

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

The wide ranging and rich results of the research project present an active and applied reflection on and contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. They call upon European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, to play a full part in managing their diversity, enriched and strained by the multi-faced process of globalisation. They invite the EU to commit an ambitious and ongoing policy in favour of intercultural dialogue. They engage the academic world to an action-oriented and innovative research approach in the relation between intercultural dialogue and citizenship.

### NEW MOMENTUM FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Although the issue of intercultural dialogue is neither a new nor unexplored phenomenon it seems to have gained a new momentum in recent decade. The intensified debate on dialogue of cultures and peoples including European initiatives, research and discussion fora has been triggered by a number of recent developments.

Events of 11 September 2001 and subsequent bomb attacks in Madrid and London and their consequences not only in high politics domain but also resulting in the tensions and occurrence of mutual distrust between the Christian and Islamic communities, have called for the intensification of dialogue into institutionalised forms of policy-making, not only on the global scale but also within the EU.

In the European Union context those trends are taking place at the time of two enlargements and the reflection period following the unsuccessful ratification of the Constitutional Treaty. The 2004 and the 2007 enlargements have added pressure on the question of internal coherence and convergence of the EU not only in economic terms but also in widely understood socio-cultural terms, by intensifying the hitherto existing cultural diversity within the EU. Accommodating the socio-cultural diversity of member states as well as the collective identities of various groups, provides a formidable challenge to policy-makers, implementing authorities and the law of courts. The future of the EU very much depends on the building up of a sustainable democratic public sphere based on increased civic participation, solidarity and inclusiveness and is to be achieved through increased openness and transparency of EU action and by civil society dialogue and debate.

All these mutually reinforcing trends together bring about the situation in which intercultural dialogue is much an internal and external issue of the EU and calls not only for upholding the democratic principles enshrined in the treaties but also for new efforts that could make the present and future EU better adjusted to the current and new challenges. Thus the strategy for the Union is not only that of developing new instruments for securing better the basic democratic principles of the EU but also of those aimed at reinforcing existing initiatives related to the issues interlinked with multifaceted cultural diversity.

With the recent enlargements, the EU represents an even greater richness of cultural, social and linguistic diversity. In such a context, the recognition of shared values such as freedom, democracy and tolerance appears more and more important in the conduct of internal relations between various societies and communities within the EU context. Intercultural dialogue therefore becomes a necessary tool to avoid negative results of cultural pluralism the Europeans are encountering within and beyond the EU borders. While assuming that intercultural dialogue is one of the major instruments the EU must undertake to meet the challenges it is facing now, it seems to be rational to recommend some preliminary steps of comprehension.

First of all, we must make a perhaps trivial statement: intercultural dialogue is a very complex issue, comprising political, anthropological and psychological aspects. Geography must be also

taken into consideration, because it makes us to distinguish between intra-European dialogue (i.e. the relation between different cultures and their compatibility) from dialogue Europe run within its foreign policy *vis-à-vis* different cultures and political systems. Accepting such a wide interpretation we will avoid any ready-made solutions and simple prescriptions. It implies an extended analysis of intercultural dialogue with an internal and external dimension and enables the EU to be a civil actor endowed with soft power within the world system.

Secondly, it is beyond of doubt the concept of intercultural dialogue must be situated within a political context which introduces it as a major issue in the contemporary debate taking place in Europe. A clarification of the context can help us to approach the essence of intercultural dialogue and define its opportunities and challenges.

Thirdly, intercultural dialogue is strongly linked with both the practical use of such terms as identity, citizenship and democracy and their implementation in structures such as the dialogues' framework and the inclusive city. They are both the fundamental values and conditions for effective and sustainable intercultural dialogue.

#### CONCLUSIVE PREMISES

The subject of intercultural dialogue is multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary by nature and affects many themes and issues in our European societies. The current decade has witnessed a growing enlargement of the European Union and an increasing diversity in an era of opportunities and challenges. The EU represents more than ever an immense richness of cultural, social and linguistic diversity. In such a context, the shared values that hold together our societies, such as freedom, fairness, democracy, human rights, rule of law, tolerance and solidarity, become crucial for Europe's future.

The redefinition of citizenship as a plural concept is an essential part of the intercultural discourse, in view of opening new horizons and ways for the practice of participatory and deliberative democracy at local, national, European and international level. In this context new roles are offered to civil society organisations and movements as well as to cities and local government institutions.

Within the multi- and interdisciplinary perspective of the research project, the human rights paradigm is assumed as the basic point of departure for authentic intercultural dialogue at all levels. This implies the need to complement traditional rights with new subjects such as new citizenship, inclusion, local and international democracy, shared responsibility for common goods, etc. It should be put at the core of both the research and political agenda.

The general guidelines of an organic EU strategy in the field of intercultural dialogue should therefore be:

- to explore the political core of the phenomenology of intercultural dialogue in a space that starts from the city and extends to international institutions, involving state, intergovernmental and global civil society actors;
- to promote and benefit from the active role of civil society organisations and movements within and beyond national borders;
- to promote and foster inclusive policies that cities carry out in the framework of multi-level and supra-national governance.

Specifically the conclusive premises for identifying the role of intercultural dialogue for (new and plural) citizenship in Europe should be:

- the prior goal of intercultural dialogue is to motivate individuals and groups of different cultures to share universal values by doing together;
- intercultural dialogue is a prerequisite for social cohesion, human security and peace at internal and international level;
- institutions have the task to create a suitable ground for doing together, i.e. providing the same citizenship rights to all;
- the concept of (active) citizenship is strictly linked to democracy and to the different dimensions of the practice of democracy from the local level up to the international institutions;
- the EU has the responsibility to make the European space a real space of interculturality;
- the natural environment for intercultural dialogue is the city and an inclusive city should provide the ground for its achievement;
- political participation is a fundamental feature of both the inclusive city and inclusive Europe;
- action-oriented education is necessary to achieve civil and political awareness on the road to peace.

I. HUMAN RIGHTS PARADIGM: THE BASIC POINT OF DEPARTURE  
FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

During the 2002 Jean Monnet Conference «Globalisation and Intercultural Dialogue» in Brussels, it was widely accepted that human rights as recognised in the pertinent international legal instruments, are at the core of any suitable approach to intercultural dialogue. It was also emphasized that the international law of human rights has extended its «constitutional space» from inside the nation-state to the entire world.

In this multi- and inter-disciplinary perspective, the human rights paradigm is assumed as a powerful trans-cultural facilitator to move from the (increasingly) conflicting stage of multi-culturality to the dialogic stage of inter-culturality. To this end it is necessary to complement traditional items of the research agenda in re, such as cultural rights (i.e. right to education, right to identity, religious freedom), minority rights, the right to self-determination, criminal law, immigration, asylum, religious freedom, with new subjects such as:

- how to build up and develop «new citizenship» concepts and practice;
- «inclusion» as a prerequisite for social cohesion;
- what makes or enhances legitimacy, participation and laicality of public institutions;
- how to improve local democracy;
- how to develop international democracy;
- how to promote awareness of shared responsibility for common good(s);
- the political relevance of the inter-religious dialogue.

Needless to say that such a universal human rights approach to intercultural dialogue also requires a European policy interpretation:

- public policies are absolutely necessary to pursue the strategic goal of the «inclusion» of all individuals and groups living in the EU. A European dialogue strategy is an effective way towards a world order based on human rights. Moreover, the principle of subsidiarity could work as a guide principle in «dialogues decision-making» and in the implementation of «dialogue policies»;
- a major coordination with the other European institutions

engaged in this field, in particular with the Council of Europe and the OECD, is desirable. A fruitful way to favour the efficiency of the human rights in the world is to give major focus and continuity to partnerships with other regions in the world and to strengthen the support to the UN;

– the European Union should give the example of how to apply, first of all within its territorial and institutional space, the universal human rights into its internal and external policies. The challenge is to make the European space, marked by a process of increasing multiculturalisation, a real yard for interculturality and a policy environment responsible to the appeal of shared responsibilities in the globalised world.

## 2. KEY CONCEPTS AND THEIR POLICY IMPACT ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

### 2.1. *Intercultural Dialogue and Identity*

Intercultural dialogue requires an open attitude towards «the other», wanting to listen to them to induce comprehension. However many people are still afraid that intercultural exchanges result in a loss of identity: the openness can create insecurity. So, to overcome the perception of «the other» as potential threat it is necessary to build the sense of belonging as close as possible to the citizen, to create small and local communities where «the other» can become an accepted neighbour. Subsequently, a spill-over effect can support building up of identities not defined in negative way as opposed to something, but characterised as belonging to a group differentiated but sharing basic set of common values and interests.

It should be clear that the prior goal of intercultural dialogue is not integration or assimilation of individuals and groups of different cultures, but an incentive to share universal values by/for «doing together». Political participation and laicality are fundamental features of inclusiveness at all levels; they may give rise to a new civic identity, referring to the European-constitutional motto «united in diversity». In short, the EU model can form the model framework for unity in diversity within and outside the Union, in particular with its Neighbours, so that a common «sense of citizenship» based on shared responsibility for the achievement of the common good, can

be elaborated through joint decision-making and joint implementation of shared policies. Moreover, such a conceived civic transcend identity is perfectly consistent with the inner ratio of the city, which is «territory», but not «border».

Therefore following policy conclusions are proposed:

- the policy of local authorities should encourage and provide the material base for building up of local communities of civic society and supported with the subsidiarity principle;

- the integration and participation of citizens in urban context should be encouraged and supported with the exploitation of accessible Community programmes but also with greater involvement of local/regional authorities and actors of the territorial multi-level governance system;

- citizens' participation should be promoted locally where the basic needs are met to create the sense of community between those sharing basic interests. A dialoguing element should not only be stressed in the areas related to education and culture but in all areas where the common interest in basic community needs may turn into common purpose, thus creating an integrating societal factor by setting common purposes beyond ethnic, mental and cultural borders within local communities;

- there exist more potential fora for intercultural dialogue than those usually associated with interculturalism and dialogue. In the case of infrastructure projects the integration of local communities' stakeholders in debates over the common good may lead to intercultural «learning by doing». This potential should be reinforced horizontally among Community action programmes beyond these administered by DG Education and Culture because they may create added value of promoting intercultural dialogue, tolerance and solidarity exactly where it should happen, i.e. at regional and local level and in daily life on the streets;

- the cross-border cooperation programmes and programmes addressed to the third countries with participation of EU member states should take into account the intercultural element while providing for transfer of knowledge and best practices in the fields not necessarily directly linked to culture, education, media or social policy issues. The sharing of common goals offers the first steps to communicate with others, while working together may lead to increased understanding and mutual respect and trust;

- a focus on education to intercultural dialogue is fundamental

for sustainable results. However, the coherence between school education aimed at intercultural dialogue and home education which sometimes propagates opposite attitudes *vis-à-vis* «the others». It seems that stronger involvement of families with schools could result in peaceful coexistence, building up the environment for shaping open identities and inclusive societies.

## 2.2. *Intercultural Dialogue and Citizenship: Universal Basis, European Dimension and Plural Character*

The European integration process is striving to build an ever closer Union between the peoples of Europe. The idea and institution of European citizenship should therefore be the framework in which the European peoples identify themselves as the European demos, living in a broad cultural space and belonging to a large and differentiated polity.

Universal citizenship is the grant provided by the «new» international law which is rooted in the United Nations Charter and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In virtue of this *ius novum universale*, all human beings are endowed the same legal statute in the world constitutional space.

The rationale of universal citizenship is to include all, i.e. *ad omnes includendos*. A new European citizenship, combining the post-national and multicultural form, appears as a model for democratic community where all citizens are treated equally, exhibiting universal rights as well as rights relevant to their group differences. Therefore, the European Union is required to quickly harmonise the present «EU citizenship» rationale with the correct citizenship rationale that stems from the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

European citizenship also means plural and active citizenship, being the core of any credible policing for intercultural dialogue. Its immediate implication is that all residents in a given territory, as human beings having the same legal status internationally recognised, should enjoy the same fundamental political, civil, economic, social, cultural rights and liberties. In this perspective, plural and active European citizenship is strictly linked to democracy in its different political, economic and social dimensions, in its various representative, participatory, deliberative forms and in its local, national and international expressions.

Therefore following policy recommendations are suggested:

- a new model of European citizenship is needed which includes universal and multicultural rights;
- european citizenship should be based not only on nationality, but also on legal residence. It means that legal long-term third-country nationals should be recognised as Union citizens;
- economically non-active citizens of the EU member states should enjoy free movement and residence right, which is not conditioned by possession of sufficient means for subsistence and health insurance;
- all transitional periods concerning free movement of workers for citizens of new member states of the EU should be abolished;
- a policy research on the relationship between the EU and its citizens, i.e. the development of a European citizenship, is required.

### *2.3. Intercultural Dialogue and Democracy: Major Challenges and Participatory Characteristics*

The challenge to current politics is a search for a coherent combination of all dimensions of democracy and, at the same time, an extension of democratic practices up to the international institutions: strengthening and democratising the United Nations should hopefully become a fundamental common goal for the actors in dialogue. It is assumed that an intensification of intercultural dialogue and a reinforcement of deliberative (discursive) democracy might contribute to the development of a new European policy of greater inclusiveness, rejecting a distinction between insiders and outsiders, and increasing a sense of belonging. Such a dialogue constitutes a solid basis for the European active citizenship, strengthens empowerment and contributes to the deepening of the European identity.

It is argued that intercultural dialogue may contribute to an intercultural society that brings a new and advanced type of democracy within the growing diversity of the European political, social and cultural space. Preconditions for such an intercultural dialogue are:

- acceptance of the human rights paradigm as a solid basis for mutual respect;
- an intensification of intercultural communication;
- recognition of cultural pluralism;

- greater citizens' participation;
- inclusive policies at all levels and within all sectors;
- development of a culture of dialogue and an education to intercultural dialogue.

Democracy needs intercultural dialogue for exploitation of its full potential as much as intercultural dialogue needs democratic practices. In accepting this mutually influencing interrelation between both phenomena, democracy can only benefit from the full potential of society if people are able to build a real inclusive community and if it is not limited to mere constitutional division of powers and majority rule. This implies some wide-ranging action orientation and sound reflection to favour a common environment for true and open intercultural dialogue:

- the creation of fora for debating the fundamental constitutive elements of democracy acceptable for all;
- a critical reflection on Europe's lengthy history of introducing and practicing democracy by focussing on its building stones;
- the recognition of various interpretations, trends and faces of Islam;
- the recognition that institutions alone cannot ensure justice and equality in the absence of generally shared values in the society;
- the policy conviction that common values are the minimum *minimorum* agreed for intercultural dialogue.

### 3. THE STRUCTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL SETTING FOR INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Important for the policy implementation of the key concepts of identity, citizenship and democracy are the structures for effective and sustainable intercultural dialogue. In the course of the research project focus was put on the institutional setting of the EU dialogues' framework and the inclusive city.

#### *3.1. The European Dialogues' Framework*

A relevant question concerns the EU policy for political dialogues, discussions, cooperation, and the human rights clause in treaties with third countries. The purpose of sharing a precise world

order model is missing in this approach. We should wonder whether the EU would be more credible, convincing and effective by endeavouring to discuss and share with its interlocutors a clear and coherent vision of world order as the platform on which to develop dialogues and discussions. Dialogues provide a clear framework for EU policy-making and would increase the democratic legitimacy that is needed to gain the vital support of the European civil society and public opinion.

Although intercultural dialogue has (still) not formally entered in the EU dialogues' agenda, it should unquestionably be included in the ongoing human rights dialogue and in the amplest political dialogue as an emergent issue. Needless to stress that democratic principles and the rule of law are part of the EU package for dialogues, discussions and partnerships with its neighbours as wells with countries and regions across the globe.

### *3.2. The Inclusive City*

Since the common good is the full realisation of the human personality and dignity the «inclusive city» should provide the ground for the achievement of this paramount goal for all those living in its territory. Cities may provide a favourable, attractive and creative environment for citizens' participation in (formal and informal) democratic processes of active citizenship. Furthermore, roads of dialogue interconnect cities through the creation of occasions and areas of interchange and encounters. Interconnecting cities can, as history has proven, create the environment for intercultural practice between people.

As a living laboratory for intercultural dialogue, the city is fully eligible to pretend a world order that would not counter or disrupt its sound institutional mission for inclusion of all its residents in integrative urban policies. In other words, the promotion of universal citizenship does strengthen the eligibility of cities and local governments to have a more visible place in the architecture and functioning of the world political system.

An exciting research task is to outline the identikit of the inclusive city and of the inclusive Europe. Significant indicators of the variable «inclusion» in cities should refer to:

- the adoption by the City Council of the European Charter of Human Rights in the city;

- the inclusion in the city statutes of a norm dealing with human rights, peace, development cooperation, with reference to the international law of human rights and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- the establishment of a specialising «human rights infrastructure» such as the ombudsperson;
- strategies to pursue «human security» objectives;
- policies and organised services for economic and social rights (e.g. housing, occupation, health, school, etc.);
- educational projects with schools, universities, NGOs, etc.;
- «round-tables» for intercultural and inter-religious dialogues;
- the right to vote to immigrants and infrastructures for participatory democracy;
- formal recognition and support for immigrants' associations;
- permanent intercultural tables to promote and guarantee laicality in (of) the city;
- *ad hoc* structures relating to gender issues;
- incentives for civil society projects;
- incentives for entrepreneurial initiatives by immigrants;
- participation in international organisations and transnational networks;
- artistic (music, theatre, cinema, etc.) festivals.

Indicators of the «inclusive Europe», taking into account the principle of subsidiarity, should include:

- a revision of the EU citizenship, in accordance with the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- a human security (and human rights) approach for the Chapter «Justice and Home Affairs»;
- a legislation on asylum and immigration in accordance with the international law of human rights;
- welfare policies for economic and social rights;
- a real and consistent commitment to contribute to build up a world order based on the UN Charter and the international law of human rights;
- larger and more substantive space for the role of civil society organisations and local institutions in various forms of dialogue and communication.

## CONCLUSIONS

Globalisation forces us to engage in real, sincere and full dialogue, based on mutual respect and mutual obligation among partners and rooted in a progressive development of the human person. Intercultural dialogue must therefore be developed from a basic code of values. This implies a human rights approach to citizenship *ad omnes includendos*, i.e. including all human beings as members of the human family in a large and multi-level space.

The role of principle and values in policy-making both internally within the EU and externally with our neighbours is crucial. It implies no separation between internal and external measures to achieve dialogue and practice democracy and solidarity along the path towards a common ownership of our common destiny. It also acknowledges the role of collective and individual morality in policy development, law-making, dialogue and participation. Europe as a leading promoter of dialogue involving governments and civil society should set the example for international and transnational democracy beyond the beaten tracks of national borders.

We need to adopt a model of maximum cohesion with necessary differentiation through the application in practice of procedural and substantive solidarity. The application of a new golden rule «do with others as we do among ourselves» is based on a community of shared values leading to the common good while respecting and promoting essential identities within an agreed upon framework for dialogue in order to produce jointly formulated guidelines. For the Mediterranean this requires a stronger multilateral framework in the form of a Framework Treaty. The horizon for active citizenship is the European and world space of internationally recognised human rights. The EU provides the evolutionary context and spatial horizon in which plural citizenship and inclusion practices can be implemented. Citizenship rights therefore must be exercised in a broader constitutional space, expressing both legitimization of decision-making and citizen's participation in the formation of a global civil society.

In this perspective the role of the city is very important in the promotion and dissemination of intercultural dialogue. They are often laboratories for experiencing intercultural dialogue and platforms for promoting universal citizenship and understanding world political system. True intercultural dialogue is therefore

considered both a policy aim and a method of participatory democracy.

In the context of Community action in the field of intercultural dialogue we encounter a striking paradox that underpins the question of intercultural dialogue on the EU level, namely the disparity between the EU responsibility for respect and preservation of cultural diversities and the limited scope of action left in the hands of the communities. With Article 151 excluding explicitly «any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States» the Community institutions can only adopt incentive measures and recommendations. Still with no regulatory framework accessible for the EU in the field of action aimed at facilitating intercultural exchanges the EU institutions provide some modest incentive and supportive measures for intercultural encounters within and outside the EU through a system of programmes administered mainly by Commission's DG Education and Culture.

At the same time, while bearing the responsibility for designing and execution of communities' and Union's policies, the EU institutions provide some discussion fora and channels for voicing various interests, including those of civil society. Increased scope of policy consultations with the civil society and number of new initiatives adopted recently seems to stress a more pro-active stance towards the current challenges of multiculturalism and diversity.

However, appropriate answers are needed to create linkage between democratisation-oriented action and widely understood promotion of intercultural dialogue, and to build a new, inclusive European public sphere. More efforts are needed locally and regionally; so perhaps more action should be addressed to and undertaken by local authorities and other sub-national actors so that the information and awareness raising campaign should reach those that deal with cultural diversity in daily encounters also outside the programmes which explicitly refer to interculturalism, dialogue, multilingualism, media or culture.

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue will be a test of responsiveness of local/regional/national communities to the Community action calling for increased understanding and visibility of intercultural dialogue. This implies activities and action-orientated research that view intercultural dialogue as part of daily life in the wider context of social dialogue and citizen action throughout Europe.

The EU must be prepared to open hearts and minds to all cultures and develop in the framework of secular democracy based on human rights, a values in policy-making approach: this implies real dialogue about values and dialogue with our neighbours, especially in the Mediterranean. It is a plea for a horizontal constitutionalism with the EU neighbours and requires courageous political leadership. With a dialogues' framework the EU can move to be a leading promoter of «intercultural dialogue» involving governments and civil society, ensuring that human rights are accorded a central place in the building of a new inclusive European polity. Finally, the action-oriented research outcome, which contains general and specific policy recommendations as well as good practices, offers valuable contributions to the content of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008.