

CONCLUSIONS

The Team «Intercultural Dialogue and Democracy» proposes a number of general and specific policy recommendations to favour the elaboration of a more inclusive European society with greater citizens involvement in European intercultural dialogue.

As an interdisciplinary and international research group we are aware that the problems are complex and should not be simplified for the sake of recommending easy solutions. Intercultural dialogue and the creation of civic space are part of possible answers but need to be understood and placed within the broad context of changing European societies, emerging innovative concepts and general societal trends and developments.

I. GENERAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning identity-building/identification and shaping European identity:

- focus on practices that can stimulate identity-shaping as a historical process of self-definition:
 - a. resorting or going back to one's own roots and traditions (respect for cultural diversity);
 - b. listening to the self expression of people;
 - c. taking account of the dynamic and open dimension of identity-building.

CONCLUSIONS

Concerning intercultural dialogue defined as a deliberative democratic process:

- need for encouragement system, stimulating multiple forms of dialogue and communication to ensure that all kinds of people have their real say;
- creating connections between personal experience and public issues;
- providing ways for people to perceive themselves as actors and to be real actors – creating opportunities of transfer of the dialogues' outcomes to be heard and implemented by other bodies –, actors of the public sphere.

Concerning pluralism and (European) identity:

- recognition that Europe's identity is defined as a multi-layered historical mix: no European identity is possible without taking into account the historical and cultural roots of Europe (i.e. the Greek, Roman and Christian heritage).

Concerning communication:

- intercultural dialogue is a hermeneutic process with a focus on formal and informal communication;
- intercultural dialogue is experienced in daily practices within multicultural Europe;
- role of schools, family, (street) encounters in intercultural dialogue;
- verbal and non-verbal communication: face-to-face dialogue, importance of perception, willingness to dialogue;
- need of (physical) places for encounter and meeting (e.g. markets, squares, public spaces, etc.).

Concerning integration, inclusion and dialogue:

- a two way process based on a framework of basic values (i.e. a shared community of values: based on the human rights paradigm) in which equal opportunity, cultural diversity and mutual tolerance are respected.

Concerning context:

- creation of the pre-conditions for intercultural dialogue: self-government (principle of subsidiarity), administrative competences, economic factors, financing, transport, accessibility and mobility, built and non-built environment, cultural offer, etc.).

CONCLUSIONS

Concerning education:

- importance of formal and non-formal learning (i.e. regular teaching curricula, training of educators, story telling, collective memory, literature and travel): to get to know the other;
- intercultural dialogue is «learning to live together», a vehicle for conviviality in which cultures meet and influence each other without destroying each other;
- importance of art and cultural exchange as vehicles of mutual understanding;
- importance of media in the promotion of the openness and readiness to dialogue through information and presentation of «good examples».

Concerning responsibility of all actors involved:

- attention to partnerships between public, private and civil society sector and citizens.

Concerning existing European programmes and policies:

- building and benefiting from existing and relevant European programmes.

2. CITY-RELATED AND LOCALLY BASED POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Concerning (European) identity/identification:

- recognise the importance of cities as sources for the European dimension of multi-faced identity, imagination and integration, the role of European cities in reconstructing Europe's identity (*genius loci*);
 - recognise the cities as meaningful resources for intercultural dialogue;
 - recognise cities as visual and practical means to discover and experience the European identity;
 - focus on visiting European cities: they express the richness of Europe, its cultural and spiritual memory and its creative will to make history (e.g. cultural tourism and the development of cultural paths of Europe);
 - focus on European travel literature: to know and contact the other;
- Concerning democracy;
- recognise cities as laboratories and breeding places for innovative

CONCLUSIONS

democratic processes and citizens' participation.

Concerning urban context of intercultural dialogue and plural citizenship:

- recognise the city as a learning place/environment for education to intercultural dialogue, active citizenship and civic education;
- recognise the city as a meeting place for daily experiencing intercultural dialogue.

Concerning practical suggestions and locally based initiatives:

- creation of workshops, meetings and encounters (at intercultural crossroads), how (young) people imagine Europe, intercultural dialogue and citizenship. A network of various and diverse institutions could be organised in different European locations, persons to persons meetings in which intercultural dialogue is experienced and lived;
- organisation of multicultural festivals;
- exchange of experiences and intercultural practices at local level.