration and participation of the inhabitants.

Last but not least, in an attempt to give cultural rights more universal recognition, UNESCO adopted in 2005 an international legal instrument on cultural diversity, in the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions consolidates the conviction that intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity are among the surest guarantees of peace. The Convention lists as one of its objectives the encouragement of «dialogue among cultures with a view to ensuring wider and balanced cultural exchanges in the world in favour of intercultural respect and a culture of peace»<sup>25</sup>.

#### 4. OSCE

OSCE is the world's largest regional security organisation. The geographic makeup of OSCE, connecting states from both sides of the Atlantic shores up to all the former Soviet Union republics, its wide-ranging mandate and the activities of its institutions and missions in different areas, give to this organisation a privileged ability to deal with common challenges. From this perspective, the

OSCE is working to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue throughout its 56 participating states. While these subjects are pivotal to the success of much of OSCE's work in the field of security and confidence building, its activities specifically devoted to dialogue are mainly concentrated in three OSCE internal institutions : the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media; the High Commissioner on National Minorities; and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). However, it should not be forgotten that OSCE field operations are the primary tools for promoting OSCE policy and norms relevant to intercultural dialogue.

#### *4.1. Repertory of Activities*

##### *4.1.1. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM)<sup>26</sup>*

The function of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), which was established in 1997, is to observe relevant media developments in OSCE participating states and to advocate and promote full compliance with OSCE relevant standards on freedom of expression and free media. In both cases, the activities revolve around monitoring and reporting potential or actual breaches of media freedom. In this respect, the Representative assumes an early warning function when OSCE participating states fail to comply with principles and commitments of the organisation. In addition to the «early warning functions», the RFOM implements a number of educational activities in cooperation with OSCE field operations aimed at promoting media reform, supporting drafting of legislation and capacity building for journalists and media outlets.

##### *4.1.2. High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)<sup>27</sup>*

The High Commissioner's task, which was established in 1992, is to provide early solutions concerning tensions involving national minority issues which have the potential to develop into conflict within the OSCE area. His reports are independent and confidential. This important condition allows him to operate freely and to retain the confidence of governments or others who might be the subject of his concerns.

To help him to address tensions, the HCNM has developed a series of recommendations addressing an important precondition to pave

the way for multiculturalism, namely how to eliminate or at least reduce tensions between groups in multi-ethnic states. It is a well-known fact that ethnic differences are compounded by religious and cultural differences. The mandate of HCNM is therefore quite relevant in promoting and facilitating intercultural dialogue.

#### 4.1.3. *Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)*<sup>28</sup>

ODIHR is the specialised institution of OSCE dealing with human rights and democratisation, including the promotion of democratic election processes.

Since 1990, the OSCE has enhanced its commitments to combat racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and related intolerance, including intolerance manifested against Muslims. In 2004, the ODIHR established a programme dedicated to tolerance and non-discrimination. This programme is currently developing a system to manage the information received from the participating states, civil society and intergovernmental organisations. To this purpose a web site was launched to share information collected<sup>29</sup>. ODIHR has established also an «Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion or Belief»<sup>30</sup> of eminent experts from throughout the OSCE region, to act as an advisory and consultative body to promote freedom of religion belief, highlighting issues or trends and suggesting ODIHR action to advance religious freedom. The present 59 members of the advisory panel are available to participating states and to OSCE field missions. Activities and projects include legislative reviews for governments and monitoring cases of violations of OSCE commitments pertaining to freedom of religion or belief. The panel is quite open to cooperate with OSCE partner organisations in the field of religious freedom. Good examples of such cooperation are a number of legislative expertises, which were conducted jointly with the Council of Europe Venice Commission<sup>31</sup> and the publication of *Guidelines for Review of Legislation Pertaining to Religion or Belief*<sup>2</sup>.

#### 4.1.4. *OSCE Field Operations*<sup>33</sup>

The 17 field operations, which are based throughout South-East and East Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, are the OSCE privileged tool to promote the organisation's common norms, principles and commitments and assisting participating states in their implementation. It goes therefore that field operations

implement also activities related to promotion of interfaith and intercultural dialogue. For example the OSCE presence in Albania has contributed to the creation of a «South-East Europe Inter-Religious Network». Religious tolerance is also the main focus of OSCE field activities in Georgia and in Kazakhstan.

## 5. EVALUATION

As seen in the «repertory» parts, the activities, which have been implemented in the past few years to promote dialogue and interaction between different cultures, as well as religions, are a tangible evidence of the effort put into the cause of intercultural dialogue by the three organisations in question. There are undoubtedly common denominators in the mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue of CoE, UNESCO and OSCE such as: a) an increased focus of their activities on the topic, including those apparently not closely related to intercultural dialogue; b) an improvement of internal and external coordination in order to create additional synergies; c) the attempt to involve all sectors of society in their activities, especially civil society and the most outcast groups. Concerning the later, a general trend seems to be the call for the NGO's active involvement in the planning and implementation of activities at the grassroots level. This is to ensure that mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue could be instrumental to long-lasting and durable process, extending its achievements beyond the short span of any single campaign or programme. There seems to be also a general consensus among these organisations not to be involved in any sort of direct or even indirect support of the theory of the «clash of civilisations». On the contrary, they all seem to concur with the positive message brought by the UNSG initiative of «alliance of civilisations». Moreover, the three organisations have had a similar attitude in refuting any interpretations of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at the expenses of the exercise of fundamental human rights standards such as the right to respect for freedom of expression. At the same time, representatives of all three organisations have underlined in numerous occasions that all freedoms, such as the exercise of the right for freedom to communicate ideas, are not absolute and carry responsibilities. A brief analysis of the peculiarities of each organisation in their respective intercultural activities follows hereto.

## 6. COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The CoE, because of its long-standing expertise in the sphere of human rights standards setting (e.g. the ECHR and its Strasbourg-based court) and promotion of democratic dialogue (e.g. through the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities), has a number of peculiar strengths to make its intercultural dialogue's efforts closer to the ultimate beneficiaries: the 800 millions of individuals living in Europe. In order not to lose these CoE potentialities, and in the long run CoE credibility in this field, a coherent strategy bringing increased internal coordination and avoiding overlapping is needed. Therefore, the nomination of a coordinator for intercultural dialogue and the forthcoming completion of the «White Paper» on intercultural dialogue are highly important initiatives. In particular, it is hoped that the «White Paper» could become an instrument for reflection and action, useful not only to the Council of Europe but to all those who contribute at the European and international level to the development of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

A special praise must be attributed to the efforts made in the implementation of the «Faro Strategy» to increase cooperation with external partners, including not only other international organisations such as EU, UN, OSCE, but also regional bodies such as the Arab League and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation. In this context, some critical voices asked why the CoE action should be extended to neighbouring regions rather than concentrate on developing «intra-European dialogue» within European societies<sup>34</sup>. Another remark concerns the risk that too wide linkages between intercultural dialogue, conflict prevention and inter-religious dialogue could make impossible the achievement by the organisation of clearly targeted objectives in this field. Therefore, it seems important for the CoE to combine flexibility and openness, with a well-structured set of parameters to favour the achievement of measurable results. Mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue should bring an increased involvement of all sectors and activities of the CoE, including its prominent political work, in order to get away from the misgiving and restrictive interpretation of intercultural dialogue as a field mainly related to the cultural work of the organisation. At the same time, the CoE strong cultural, educational and youth profile, and expertise continue to be an

invaluable contribution to the (multi)cultural dimension of intercultural dialogue.

In any case, mainstreaming of intercultural dialogue cannot be achieved only with an increased internal or external coordination. If more resources cannot be made available to support additional activities, at least no further pruning of the budget of the CoE should be allowed. While it is true that CoE «Policies promoting the management of cultural diversity in democratic societies through intercultural dialogue can utilize the specific strengths»<sup>35</sup> of the organisation's institutions, the same institutions should be provided with the necessary means to run their ordinary work. As alarmingly reported by one of the member of Parliamentary Assembly «The credibility of the CoE's continuing work in several fields is already strained: with further cuts it cannot reasonably be maintained»<sup>36</sup>.

#### 7. UNESCO

A strong point in favour of UNESCO action in the field of multicultural dialogue is its world remit in the area of culture, compared to the one of the CoE, which is limited to the European level. Moreover, the organisation enjoys a privileged place within the United Nations system in spreading the values of education, tolerance, respect for all human life, and respect for each other's differences. However, UNESCO does not seem to have the corresponding weight at universal level that the CoE machinery and standards on human rights have in Europe. UNESCO has, however, facilitated important synergies for the advancement of intercultural dialogue, such as the establishment of its «Chairs» network, enabling the academic world to contribute with researches and studies in the area of multiculturalism<sup>37</sup>. In this context, UNESCO plays a vital and constructive role in bringing together different players such as academia, decision-makers, NGOs and other stakeholders. Moreover, UNESCO campaigns in general, and in the field of multiculturalism in particular, are widespread, amply covered by the media and their message is understood and positively received by the large public.

## 8. OSCE

The OSCE activities implemented by the institutions, which are mentioned in the «repertory» part, are certainly efficient tools to foster multicultural and inter-religious dialogue (interfaith dialogue is the term used by OSCE). This is particularly true in «conflict-ridden» areas where OSCE missions are successfully operating. OSCE fields operations have an undoubted ability in providing the necessary means in terms of local and international experts, logistic and short-term funds to support the OSCE central institutions, such as ODHIR, in grass-root activities, targeting NGOs, youth and vulnerable groups, in particular women and children. Fostering multiculturalism and interfaith dialogue is seen by OSCE a way to promote tolerance and non-discrimination and, eventually a key element for fostering a comprehensive security and lasting stability within and among its participating states, as well as neighbouring regions. If a weakness is to be found in this impressive OSCE action, it could be a certain insufficient cohesion among the different structures, mechanisms and tools of the organisation, which are involved in this work. To say it with OSCE words for further concrete contributions «it will be important to seek harmony and mutual reinforcement in the work and public expression of the OSCE Chairmanship, Personal representatives, institutions and Secretariat»<sup>38</sup>.

## 9. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it should be asked whether the increased efforts by CoE, UNESCO and OSCE have brought an «added value» in the progress of multiculturalism between and within nations: to say the least, there is great room for improvement. Certainly, international organisations, used to address institutional problems and to deal with institutions rather than with individuals, are now faced with the enormous challenge to counter a situation where «tensions across cultures have spread beyond the political level into the hearts and minds of populations»<sup>39</sup>, the parts of population least reachable directly by international organisations. «This disturbing phenomenon must be addressed pragmatically»<sup>40</sup>: thus, any action aiming to favour intercultural dialogue will bear fruit only if it will come up

with concrete solutions that can be put into practice, eventually making all individuals feel partakers of universal, but not yet universally accepted and understood, values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, gender equality, diversity tolerance and rejection of discrimination based on ethnic origin or religion. Promoting and disseminating these «*minima moralia*» is undoubtedly «a huge and complex task»<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> For an overview of the EU activities in the area of intercultural dialogue see the contribution of Professor Marco Mascia, *The European Union «Dialogues» Strategy as an Effective Way Towards a World Order Based on Human Rights»* of this same publication.

<sup>2</sup> See at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/018.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> Against the backdrop of the recent controversy over the caricatures of Mohammed, it is to be noted that the Court has recently delivered a judgment in the *I.A. v. Turkey* case, which concerned the conviction of a publisher of a novel which the Turkish courts had held to be insulting to Islam. The European Court concluded that there had been no violation of Article 10 (freedom of expression) with 4 votes to 3.

<sup>4</sup> For a review of the ECRI activities related to this topic see ECRI Expert Seminar on combating racism while respecting freedom of expression, organised in Strasbourg on 16-17 November 2006; see at [www.coe.int/t/e/human\\_rights/ecri/](http://www.coe.int/t/e/human_rights/ecri/).

<sup>5</sup> Recommendation (97)21E, 30 October 1997.

<sup>6</sup> A report on the «need of new steps in the field of intercultural and interconfessional dialogue» is under preparation by the Committee on Culture of the Parliamentary Assembly.

<sup>7</sup> The Commissioner organised in February 2006 in the Russian Federation a seminar on «Dialogue, Tolerance, Education: The Concerted Action of the CoE and Religious Communities» where it was proposed the setting up at the CoE of an institute for the teaching of religious facts. See CoE Document CommDH(2006)3.

<sup>8</sup> The «Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe» at [www.culturalpolicies.net/](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/) is a Europe-wide information and monitoring system on cultural policy measures, instruments, debates and cultural trends. It is a joint venture between the Council of Europe and ERICarts realised with a community of independent cultural policy researchers, NGOs and governments.

<sup>9</sup> See Document CM(2005) 80 final, Chapter III, Building a More Humane and Inclusive Europe, Section 6.

<sup>10</sup> The Steering Committee on the Media (CDMC) is considering a proposal to have an information exchange network in the area of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

<sup>11</sup> See Document CM(2005) 164 («Faro Declaration»).

<sup>12</sup> This function has been entrusted to Ms. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of DG IV of the CoE.

<sup>13</sup> Additional information on the CoE initiative to prepare the «White Paper», can be found in CoE Document CM(2006) 44, *Guidelines for the Drawing-Up of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue*.

<sup>14</sup> *The Religious Dimensions of Intercultural Dialogue* speech presented at the conference by Thomas Hammamberg, the CoE Commissioner for Human Rights is available at [www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Source/Novgorodspeechsept06-final.doc](http://www.coe.int/t/commissioner/Source/Novgorodspeechsept06-final.doc).

<sup>15</sup> For an overview of the cooperation between the CoE and the South Mediterranean countries see the Parliamentary Assembly document Doc. 9934 at <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Documents/WorkingDocs/Doc03/EDOC9934.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> See at [www.coe.int/T/DG4/CulturalConvention/source/Faro\\_Platform\\_EN.pdf](http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/CulturalConvention/source/Faro_Platform_EN.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Namely: fight against terrorism; protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; trafficking in human beings; tolerance and non-discrimination.

<sup>18</sup> The call for an «alliance of civilisations» was initiated in mid 2005 by Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain, and co-sponsored by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey. A trust fund was set up to finance the initiative. A high-level group of eminent persons to guide the initiative was later formed by the UN SG. The group presented a report with recommendations and a practical plan of action in November 2006. See at [www.unaoc.org](http://www.unaoc.org).

<sup>19</sup> See at [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/events/current/dialogue2008\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/events/current/dialogue2008_en.htm).

<sup>20</sup> For a selection of themes related to culture fields see at <http://portal.unesco.org/culture>.

<sup>21</sup> For more information on the Slave Route project, its achievements and the new phase of the project see at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001465/146546e.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> In 2006 the year's celebration was hosted by the government of El Salvador in collaboration with other Central American countries.

<sup>23</sup> The project is implemented in cooperation with the UNESCO Office of Sarajevo and is funded by Italy.

<sup>24</sup> It is interesting to note that the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the laboratory of many intercultural programmes and events. In 2004 it was named the first Intercultural City of the Council of Europe.

<sup>25</sup> Article 1(c).

<sup>26</sup> See more information at [www.osce.org/fom/](http://www.osce.org/fom/).

<sup>27</sup> See more information at [www.osce.org/hcnm/](http://www.osce.org/hcnm/).

<sup>28</sup> See more information at [www.osce.org/odihr/](http://www.osce.org/odihr/).

<sup>29</sup> See more information at <http://tnd.odihr.pl/>.

<sup>30</sup> See more information at [www.osce.org/odihr/item\\_2\\_17959.html](http://www.osce.org/odihr/item_2_17959.html).

<sup>31</sup> Comments on the Draft Law on Churches and Religious Organisations of the Republic of Serbia available at [http://venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL-AD\(2006\)024-e.asp](http://venice.coe.int/docs/2006/CDL-AD(2006)024-e.asp).

<sup>32</sup> See the document at [www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/09/3714\\_en.pdf](http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2004/09/3714_en.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> For a complete list of OSCE field operations see at [www.osce.org/about/13510.html](http://www.osce.org/about/13510.html).

<sup>34</sup> *Council of Europe - European Union: A Sole Ambition for the European Continent*, report by Jean-Claude Juncker, Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, p. 22, see at [http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/DocListingSession\\_E.asp?selCriteres=session&Session=2006-2](http://assembly.coe.int/ASP/Doc/DocListingSession_E.asp?selCriteres=session&Session=2006-2).

<sup>35</sup> Document CM (2006) 56 final, *Progress Report on the CoE's Activities for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue: Implementation of the Faro Strategy*.

<sup>36</sup> Parliamentary Assembly Doc. 10971, *Follow Up to the Third Summit: Priority for Cultural Cooperation*, Report Committee on Culture Science and Education, Rapporteur Mr Lluís Maria de Puig, Spain, Socialist Group.

<sup>37</sup> In this framework, it should be mentioned the recent signature in March 2006 of an agreement launching the network «UNESCO Chairs of Interreligious Dialogue for Intercultural Understanding».

<sup>38</sup> OSCE Contribution to the Alliance of Civilisations Initiative, Vienna, OSCE, 2006, p. 34.

<sup>39</sup> *Report of the High Level Group of the UNSG Alliance of Civilization Initiative*, New York, United Nations, 2006, p. 25.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>41</sup> See the «Juncker Report», p. 22.