

**“Intercultural dialogue  
as a basis for peace and  
sustainable development  
in Europe and  
its neighbouring regions”**

**Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture  
Baku, 2-3 December 2008**

**Conference reader**

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## FOREWORD

The Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture, which took place in Baku, Azerbaijan, on 2 and 3 December 2008, was a major event dealing with one of the key challenges of our day: intercultural dialogue.

At the Council of Europe, we are convinced that intercultural dialogue is not only an enhanced means of communication, which can build trust and mutual understanding, but it can also serve as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions.

Intercultural dialogue remains a political priority which reflects, facilitates and fosters the core objectives of the Council of Europe and its member states to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law. This has been clearly established by the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (May 2008) which is a groundbreaking policy tool in facing the challenges of cultural diversity.

The Baku Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture gathered together the ministers of States Parties to the European Cultural Convention but went beyond the geographical boundaries of the Council of Europe and was especially important as a result of the inter-regional composition of the conference. Many ministers and deputy ministers of culture representing member states of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) also participated in this conference, as well as representatives from countries neighbouring Azerbaijan and further afield. The themes focused on the vital role of cultural policy and action in fostering understanding between different regions and between different cultures.

We are glad to present the proceedings of the ministerial conference as an important contribution to the process which began in Baku – a city which has always been a bridge between Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia.

This publication contains the full documentation of the conference, including guidelines which will help us to meet the challenge of transforming theory into practice. We now need to move from *talking* about intercultural dialogue to *engaging* in dialogue itself.

Mr Abulfas Garayev  
Minister of Culture and Tourism of  
the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Right Honourable Terry Davis  
Secretary General of the Council  
of Europe







Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
of the Republic of Azerbaijan

## Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture Baku, 2-3 December 2008

**“Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions”**

### PROGRAMME

#### Arrival of delegations

##### **1 December 2008**

**20:00** Welcoming dinner at the *Nobel House Villa Petrolia* courtesy of the Organising Committee of the Conference

##### **2 December 2008**

**09:30** Departure from hotels to the Gulustan Palace

**10:00** Press conference

**10:30** Registration and coffee

**11:00-11:50** Opening statements

- *His Excellency Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*
- *The Right Honourable Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe*
- *Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*
- *Mr Farid Mukhametshin, Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe*
- *Mr Rafael Huseynov, Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*

#### **Institutional statements**

- *Mr Mongi Bousnina, Director General of ALECSO*
- *Mr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajiri, Director General of ISESCO*
- *Ms Katérina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO*

**11:50-12:00** Musical performance by a children’s chorus

- 12:00-13:00**                      **Ministerial round table: “Common ground for intercultural dialogue”**
- Moderated by Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan*
- Keynote speakers:*
- *Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe*
  - *Mr Marc Scheuer, Director of the Office of the Secretariat, United Nations Alliance of Civilizations*
- Speakers:*
- *Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen, State Secretary of Culture, Norway*
  - *Mr Iyad Bin Ameen Madani, Minister of Culture and Information, Saudi Arabia*
  - *Mr Giuseppe Proietti, Secretary General of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*
  - *Monsignor Claudio Gugerotti, Apostolic Nuncio in Azerbaijan, Holy See*
- 13:00-15:00**                      **Luncheon courtesy of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for Heads of Delegations and**
- Luncheon for other participants courtesy of the host country at the Gulustan Palace**
- 15:00-16:30**                      **Ministerial panel 1: “Cultural policy programmes and initiatives and intercultural dialogue: new concepts on the governance of diversity”**
- Moderated by Mr Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini, Vice-President of COREIS (Comunità Religiosa Islamica), Italy*
- Speakers:*
- *Mr Nebojsa Bradic, Minister of Culture of Serbia*
  - *Mr Farouk Hosni, Minister of Culture, Egypt*
  - *Mr Dragan Nedeljkovikj, Deputy Minister of Culture, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”*
  - *Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen, State Secretary of Culture, Norway*
  - *Mr Siim Sukles, Secretary General of the Estonian Ministry of Culture*
  - *Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*
  - *Mr Rustam Ibrahimbekov, Oscar laureate*
- 16:30-16:45**                      **Coffee break**
- 16:45-18:00**                      **Ministerial panel 2: “Heritage and intercultural dialogue – from national to universally owned heritage”**
- Moderated by Ms Nina Obuljen, State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Croatia*
- Speakers:*
- *Mr Hamad Abdulaziz Al-Kavari, Minister of Culture, Art and Heritage, Qatar*

- *Mr Božo Biškupić, Minister of Culture, Croatia*
- *Mr Bogdan Zdrojewski, Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Poland*
- *Mr Olzhas Suleimenov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to UNESCO*
- *Mr Mongi Bousnina, Director General of ALECSO*
- *Ms Irina Subotić, Europa Nostra Council Member and Europa Nostra Serbia President*

**18:00-18:30**                    **Signing of agreements**

**20:00**                         **Reception and dinner at Mugam Club and Caravansarai restaurants of Baku courtesy of Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

**3 December 2008**

**09:30**                         **Departure from the hotels to the Gulustan Palace**

**10:00-11:00**                **Opening by the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Mr Abulfas Garayev**

**Conclusions from the first day of the conference**  
*by Mr Robert Palmer, Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Council of Europe and Ms Sevda Mamedaliyeva, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism, Azerbaijan*

*Remarks from the floor by participants*

**Presentation and adoption of the Baku Declaration**  
*by Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe*

**11:00-11:30**                **Coffee break**

**11:30-12.00**                **Closing ceremony**

*Speakers:*

- *the Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan*
- *Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*
- *Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe*

**12:30-13:00**                **Press conference**

**14:00-16:00**                **Lunch and cultural programme at the Azerbaijan History Museum**

**18:00-19:30**                **Ballet “Seven Beauties” composed by Gara Garayev at the Opera and Ballet Theatre**

**20:30-22:30**                **Reception and dinner at the Baku Yacht Club**

**4 December 2008**

**Cultural programme**

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>10:00-12:00</b> | <b>Visit to the Old City of Baku (Icheri sheher, Shirvanshakh Palace and Maiden Tower)</b> |
| <b>12:00-13:00</b> | <b>Excursion to the State Museum of Azerbaijan Carpet and Applied Art</b>                  |
| <b>16:00-17:00</b> | <b>Visit to Heydar Aliyev Foundation</b>   |
| <b>19:00-20:00</b> | <b>Concert of Azerbaijan Youth Symphonic Orchestra</b>                                     |
| <b>20:30</b>       | <b>Reception and dinner at the Fayton Club restaurant</b>                                  |

**Departure of participants**

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## Report on the conference

*Robin Wilson*

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### **Background: intercultural dialogue in Europe's neighbourhood**

In November 2007, the Government of Azerbaijan offered to host a conference of ministers responsible for culture in Baku in December 2008, with the theme of "Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions". This initiative was welcomed by the Rapporteur Group on Education, Culture, Sport, Youth and Environment (GR-C) of the Council of Europe in February 2008, three months before the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue was launched in Strasbourg by the foreign ministers of the 47 member states. It was evident that the government and parliament of Azerbaijan saw the future of their state as tied to integration into European structures. At the same time, there was a desire to act, in the debate on intercultural dialogue, as a bridge to states in the surrounding region, including those like Azerbaijan whose populations were predominantly Muslim.

The proposal fell naturally within the Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Warsaw in 2005. This not only called for the appointment of an intercultural dialogue co-ordinator, but also addressed the need for such dialogue to embrace Europe and its neighbouring regions, based on the universal norms of democracy, human rights and the rule of law which the Council of Europe embodies. In the Warsaw Declaration, summit participants had also said they remained "concerned by unresolved conflicts that still affect certain parts of the continent, putting at risk the security, unity and democratic stability of member states and threatening the populations concerned". They promised to "work together for reconciliation and political solutions in conformity with the norms and principles of international law".

The initiative also naturally followed from the Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue of the following November, which called for the preparation of the White Paper and for new instruments of dialogue between Europe and its neighbours. The declaration welcomed the memorandum of co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (Anna Lindh Foundation), the co-ordinated programme of activities with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the open platform (Faro Platform) launched with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

That the conference was seen to link with these recent developments was reflected in the breadth and prominence of participation in Baku.<sup>1</sup> According to the Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **Abulfas Garayev**, speaking at the conclusion, 48 countries were represented – the great majority at ministerial or senior official level – including 36 from Europe and 10 from the Muslim world. There were also 12 international organisations.

The background paper prepared for the conference by the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan<sup>2</sup> noted that the term "intercultural dialogue" had transcended previous language of "dialogue between cultures" or "dialogue among civilisations". The significance of this apparently semantic change was that the older language implied that dialogue would always be by proxy – between "representatives" – rather than allowing the direct engagement of individuals and associations enjoying their human rights and their freedom to make choices. In the older outlook, "cultures" or "civilisations" were implicitly seen as homogeneous wholes, for whom, indeed, "representatives" could easily speak. The paper reported "widespread frustration

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1. See list of participants in Appendix 1.

2. "Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions"; see later under "Background information".

about the shallow results of so many events” and pointed to the need to engage civil society, and citizens, if dialogue was to be genuine and meaningful.

More positively, it noted the claim in the Rainbow Paper<sup>3</sup> from the civil society Platform for Intercultural Europe that “art and culture have a special role in intercultural dialogue because they question prejudices and stereotypes, break taboos, trigger curiosity, play with images and words, inspire and connect”. The background paper also elaborated on the potential of the cultural arena as a stimulant of productive and creative dialogue:

The cultural sphere is a domain of the active production, reproduction and renewal of the complex and evolving identities which are themselves the subjects of intercultural dialogue. It provides opportunities for the understanding of increasingly complex identities, often multiple and shared, to be subjected to new perspectives, and for their contradictions to be explored in a non-threatening and often revelatory manner. It engenders new combinations of diverse elements of identity, through fusions and appropriations, which offer exciting innovations. The co-habitation in one locality of different identities has been an important driver of creativity and prosperity, and the recognition of a diversified concept of heritage has become a central component of cultural policy that is relevant to today’s changing societies.

The writer Orhan Pamuk (2005) has put this elegantly. He has claimed that “central to the art of the novel” is “the question of the ‘other’, the ‘stranger’, the ‘enemy’ that resides inside each of our heads, or rather, the question of how to transform it”. Novelists, according to Pamuk, “can begin to test the lines that mark off that ‘other’ and in so doing alter the boundaries of our own identities. Others become ‘us’ and we become ‘others’”. And even as the novel “relates our own lives as if they were the lives of others, it offers us the chance to describe other people’s lives as if they were our own”.

Pamuk thus confronts an alternative, relativist perspective, which has hitherto been another factor militating against the success of intercultural dialogue on the global scale – the so-called “clash of civilisations” between Islam and a purportedly Christian “West”, advanced by the American political scientist Samuel Huntington in the 1990s, to which a number of conference speakers were to refer. Francis Wheen (2004: 75) has characterised this as a “conservative pessimism”, noting its “emphasis on cultural predestination, its narrow religio-cultural definition of what constitutes a ‘civilization’, its reluctance to accept the possibility of cross-pollination between cultures” and the way it denies individuals “the freedom to choose their own affiliations and associations, imposing lifelong allegiance to a club which they never applied to join”.

Intercultural dialogue, in that sense, is driven by what one might call a “progressive optimism” – a belief that where individual human beings meet, in a context which the White Paper describes as “equality of human dignity”, it is possible for differences to be bridged and for diversity to be a factor for cultural enrichment. There was much in the proceedings of the conference to suggest this belief was well founded.

## Conference proceedings

### *Opening speeches*

Azerbaijan is strategically placed on the ancient Great Silk Road, and, welcoming conference participants, **Ilham Aliyev**, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, described his country as at a “crossroads of cultures”. He hoped the ensuing “Baku process” would strengthen international understanding and friendship, and that intercultural dialogue would be accelerated through concrete mechanisms. Mr Aliyev, however, robustly reiterated the official Azerbaijani position against the Armenian “occupation” in the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia was not represented at the conference.

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe, **Terry Davis**, agreed that Baku represented a “natural bridge between East and West, North and South”. But he asked: “Are we ready for dialogue?” He affirmed that intercultural dialogue was a political priority for the Council of Europe and he noted that this was the first event supported by the Organisation associating ministers from neighbouring regions, as well as the first ministerial conference since the

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3. Available at <http://rainbowpaper.labforculture.org/signup/public/read>

publication of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which he described as a “key policy document”.

Societies were ever more exposed to cultural diversity, which was as important as natural diversity to the environment, yet we often still thought along “national lines” in terms of cultural stereotypes, according to Mr Davis. Intercultural dialogue was an “antidote to intolerance, division and violence”, but it was not an ideology, a recipe for abstract replication or a matter for exchanges of platitudes at international conferences: it should take place on the street, at work, in the mosque. In that context, universal values guaranteed mutual respect and allowed the force of argument to prevail in dialogue over the argument of force.

So many conflicts were due to a lack of dialogue between cultures and a supposed “clash” of cultures, said **Guillermo Corral Van Damme**, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe; hence the need for intercultural dialogue which he linked to development, youth and social inclusion. He spoke of the Alliance of Civilizations – the joint, Spanish-Turkish initiative pursued by the United Nations – highlighting its next event in Istanbul in April 2009. The alliance recognised that conflicts were taking place on a “planetary scale”, related to global warming, migration flows and poverty.

Intercultural dialogue was about promoting social and cultural cohesion, Mr Van Damme said. The Council of Europe and the Alliance of Civilizations were key assets in this regard. He pointed to the importance of the media, of artists as agents of culture, of the protection of cultural heritage and of the digitalisation of culture for public access, as well as co-operation within cultural industries.

**Farid Mukhametshin**, of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, stated more positively that globalisation was increasing contacts among peoples and beginning to develop a sense of human identity, which did not need to rely on cultural traditions. **Rafael Huseynov**, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, similarly argued that while cultures differed they were linked and could learn from each other. The goal was not to increase differences but to bring people closer together. Azerbaijan has a multireligious heritage and he pointed out how historically in Baku, fire-worshippers and Muslims had been able to coexist.

#### *Institutional statements*

**Mongi Bousnina**, Director General of ALECSO, began by highlighting ALECSO’s Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Arab Position on Dialogue and Diversity of January 2006. The declaration calls for “the development of the spirit of self-criticism in order to eliminate the inherited and unfortunate tendency to overrate oneself and look down on the Other”.

Dr Bousnina stressed the role of education, including language education, in changing images of the “other”. There were a lot of common points between the Arab world and Europe, he said, pointing to the experience of Al-Andalus (Andalusia) in Europe and of the enlightenment in the Arab world. There was a need to address the colonial experience more objectively and to recognise the “common past” of the Arab and European spheres, he added, highlighting the importance of the teaching of history.

He described the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue as an “excellent production”, which opened up new possibilities for exchanges. He supported the idea of the Artists for Dialogue initiative: creators played an essential role in building bridges, and artistic creation was one of the best means to meet the “other”, he said. He also upheld the value of the Council of Europe’s Cultural Routes programme, which he stressed should not forget Arab travellers and European visitors to the Arab world.

**Abdulaziz Altwaijri**, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), pointed to ISESCO’s own White Book (2002), before describing the White Paper as a “timely initiative”. He said it had been translated into Arabic – he was able formally to present a copy to the Council of Europe Secretary General, Mr Davis – and it should be promoted by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as governments.

Dr Altwaijri connected the idea of “living together as equals in dignity” – the subtitle of the White Paper which echoed the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights – to Quranic verse: “We have dignified the sons of Adam.” The core values of the Council of Europe were shared by Muslim communities, he said – the right to freedom and dignity, belief in justice and equality, and solidarity with the oppressed. Enhancing such values was a prerequisite of coexistence, and ISESCO was determined to spread the culture of dialogue and peace and its underpinning universal principles.

**Katérina Stenou** of UNESCO stressed that Europe had historically played a role in the exclusion of others. She noted the UNESCO conventions on heritage and cultural diversity, arguing that the organisation had always seen dialogue between cultures as at the centre of its concerns. Like others, she spoke of the “extraordinarily important role of civil society” in this regard.

On a more philosophical plane, Ms Stenou used the metaphor of “fermentation” to describe cultural diversity, explaining that it was thus an evolving reality. And dialogue, she insisted, was not the same as negotiation: it was an openness to “doubting”, to “destabilising oneself to make headway”. In that context, diversity and dialogue were “two faces of the same coin”, a means for us to learn to live together with conflicts of loyalty.

#### *Ministerial round table: common ground for intercultural dialogue<sup>4</sup>*

The first substantive session of the conference sought to establish the basis for common ground between the “self” and the “other”. An informal paper,<sup>5</sup> prepared by the rapporteur for this session, posed a number of questions for conference participants and offered some putative answers. Among these, two are worth highlighting. The paper asked whether the intercultural approach was of universal application. It argued:

The White Paper has emerged from the Council of Europe, but the intercultural approach is not confined to Europe. This is not only because the White Paper stresses the contribution of other transnational organisations and the importance of partnerships with them, particularly where these represent Europe’s “neighbours”. It is also because the *alternative* approach – encapsulated in the phrase “the clash of civilisations” – is itself conceived in a global fashion.

The Council of Europe is conscious that the values it embodies – of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – are not narrowly “European”, founded as they are on the principle of equality of human dignity. The same case can be made for the “political architecture” which the White Paper identifies as required to engender a culture of tolerance and broadmindedness: equality of citizenship (including gender equality), reciprocal recognition by persons belonging to different communities, and impartial public authority to deal fairly with their competing claims. Indeed, where these conditions do *not* apply, there is a risk of the “Balkanisation” of states and regions along ethnic or religious fault lines, where walls embody the spurious security offered by communal leaders manipulating fears of the “other”.

The paper also questioned whether the five policy approaches proposed by the White Paper were of equal importance everywhere. It contended that:

The five policy domains identified in the White Paper are: the democratic governance of cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and participation, learning and teaching intercultural competences, spaces for intercultural dialogue and intercultural dialogue in international relations. These are the interlocking building blocks of intercultural dialogue, which demands a political culture in which diversity is valued, where diverse individuals engage with one another as fellow citizens, where all citizens have a basic intercultural competence for dialogue, where dialogue can take place in safe spaces, and where such spaces can extend to the transnational.

Inevitably, in any particular context, priorities may vary. In societies driven by violence, finding safe spaces for dialogue is at a premium. Where access for migrants to citizenship is restrictive, equally, democratic participation will seem to them a remote possibility. And so on. The beauty of intercultural dialogue, however, is that it is inherently as diverse as the

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4. For reasons of space, not all participants’ comments can be included in this conference report. Those which are mentioned have been selected to ensure that all major, substantive points made during the conference are reflected in this report.

5. See “Common ground for intercultural dialogue” under “Background information”.



individuals who engage in it. It is not an official ideology, to be imposed regardless of circumstances on the ground. On the contrary, it depends on local authorities and NGOs to fill in what is otherwise an outline sketch of a framework.

**Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe, provided delegates with an exegesis of the White Paper process. She said events of recent years had raised questions as to how members of different communities could inter-relate – and questions had been more evident than answers. It was in that context that the Faro conference of ministers of culture had taken the “courageous” initiative in 2005 of calling for the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, to offer guidance on policy and good practice.

The Council of Europe was well placed, through its core mandate of defence of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, to meet this demand, she said, and there had been much prior work in the domains of culture, education and so on. But the White Paper was “in many respects fundamentally new”, and there had been a “vast” consultation with the member states, local and regional authorities, NGOs and others.

Ms Battaini-Dragoni said the key themes of the White Paper were to:

- develop the democratic governance of cultural diversity – build a political culture of diversity, recognising the rights of minorities and migrants;
- strengthen democratic citizenship and participation;
- promote intercultural competences, including knowledge of cultures and heritages, languages and lifestyles, compromise and conflict resolution;
- engender physical or virtual spaces for intercultural dialogue; and
- inspire intercultural dialogue in international relations, including involving local and regional authorities, the media and civil society.

One of the clearest lessons from the member states, she said, had been that the way in which they had previously addressed cultural diversity had proved imperfect – whether the approach adopted had been based on the principle of the assimilation of members of minority communities or the multiculturalist recognition of purportedly communal identities. On the one hand any discrimination or exclusion meant intercultural dialogue could not take place; on the other, respect for difference was only possible if policy was based on universal values: views which denied the human dignity of others were unacceptable in a democratic society.

Ms Battaini-Dragoni said intercultural dialogue offered a new paradigm. It required particular competences, such as in languages and knowledge of the world religions. Culture and education were thus key to intercultural dialogue, as they opened minds. The Council of Europe was launching a training programme for a range of professionals, including the police for instance, to equip them for intercultural dialogue. The Organisation’s work would be rolled out through the many translations of the White Paper, the Intercultural Cities programme, the new campaign against discrimination and so on.

**Marc Scheuer**, Director of the Secretariat of the Alliance of Civilizations, said the world was too often conceived in terms of the “clash of civilisations”, as if the latter were mutually exclusive and historically distinct. This was “fuelling suspicion and fear”, he said, turning disputes into seemingly intractable identity conflicts. The role of the Alliance of Civilizations, which had been focusing on relationships between “the West” and the Arab world, was to combat stereotypes and promote “a dialogue that delivers”, that made “a difference in citizens’ daily lives”.

Mr Scheuer echoed the centrality of the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Cultural diversity represented “a driving force of human progress” whose opportunities should not be missed, he said, in an “alarmingly out of balance world” which risked being “drawn into paralysing tensions”. The alliance organised an annual forum to take stock of this evolving global context, for governments, NGOs and the media.

He identified specific media initiatives the alliance had taken:

- an expert-finder network and rapid-reaction mechanism where, as in zones of conflict, information was not being treated in a sufficiently professional and objective way;
- regional meetings of editors and journalists on responsible reporting of cross-cultural issues, with a planned extension to bloggers; and

- support for production of films and television programmes which did not reproduce stereotypes.

The alliance was also promoting intercultural skills, including media literacy, in co-operation with UNESCO. It was backing transcultural projects of young people, using the Internet to disseminate these across the world, and it would like to support a fellowship for emerging leaders to encourage exposure to other societies and cultures.

Turkey is co-sponsor with Spain of the Alliance of Civilizations and, in discussion, its Minister of Culture and Tourism, **Ertuğrul Günay**, said the issue was, in a globalised world, how to ensure free expression for oneself yet respect for others. He noted Turkey's unique geo-cultural location and argued that cultural heritage offered a means for mutual understanding.

The Saudi Minister of Culture and Information, **Iyad Bin Ameen Madani**, said the world itself was "at a crossroads", with enormous "upheavals". He itemised the economic crisis, climate change, the scourge of Aids, conflicts between what he called those sponsoring a "new world order" and those favouring "old principles on old foundations", and the "wave of terrorist acts perpetrated by extremists". Conflicts in the developing world were multidimensional, embracing poverty and corruption.

A new order, Mr Madani said, must not represent just the end of the cold war but an "eruption of liberal democracy", which could not be built on the principle that "some are right and some are wrong". Muslims constituted one fifth of humanity, yet Islam was often discussed on a basis of ignorance. "Islam does not perceive or identify others as enemies", he said, but was one of many great civilisations "that we have seen come and go on this planet". There was a need to unite against the notion of "culture wars", for there could not be a single authoritative view of the world. Pluralism and faith in diversity were needed, allied to dialogue among cultures and common policies.

**Giuseppe Proietti**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities in Italy, described intercultural dialogue as "the greatest challenge of our time". He said it was not only a moral imperative but was also of instrumental value in preventing misunderstandings. It was essential to open oneself to the culture of the "other", as only in this way could one become aware of the shortcomings of one's own ideas and make progress.

**Kimmo Aulake**, of the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture, said intercultural dialogue was "a complex theme". There was a need for common ground as well as shared commitment, which the White Paper provided. There was no alternative to universal values: a democratic culture and a willingness to exchange were preconditions of intercultural dialogue. There was a danger otherwise of a "vicious circle", but intercultural dialogue held out the hope of a "virtuous circle", helping societies to become more dynamic, more cohesive "and better places to live in".

**Werner Wnendt**, representing the German Foreign Office, insisted: "There is no alternative to the dialogue among cultures." Dialogue could overcome stereotypes and prejudices, and the White Paper provided a "clear orientation". Civil society was key: it conducted the dialogue, for which government provided the framework. He saw the Intercultural Cities project as a promising, "citizen-friendly" approach, and favoured its extension in a second stage to cities outside the European region. There was a "huge potential" for dialogue with Europe's neighbours, if based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

*Ministerial panel I: cultural policy, programmes and initiatives for intercultural dialogue – new concepts on the governance of diversity*

The two ministerial panels sought to translate this general discussion into particular arenas: cultural policies and programmes and how cultural heritage specifically is addressed. An informal document for the first panel, by Danielle Cliche-Torkler,<sup>6</sup> usefully identified the

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6. See later section under "Background information".

various measures which culture ministries pursued, that had an impact on intercultural dialogue:

They can be described as creativity directed measures (e.g. direct support for joint arts productions and performances), market support measures (e.g. direct and indirect support aimed at enhancing the distribution of diverse artistic works, cultural goods and services through festivals and other events) and participation directed measures (e.g. aimed at dismantling barriers to participation in cultural life). It is also recognised that intercultural dialogue encounters are supported through funds and programmes to foster the transnational mobility of artists and cultural professionals (e.g. travel grants, scholarships, artist in residency programmes, etc.).

The paper stressed the need to “open up publicly funded cultural institutions”, so that these became “shared cultural spaces which encourage dialogue and cross-cultural mixing”. This implied a need to earmark funds for intercultural activities within the programmes of such institutions, which should be diversified by involving artists of different cultural backgrounds and visions and by treating the wider public as a resource for programme development rather than only as “consumers” of culture. Boards and staff should themselves be diversified and trained in intercultural competences. It was also important to recognise that cultural activities in non-institutional spaces – the neighbourhood, supermarkets, streets, train stations, public parks, marketplaces, virtual environments and so on – could integrate intercultural dialogue into daily experience.

And, in a discussion germane to the Artists for Dialogue initiative, the paper noted:

Cultural funding programmes to promote cross-border dialogue and mobility are gradually moving away from diplomatic agendas, towards a more project or production based approach. This move is an important one to recognise and to build on. Support for the mobility and interaction between artists and cultural professionals in concrete projects leads not only to multiple encounters, rather than one-off events, but enables the process of dialogue to generate new levels of understanding as well as potentially new and diverse forms of cultural expression. Indeed artist-led partnerships across borders have opened corridors for dialogue. New communication technologies have also been employed to create new cross-border spaces for dialogue.

Contributing to the ministerial panel, the Norwegian State Secretary of Culture, **Halvard Ingebrigtsen**, said Norway had identified 2008 as a year of cultural diversity, which had embraced more than 1 000 activities. All institutions had been invited to develop long-term strategies to deal with cultural diversity. He pointed to the European Wergeland Centre (the European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship), for which the Committee of Ministers agreed on a statute during the year<sup>7</sup> and which he described as an important “structural tool” for pursuing intercultural dialogue. The centre, located in Oslo, is to:

- carry out research on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship;
- provide relevant in-service training and support for teachers and teacher-training professionals; and
- disseminate information and serve as a meeting place for researchers, teachers, teacher-training professionals and policy makers.

**Guillermo Corral Van Damme**, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers, said it was easy to embrace the concept of intercultural dialogue, and even to agree on its urgency, but it was much more difficult to translate this into policy and practice. He spoke of the need to create an appropriate context for the attraction of artistic talent. That required, as a minimum, freedom of expression – ideas were even more mobile than people – and the resolution of issues of protection of intellectual property rights, in an era of digitisation and the Internet. It also required the promotion of cultural and creative industries, as a substratum for cultural diversity, recognising the role of small and medium-sized cultural enterprises and placing particular emphasis on minority and women’s projects.

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7. See <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1311239&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=9999CC&BackColorIntranet=FFBB55&BackColorLogged=FFAC75>.

**Elshad Iskandarov**, Secretary General of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), said that aggression, power, occupation and poverty bred misconceptions and prejudice, rather than vice versa. Supporters of intercultural dialogue tended to be excluded by advocates of “hard” power. Yet while “soft” power had the capacity to deal with conflicts, the test was in real-life, grass-roots attitudes, engendered via schools, mosques and so on.

**Abdulaziz Altwaijri** of ISESCO said culture was now not only a vector of dialogue and debate but also of economic prosperity and social progress. There was a growing need for new formulae for the management of cultural affairs. Culture was no longer just where intellectuals met or ministers acted: it also had a “horizontal” (or networked) character.

The Azerbaijani film-maker **Rustam Ibrahimbekov** said that “Baku really is on the border of Europe and Asia”. Some days he thought of himself as European, some days as Asian and some days he did not know what he was. The world was divided into regions with their own strong traditions, and within each of these “zones” there had been progress in accepting one another – the need now was to break down these frontiers. The threat of non-existence was turning humankind into a “unified living organism”. That was why intercultural dialogue was so important, now that each of us could have such an impact on “the survival of humankind”.

#### *Ministerial panel 2: heritage and intercultural dialogue – from national to universally owned heritage*

The second ministerial panel was informed by a further informal document, this time by Carsten Paludan-Müller,<sup>8</sup> which problematised the idea of national heritage. It contended that:

The traditional European idea of cultural heritage as part of a specific national identity may work as long as the nation state has a homogenous population. In most instances, however, this has never been the case and, at the present time, we are seeing an increasing (recognition of the) diversity of identities in the populations even within many European nation states. Furthermore, in many countries outside Europe, it is, and sometimes always has been, evident that European-style monocultural nationalism is at best a dysfunctional concept. Strong emphasis on ethnic, religious or cultural unity is no longer a viable means of ensuring the cohesion of civil society and the state. The need for a diversified concept of cultural heritage is a result of the fading ideal of the monocultural state and the diversification of identities.

The paper looked instead to developing the concept of “common heritage”, advanced in the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention) of 2005, beyond European confines. Indeed, it criticised a “Eurocentric perspective”:

This hinders our ability to understand and recognise the important contributions to European culture that have come from its interaction with the rest of the world. In parts of the region outside Europe where Islam is the dominant religion, the history that is perceived as shaping collective identity sometimes emphasises the last 1 400 years to a degree that precludes the understanding of the long lines from earlier history that have heavily conditioned the political development of Dar al-Islam. Christianity and Islam share their roots and their claim of universality beyond questions of ethnicity. ... Exchanges have continuously cross-fertilised cultural, religious, technological and scientific successes across the Mediterranean basin and along the Silk Road.

**Monsignor Claudio Gugerotti**, the Apostolic Nuncio in Azerbaijan, representing the Holy See, reminded the conference that 138 prominent and diverse Muslims from around the world had recently published a letter to the leaders of the main Christian churches, calling for dialogue to promote global peace. In response, the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue had joined representatives of the signatories to establish a Catholic-Muslim forum. An unprecedented seminar had taken place a few weeks before this conference, on the theme “Love of God, Love of Neighbour”. The letter had suggested these comprised “foundational principles” common to both faiths.

**Nina Obuljen**, of the Croatian Ministry of Culture, asked how we could go beyond the “monocultural nation state” to a sense that heritage was open to plural perspectives. Her

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8. See later section under “Background information”.

delegation articulated the interesting – and, in oil-rich Baku, nicely ironic – metaphor of an “intercultural pipeline” to make transnational connections.

**Bogdan Zdrojewski**, the Polish Minister of Culture and National Heritage, highlighted the role of civil society in this regard. The Kraków Academy of Heritage, he said, had run international summer schools engaging nearly 2 000 students from a variety of sources.

The preparatory document for this session began with a warning: “In some contexts, cultural heritage has been seen as a factor in sustaining conflicts resulting in competing claims to cultural heritage.” This was to be manifested in comments by the Deputy Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport in Georgia, **David Jalagania**. He complained that monuments had been destroyed by the Russian “occupation” of parts of the country.

**Irina Subotić** of Europa Nostra demonstrated in her remarks how the view of heritage as an asset not confined to the “nation state” meant the performance of individual states then became a legitimate matter for debate. Heritage, she said, was a common inheritance, which must be preserved intact for transmission to future generations. Yet central Baku, whose history went back more than 5 000 years, was being “systematically destroyed” by modern development, she claimed. These were monuments to the intercultural dialogue of the past.

#### *Conclusions from the first day of the conference and adoption of the Baku Declaration*

**Robert Palmer**, Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage at the Council of Europe, opened the second day of the conference with some personal impressions of the proceedings on the first day. He picked out the idea of common heritage, saying: “History is scarred by conflicts caused by the misrepresentation of history.” He also counselled against expecting too much from any one conference: “We all know that just another conference will never replace hatred by respect.” There was a need therefore, he said, to translate the conference into practical commitments in the respective home bases of the delegations.

The Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **Sevda Mamedaliyeva**, focused her comments on the potential of the Artists for Dialogue initiative, advanced in the Baku Declaration<sup>9</sup> adopted by the conference, to promote intercultural dialogue between Europe and neighbouring regions. A working group led by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan is charged with taking the initiative forward. Delegates had been entertained the previous day by a children’s choir and Ms Mamedaliyeva said a “Children for Dialogue” event was being planned, involving choirs from a range of countries.

In the ensuing general discussion, the Jordanian Minister of Culture, **Nancy Bakir Naguez**, said that once more there was a need to work against the “clash of civilisations”, complaining that the world had failed to solve the Palestinian issue. She highlighted the importance of participation in dialogue by women marginalised from civil society.

**Fifi Benaboud** of the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) in Lisbon – a partner organisation of the Council of Europe which works across the Mediterranean with states, governments and NGOs – endorsed the minister’s comment on the role of women. She said the “clash of civilisations” had perversely helped the terrorists. The real problem was the clash of ignorance, assisted by the role played by the media in reproducing stereotypes. More positively, Ms Benaboud pointed to how migrants could act as “vectors of dialogue”.

In a similar vein, **Bruce George MP**, chair of the Azerbaijan group of members of the United Kingdom Parliament, spoke of how “civilised” societies needed to look in the mirror at their “dark side” – at how they could view “with anger” the idea of intercultural dialogue with those not regarded as “one of us”. Alluding to the wider economic crisis in the background, he expressed concern that this would hit women and members of ethnic minorities particularly hard.

The Director General of DG IV at the Council of Europe, **Ms Battaini-Dragoni**, contextualised the adoption of the Baku Declaration by referring to other activities since the White Paper on

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9. See Appendix II.

Intercultural Dialogue. The White Paper had already been translated into 11 languages and there had been a welcome engagement, she said, by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), which could see how intercultural dialogue could act as a confidence-building measure.

She also highlighted the Intercultural Cities programme, being run in conjunction with the European Union. This involved not only local authorities but also NGOs. It provided a means to look at how issues of intercultural dialogue, such as participation by members of minority communities in public life, could be worked out at local level. The Council of Europe would be happy to have cities from other countries associated with this programme, as suggested.

### *Closing ceremony*

In her closing comments, **Ms Battaini-Dragoni** looked ahead to ongoing and future Council of Europe commitments, focusing on developing through education the intercultural competences needed for European societies. She said work would continue, including with the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), on history teaching through developing critical perspectives and multiperspectivity. Highlighting the importance of the Wergeland Centre, she said language policies in education would continue to be reviewed, with a view to developing common standards and ensuring migrant pupils could consolidate their language of origin. Language courses offered a pretext for intercultural dialogue themselves, she pointed out. And the Council of Europe would continue to work, including via ISESCO, with young people in non-formal educational contexts.

The Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, **Mr Garayev**, expressed his satisfaction at the strong representation the conference had secured. He sent delegates home with the message that it was important at this time of economic crisis to stay together rather than to stay divided.

### **Conclusions**

As the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, Mr Davis, had highlighted at the outset, this was the first event the Organisation had supported on intercultural dialogue engaging with Europe's neighbouring regions. Its great virtue was the cultural diversity represented around the conference room. True, it was states and international organisations, rather than civil society, which were represented, but it not only allowed some of the ideas articulated in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue to be tested among participants drawn from beyond the confines of Europe, it was also an exercise in intercultural dialogue itself – for the most part successful.

Two overarching themes recurred: the first, while advanced mainly by European states, was echoed around the hall. This was the foundational claim that intercultural dialogue can only subsist on the universal – not merely “Western” – values of democracy, human rights and the rule of law which provide the Council of Europe with its *raison d'être*. Speakers from Islamic organisations and predominantly Muslim countries stressed there was no inherent incompatibility between such values and Islam as a religion (or any other world religion, for that matter).

This related to the second repeated theme, a rejection of the “clash of civilisations”. As this was developed by speakers particularly from the Arab world, it was articulated in terms of opposition to domination, injustice and the exercise of “hard” power. But this too was echoed by other participants, most notably in the presentation on behalf of the Alliance of Civilizations, and in the support for that initiative expressed by its founder states, Spain and Turkey. “Living together as equals in dignity”, the subtitle of the White Paper, might indeed sum up that very aspiration.

Why this ready consensus? The Azerbaijani film-maker, Mr Ibrahimbekov, paradoxically remarked that we recognised our existence as common humankind in the face of the threat of our non-existence. The Saudi Minister of Culture and Information, Mr Madani, said that the world was at a “crossroads”, facing upheaval and transition. Mr Scheuer, of the Alliance of Civilizations, spoke of a world “alarmingly out of balance”.

What are these imbalances? Global income imbalances underpin violent conflicts involving the socially desperate. Global power imbalances, sometimes articulated (from both sides) in terms of a “clash of civilisations”, make these conflicts much more intractable. Last but not least, resource and ecological imbalances imperil the future of the planet itself.

Many if not all of these imbalances impinge profoundly on the states that were represented around the conference room. Worse still, they inter-relate in ways which makes their resolution intensely difficult. As Dr Altwajri of ISESCO pointed out, however, the world is now reduced to a “global village”. These challenges do face us all differentially, but they do face us all nevertheless. Intercultural dialogue has thus become our common fate.

Ulrich Beck (2009: 56-7) has captured this sense of a “world at risk”: “We are all trapped in a shared global space of threats – without exit .... Global risks open up a moral and political space that can give rise to a civil culture of responsibility that transcends borders and conflicts.” Intercultural dialogue, as the White Paper says, is not a panacea for all these ills, but it is a precondition of success in every case. For intercultural dialogue replaces domination with an “open and respectful exchange of views” – including on a global scale.

Mr Ibrahimbekov also remarked that there had been more progress in developing dialogue within different global regions than between them. This, however, seemed to be belied by jarring moments at the conference. The event, to face reality honestly, did nothing to address the challenges for intercultural dialogue posed by the conflicts within the neighbourhood between Azerbaijan and Armenia and between Georgia and the Russian Federation. As Mr Palmer said, however, no one conference could – a process is required.

There were other important insights, however, which the conference generated. If states, by their nature characterised by a certain rigidity and inertia, found intercultural dialogue difficult, several speakers suggested civil society organisations should be given a fairer wind. It seemed to be widely felt that they brought the critical capability, alongside committed municipalities, to enable intercultural dialogue to be connected to lived experience.

In daily life, intercultural dialogue always comes down, and this was again recurrent phraseology, to the “self” and the “other” – in particular, how the former perceives the latter and how that may be changed through dialogue in a favourable environment. So, as ever in consideration of intercultural dialogue, the media and education were seen as crucial institutions within civil society.

Concern that the media could reproduce stereotypes and notions of civilisational clashes, rather than engage in more responsible reporting, was, here as elsewhere, evident – but the Alliance of Civilizations was able to report important innovations with its media initiatives. As for education, here too objective and multiperspectival teaching of history – including colonial experiences – was seen as vital to develop the capacity to evaluate the historical myths through which the “self” and the “other” have been counterposed. The Wergeland Centre in Oslo looked set to provide the assistance teachers need in the intercultural classroom.

The work of cultural heritage, so often seen as the “natural” preservation of the “national”, was also exposed in discussion as a tricky business, which again risked being part of nationalistic myth-making. The key move here was the rethinking of heritage as common, rather than narrowly national, patrimony, and to lift the horizon further to escape from the risk of Eurocentrism. This session, however, was shorter on concrete solutions and proposals.

A clear sense did emerge from the conference as to the contribution which specifically cultural institutions could make. There was much that culture ministers could do to ensure cultural institutions took the demands of intercultural dialogue seriously, for instance through ring-fenced funding. Diversification of the boards and staff of these institutions and training in intercultural competences were also central, as was active engagement with diverse publics.

### **Follow-up**

One of the great benefits of the Baku Conference, arising from the breadth of participation, was that it stimulated anew the questions: “What is Europe?” and “Where does Europe end?”

These are related questions, as the more open the terms on which Europe is defined, the more extensive it can be and the more porous its borders – and vice versa.

As Gerard Delanty (1995: 15) has written, “Given the obsolescence of the Cold War idea of Europe, there is now a greater need than ever before for a new definition of Europeanism that does not exclude the stranger.” Similarly, Ash Amin (2004) has argued that Europe should be defined by “hospitality to the stranger” and by a recognition that we are “mutually and dialogically constituted”. In this perspective, “self” and “other” can no longer be counterposed for instrumental political benefit – indeed the very idea of a “self” and “other” with hermetically sealed identities becomes hard to sustain.

The enduring value of the conference, then, would lie in an emerging “Baku process”, as signalled by the President of Azerbaijan, Mr Aliyev, at the opening, which would undermine such stereotypes through dialogue in concrete ways. Such a process could, over time, address itself to how “core” Europe and its eastern and south-eastern neighbours – many anxious for closer integration with European institutions, others keen that Europe should play a greater “soft power” role in a more polycentric world – should redefine themselves and their relationships. This is ultimately a cultural question and can be progressed by cultural policy makers and practitioners in and through activities such as those identified in the Baku Declaration. Four are worth highlighting for particular attention.

First, the declaration refers to existing work of the Council of Europe, including the Kyiv Initiative Regional Programme: Black Sea and South Caucasus<sup>10</sup> and the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe (RPSEE).<sup>11</sup> In the spirit of strengthening relationships among Council of Europe members, the idea of “cultural corridors” might usefully be borrowed from the latter with an eye to developing the former. The risk with a localised initiative like Kyiv is that it becomes inward-looking in terms of its participants and is neglected by those not directly engaged. Yet from the Great Silk Route to today’s Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, “Western” Europe has depended on this region for its well-being, but this economic relationship has not been translated into one of recognised cultural interdependence or mutual understanding – still the “self” and “other” are at play.

The Kyiv Initiative has, of course, its dimension of cultural routes – the Alexandre Dumas and book routes – but the whole initiative might be revived by a larger project, which explored the movements and cultural exchanges over the centuries between the region and the wider Europe, and what the future might hold in this regard.

There would be great potential to take such a project into the classroom, particularly in history teaching, with a view to disembedding conceptions in that wider Europe of the “other” and broadening an awareness of where Europe does and might extend. An approach could be made to the Wergeland Centre, seeking its engagement, and the teacher-training network developed through the Pestalozzi Programme<sup>12</sup> could also be brought to bear. This might be of particular value in a context where the ever-greater quest for oil “security” is tending to engender instrumental attitudes elsewhere in Europe to the role that this region plays.

Secondly, the declaration looks to extend current programmes, including the Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe (the Compendium) and the European Heritage Network (HEREIN). Perhaps of most interest here is the potential extension of the Intercultural Cities<sup>13</sup> programme into the wider region. As the respected architect Richard Rogers has put it (Urban Task Force, 1999: 26, 41): “The city is, first and foremost, a meeting place for people.” At its best, it operates as “a series of interconnected networks of places and spaces devoted to making the most of human interaction”. So, again, as a means of disarming the antipathy between “self” and “other”, the Intercultural Cities programme is very important.

The programme not only has the value of bringing intercultural dialogue to street level. It also takes the form of a network for the exchange of good practice, with the potential to engender

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10. See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default_en.asp)

11. See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/default_en.asp)

12. See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/About\\_us\\_en.asp#TopOfPage](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/pestalozzi/About_us_en.asp#TopOfPage)

13. See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/default_en.asp)



an environment of “disciplined pluralism” (Kay, 2003) combining competition and collaboration, which is ideal to spur innovations and foster their dissemination.

Already the programme includes a Russian and a Ukrainian city. Extending its geographical scope, including to partner cities in states outside the Council of Europe, would mean in a sense that intercultural dialogue would not just be taking place *within* the cities but would be happening *among* cities drawn from Europe and its neighbouring regions. We know from experience that intercultural dialogue works best when it is allied to practical, common tasks.

It would be of considerable interest to have one or more participating cities with a majority Muslim population, since every other city involved is, in a sense, a Muslim-minority city to some degree. This would help set in context for other participant cities the experience of members of Muslim communities as minorities in Europe – a diverse experience often itself flattened out by homogenising stereotypes (Al-Azmeh and Fokas, 2007).

Thirdly, there is the potential for extending collaborative work with other international organisations. The Alliance of Civilizations initiatives on the media are very germane. A “Baku process” could usefully engage media executives, editors and journalists from within the region and from the wider Europe to address the reporting of conflicts and the widely rehearsed notion of civilisational clashes.

There is a great deal of work to be done to establish a media culture which frees journalists from official direction while not reducing them to pawns of the market. The Alliance of Civilization’s ideas of expert networks and rapid reaction, to promote objective reporting and analysis, have great potential to show the way and could usefully be supported by the Council of Europe.

Fourthly, there is a wholly new initiative, Artists for Dialogue, which Azerbaijan is to lead. This should be seen in the context of the point made in the introduction to this paper about the limits of dialogue between those purporting to be “representatives” of homogenised “cultures” or “civilisations”. Fruitful dialogue, dynamism and creativity all demand direct involvement of individuals and their associations. Within that, there is particular scope for artists to play a vanguard role – they are at the leading edge of the creation, articulation and play of identities that allow the very notions of “self” and “other”, as historically transmitted, to be disassembled and wholly reconceived.

Artists for Dialogue provides an appropriate vehicle for them to do so. Music could be at its heart and the rich range and historical depth of Azerbaijani musical instruments makes the country an appropriate base for this initiative. If this were to capture the enthusiasm of individual artists, it could mobilise real energy and enterprise. Even amid the apparent intractability of the Israel-Palestine conflict, for example, Daniel Barenboim’s West-Eastern Divan Orchestra has been a shining example of how mobility and co-operation among artists – who in this case might otherwise only meet as soldiers and stone-throwers – has tremendous capacity for bridge-building.

It should be very easy to secure the support of such big-name figures as patrons of Artists for Dialogue. Council of Europe projects, because of their scale, must always struggle against the risk of bureaucratisation. The goodwill and inspiration of leading artists would bring much to this initiative in this regard. One could envisage all kinds of offshoots, such as Writers for Dialogue or Film-makers for Dialogue, rooting the initiative in particular artistic disciplines.

Were the Baku Declaration only to be seen in terms of the discrete activities supported, it might have limited traction. Real life would be given to it if these were seen as elements of a larger and coherent “Baku process”, enhancing the engagement of the peoples of the region with the wider Europe, and hopefully bringing them closer together at the same time.

For within this region, there are many conflicts – frozen, latent, overt or violent – which can only be resolved through intercultural dialogue, across national, ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. A “Baku process” could establish a normative framework in which such challenges could be discussed in the spirit of intercultural dialogue, founded on universal values, as against the conventional articulation of established official positions. Were such a process to be developed obliquely, by culture ministers, civil society organisations and individual

practitioners, through the practical implementation of the commitments in the declaration, it might not immediately run into the well-known political roadblocks.

If such a process were to be successful over the coming years, Mr Ibrahimbekov might have even fewer days when he was sure that he was European or sure that he was Asian. The painter Wassily Kandinsky once wrote that the 19th century was dominated by “either-or”, while he hoped the 20th century would be devoted to working on “and” (Beck, 1997: 1). In the 21st century, that remains work in progress.

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## **Background information**



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## Background document

### **Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions**

*Prepared by the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

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#### **Aims of the conference**

The Baku Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture offers a key opportunity to follow up the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and its recommendations, including on how Europe engages in dialogue with its neighbours. Promoting intercultural dialogue<sup>14</sup> contributes to the core objective of the Council of Europe, namely preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is one of the current priorities of the Organisation set at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in 2005 and exemplified through its Faro Declaration the same year.<sup>15</sup>

Ministers of culture from states parties to the European Cultural Convention, as well as several ministers representing states in regions neighbouring Azerbaijan – members of ALECSO or ISESCO – will explore approaches to intercultural dialogue and opportunities for transnational co-operation, using the unique potential of culture, the arts and heritage.

Ministers might find it useful to identify initiatives to further promote closer links through intercultural dialogue particularly between Europe and its neighbouring regions. What Europe could do to present itself to its neighbours as a multifaceted space with a diversity shaped by interaction with other regions is a key issue to be studied, taking into account that some of these inter-regional relations (e.g. those between Europe and the southern shores of the Mediterranean basin) are more developed than others. Building on the conference devoted to analysis of what appears to be emergent common ground for intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and international co-operation as reflected in manifold international initiatives (see below) and thematic panels dealing with cultural policy and heritage, the Baku Declaration to be issued on the second day of the ministerial conference will highlight findings and inspire possible future action. Following the conference, this declaration will be submitted to the Committee of Ministers for information and follow-up by the Organisation as appropriate.

#### **The emergence of intercultural dialogue**

The phrase “intercultural dialogue” first appeared as a commitment in the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of 1995. This was a product of the First Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in Vienna in 1993, which reflected not only on the unification of Europe but the wars in Yugoslavia and more widely on the “upheavals of history” and the national minorities they had left behind. While recent events gave intercultural dialogue additional political attention, the core elements of the emerging international consensus on intercultural dialogue as a “fundamental aim of cultural policies” (World Conference on Cultural Policies for Development, Stockholm, 1998) have been shaped throughout the last decade. Key to this has been the recognition that cultural diversity is “as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature” (UNESCO, 2001).

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14. “Intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect” (White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Section 1.4).

15. The salient facts about the Council of Europe are summarised in the appendix to this document.

Ten years ago, the terms “dialogue between cultures” (Stockholm Conference) or “dialogue among civilisations” (United Nations, 2001) or “dialogue among cultures and civilisations” (UNESCO, 2007) enjoyed wide currency. Since these terms implied, however, that such dialogue would be conducted by “representatives” and not by individuals and associations fully enjoying their human rights and their “freedom to make choices” (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2004), the term “intercultural dialogue” is now increasingly used. UNESCO (2008), in its *Medium Term Strategy 2008-2013*, uses both terms simultaneously; the European Commission (with the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue 2008) and the Council of Europe use mainly the term “intercultural dialogue”.

It has been recognised from the outset that dialogue within Europe cannot succeed in the absence of dialogue between Europe and its neighbours. *Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean Area*, the report by a high-level advisory group established by the President of the European Commission and published in October 2003 (Prodi Groupe des Sages, 2003), was the framework for the establishment of the Anna Lindh Foundation two years later. It set out three priorities: learning about diversity, promoting mobility and exchanges, and the media as instruments of equality and mutual knowledge.

Dialogue, however, is not a guarantee of its own success, and widespread frustration about the shallow results of so many events motivated a number of organisations to convene a conference in June 2005 in Rabat, on “Fostering dialogue among cultures and civilizations through concrete and sustainable initiatives”. The convenors and signatories of the “Rabat Commitment” were ALECSO, ISESCO, UNESCO, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development (DCCD) and the Council of Europe. The actions pledged ranged from education (with a joint teacher-training programme on cultural diversity and religious pluralism by ALECSO, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Council of Europe) to culture and communication. Cultural projects included “the power of music and musical creativity” and the transformation of museums into multicultural spaces, as well as synergies between bilateral and multilateral cultural agreements (UNESCO, 2007).

ALECSO's Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Arab Position on Dialogue and Diversity (2006) recommended: “the highlighting of the positive aspects of cultures, the development of the spirit of self-criticism in order to eliminate the inherited and unfortunate tendency to overrate oneself and look down on the Other, the development of an image of the self and of the Other that reflects in-depth mutual understanding and the strengthening of the common will to defend human values that ensure positive and creative interaction among peoples and cultures”.

In this context, civil society as well as government has been seen as playing an important role. This was the focus of a Euro-Mediterranean conference in February 2006 in Algiers, ending with an Algiers Declaration for a Shared Vision of the Future and an Action Plan. The conference was organised by the European Movement together with its southern partners, including the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. The declaration addressed the lack of ownership of the Euro-Mediterranean process among citizens, and therefore the need to reach out to and involve civil society, side by side with intercultural education and integration of immigrants.

More than 200 European and national civil society organisations recently established the “Rainbow Platform” for intercultural dialogue. The “Rainbow Paper” (January 2008) focused on migration, education and learning, including informal learning through arts and culture. In a similar vein, the Euro-Mediterranean Non-Governmental Platform proposes to “create a regional specific programme of support to contemporary artistic creation”.

On a global scale, the United Nations project of an “Alliance of Civilizations” resulted from an initiative by the prime ministers of Spain and Turkey. The “Report of the High Level Group” in November 2006 acknowledged that “the anxiety and confusion caused by the ‘clash of civilizations’ theory regrettably has distorted the terms of the discourse on the real nature of the predicament the world is facing”. Reasserting that cultural diversity was “a driving force of human progress”, the report proposed building bridges through action on education, youth, migration and the media.

## The Council of Europe and intercultural dialogue

This provides the backdrop for the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe. The 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, meeting in Warsaw in 2005, had charted a continuing path towards a Europe without dividing lines, based on democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The Warsaw Declaration<sup>16</sup> still expressed concern, however, about unresolved conflicts affecting parts of the continent, threatening the democratic stability of member states and their populations.

The Third Summit committed member states to foster European identity and unity, based on shared fundamental values, respect for common heritage and cultural diversity. Diversity was to be rendered a source of mutual enrichment, *inter alia* through political, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. According to the Action Plan adopted at the summit, intercultural dialogue is envisaged to promote reconciliation and tolerance, as well as to contribute to the prevention of conflicts and ensure integration. The plan aimed to strengthen co-operation and co-ordination within the Council of Europe and with other regional and international institutions, with the help of a co-ordinator for intercultural dialogue. It envisaged a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions (the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia), and recognised the role of the North-South Centre based in Lisbon and managed by the Council of Europe.

Culture ministers of the Council of Europe had already addressed intercultural dialogue in the Opatija Declaration (Council of Europe, 2003), highlighting the specific role and responsibilities of ministers of culture for promoting intercultural dialogue and preventing conflicts. The Faro Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs of the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, in October 2005, generated: a co-operation memorandum between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Foundation, a co-ordinated activity programme between the Council of Europe and ALECSO in education, culture, cultural and natural heritage, youth and sport, and a platform for intercultural dialogue and co-operation between the Council of Europe and UNESCO, open to other international or regional partners. It also advocated a White Paper on intercultural dialogue.<sup>17</sup>

The preparation of the White Paper entailed widespread consultation with most of the signatory states to the European Cultural Convention and about 200 other stakeholders, including civil society, religious bodies and partners from regions outside Europe. It appeared from the consultation that old approaches to the management of cultural diversity – whether premised on the assimilation of members of minority communities to a prevailing official ethos or their collectivised recognition in the name of multiculturalism – were no longer adequate at a time when diversity was unprecedented and ever-growing.

At their 118th session (Strasbourg, 6-7 May 2008), the foreign ministers of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe launched the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: “Living together as equals in dignity”,<sup>18</sup> which offered a new conceptual framework and guidance on policy and good practice. It insisted that intercultural dialogue had to be founded on the universal values promoted by the Council of Europe, associated with a recognition of the equality of individual dignity and our common humanity: “The cornerstones of a political culture valuing diversity are the common values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual respect.”

Intercultural dialogue, the White Paper contended, had an important role in preventing ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides and in enabling us to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically. To advance dialogue, the democratic governance of cultural diversity should be adapted in many respects, democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened, intercultural competences should be taught and learned, spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened, and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level.

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16. See [www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517\\_decl\\_varsovie\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dcr/summit/20050517_decl_varsovie_en.asp)

17. See <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=927109>

18. See Appendix II.

## **Addressing the challenge of diversity in cultural policy: the milestones**

Cultural diversity constitutes a key concern for culture ministers. The World Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm 1998) endorsed principles outlined in the report by the World Commission on Culture and Development, "Our Creative Diversity" (1996), in particular the appreciation of cultural diversity – "a treasure of humankind" and "an essential factor of development" – and cultural creativity. Cultural policies "should aim to create a sense of the nation as a multifaceted community rooted in values that can be shared by all men and women and give access, space and voice to all its members".

The Council of Europe's Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2000) promoted "the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices" and "the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products". UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) recognised multiple, overlapping and dynamic cultural identities of individuals and groups in its definition of cultural pluralism. Cultural diversity was qualified as a living, and thus renewable, treasure "that must not be perceived as being unchanging heritage but as a process guaranteeing survival of humanity". Similarly, ISESCO's Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004) would foster "cultural exchange and interaction between innovators in Islamic countries and their counterparts from other countries, giving impetus to creativity".

The report of the World Commission on Culture and Development (1996) had prepared the ground for the new understanding of cultural diversity as humanity's common heritage. Thus enlarging the previous notion of a world cultural heritage, the report proposed standard-setting also for "intangible heritage". With reference to safeguarding cultural diversity, UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) advocated specific standards for intangible heritage which were outlined two years later in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). The convention covers five domains: oral traditions, including languages; performing arts; social practices; traditional knowledge; and traditional craftsmanship. It is the first cultural convention establishing a "human rights clause" in stating that "consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing human rights instruments" (Article 2).

This clause was considered necessary to prevent possible conflicts between standards on preservation and promotion of diversity and universal human rights. It was developed in UNESCO's Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). Article 2.1 states: "Cultural diversity can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, information and communication, as well as the ability of individuals to choose cultural expressions, are guaranteed. No one may invoke the provisions of this Convention in order to infringe human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or guaranteed by international law, or to limit the scope thereof." In this context, it was possible to agree on the principle of "the recognition of equal dignity of and respect for all cultures".

## **The evidence base for policy**

One practical result of these developments has been new formats of cultural reporting, embracing diversity and intercultural dialogue. In 1998 the Council of Europe established an ambitious programme of reviews in the form of annually updated cultural policy country profiles. The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe now covers 41 countries and aims at servicing all 49 member countries of the European Cultural Convention. As a publicly available information tool, it is also used by an interested audience beyond Europe, inspiring policy making and research. Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are two of several thematic areas in which relevant information are collected and processed, including selection of good practices, legal and statistical data. The good practice section of the Council of Europe's cultural policy information system, the Compendium, might be further developed to cover the wealth of experiences gained in the cultural sector, including in Europe's neighbouring regions. The system is being offered as a tool for monitoring the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity at European level. The co-operation memorandum between the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Council of Europe of October 2005 was followed by the inclusion of exchange and co-operation with the Compendium project in the 2007-09 medium-term programme of the foundation.



The Compendium is accompanied by the Council of Europe's heritage policy and practices information system – HEREIN (European Heritage Network). These will be closely related, conceptually and technically, with the programme of national cultural policy reviews, sectoral and transversal reviews, the European Audiovisual Observatory of the Council of Europe and the Eurimages Fund in the initiative labelled "CultureWatchEurope". This will provide a platform for exchange between governments and civil society, to help raise consciousness of key issues connected to cultural rights and responsibilities, to maximise synergies between different players and to act as an informal alliance devoted to developing knowledge, arguments, awareness and capacity relating to culture for democracy. A specific co-operation will also be launched in 2009 between the HEREIN network and the Euromed Heritage Regional Monitoring and Support Unit as a contribution to institutional and legislative strengthening in the Euromed area countries.

The first World Culture Report of UNESCO (2000) was an experiment in covering worldwide trends and developments. The sections on cultural diversity included a first attempt at correlating statistical data on biodiversity with those on cultural diversity (exemplified by linguistic diversity). UNESCO's new *Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013* seeks to develop further reporting and analysis on this issue.

In recent years, "diversity monitoring" has become a more general standard for reviewing the effects of policies aimed at social integration. Thousands of public institutions and private companies have included information on the ethnic, linguistic or even religious diversity of their employees and their customers in annual reports.

Particularly interesting has been the inclusion of diversity monitoring in annual reviews of national media and international media associations. One of the first to apply this tool to content analysis of broadcasting was the study on "racism and cultural diversity in the media" undertaken in 2000 and 2001 by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in Vienna. It inspired the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) and the Euro-Mediterranean association of audiovisual operators (COPEAM) to adopt such reporting for their constituencies and to publish guidelines, benchmarks and good practice in the management of cultural diversity by the media.

The most comprehensive world report on diversity was published by the UNDP as its "Human Development Report 2004: Cultural liberty in today's diverse world". This report found "little empirical evidence that cultural differences and clashes over values are in themselves a cause of violent conflict". On the contrary, "it is often the suppression of culturally identified groups that leads to tensions". It supported all ambitions for conducting intercultural dialogue as a dialogue among equals, as expressed in recent declarations.

Another innovative format of reporting was presented by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in January 2008 with the first issue, "Islam and the West", of an "Annual Report on the State of Dialogue". It related polls on public perception of Islam-West encounters in various countries to policy analysis and to programmes and projects. Culture and the arts were not directly the focus of this report, which advocated action mainly on migration, education, the media and interfaith dialogue, though it did provide evidence of the "centrality of respect" in Islam-West relations and of cultural diversity within the countries covered.

The recent report for the European Commission on national approaches to intercultural dialogue in Europe, published in March 2008, "Sharing Diversity" (ERICarts, 2008), proposed a more central role for intercultural dialogue in EU programmes and strategies. The report related data on public opinion to an analysis of diversity, mainly concerning migration, and activities in education, culture (arts and heritage), youth and sports. Taking inspiration from the Compendium information system, case studies and good practice featured throughout. The report provided evidence that visible differences play a major role in discrimination, while most EU citizens are supportive of diversity and intercultural dialogue. It also showed that intercultural dialogue had become increasingly important for national legislation and educational, cultural and social policies, including in relation with EU policies.

## Arts, heritage and creativity in intercultural dialogue

### *Challenges and strategies for cultural co-operation for dialogue*

Contemporary strategies for intercultural dialogue, as indicated, tend to emphasise education, youth and the media. Although fully justified, given present needs and within an enlarged notion of “culture”, renewed attention is called for to the core elements of cultural expression. In an international context characterised by an increasing number of verbal dialogue events, the creative arts and music provide a common language across linguistic, ethnic and religious frontiers and, along with cultural heritage (tangible and intangible), a source of mutual enrichment. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue ranks culture, the arts and heritage among the particularly important dimensions of dialogue: “The cultural heritage, ‘classical’ cultural activities, ‘cultural routes’, contemporary art forms, popular and street culture, the culture transmitted by the media and the Internet naturally cross borders and connect cultures. Art and culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, and can act as mediators.”

In the “Rainbow Paper”, the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) expressed their “particular interest in demonstrating that art and culture have a special role in intercultural dialogue because they question prejudices and stereotypes, break taboos, trigger curiosity, play with images and words, inspire and connect. They have the potential to give an inspirational and educational dimension to political endeavours, and can provide the spark for citizens to become interested in the challenge of INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE.” In a similar vein, the Rabat Commitment (2005) called upon “all actors engaged in intercultural and inter-civilizational dialogue to tap the power of music and musical creativity” (UNESCO, 2007).

The value of creative industries and heritage in cultural, social and economic terms has been widely recognised as essential to the processes of development, as well as to the enhancing of local, regional and national identities. Proposals for cultural corridors that cross national boundaries are being explored by intergovernmental bodies and international agencies, as are the notions of inter-regional co-operation in sectors such as film production and distribution, festivals promotion and cultural tourism.

The principle of co-ownership of cultural heritage across frontiers is also becoming ever more significant. Future joint activities between cultural experts from Europe and the Arab States region might focus on Europe’s Islamic heritage, past and present (from Al-Andalus to the cultural influence of the Ottoman Empire and vibrant cultural activities among migrant populations); Islamic Arts (the Euromed project of the Museum With No Frontiers Association); and non-formal arts and music education for youth. Children must not be underestimated as “ambassadors for dialogue” and experiences with music and choirs suggest that a Council of Europe initiative, in collaboration with partners, that combines the musical traditions and contemporary expression of different cultures should be explored.

The cultural sphere is a domain of the active production, reproduction and renewal of the complex and evolving identities which are themselves the subjects of intercultural dialogue. It provides opportunities for the understanding of increasingly complex identities, often multiple and shared, to be subjected to new perspectives, and for their contradictions to be explored in a non-threatening and often revelatory manner. It engenders new combinations of diverse elements of identity, through fusions and appropriations, which offer exciting innovations. The cohabitation in one locality of different identities has been an important driver of creativity and prosperity, and the recognition of a diversified concept of heritage has become a central component of cultural policy that is relevant to today’s changing societies. The initiative co-ordinated by the Council of Europe resulting in a “European Manifesto for Multiple Cultural Affiliation”,<sup>19</sup> and the educational *Handbook on Values for Life in a Democracy*, with case studies and key questions, offer insights into the link between culture and heritage, and human rights, justice and freedom.

Regional programmes for the enhancement of cultural and natural heritage, such as the joint action by the Council of Europe and the European Commission in South-Eastern Europe<sup>20</sup>

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19. [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/manifeste\\_europeen\\_pour\\_appartenance\\_culturelle\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Identities/manifeste_europeen_pour_appartenance_culturelle_en.pdf)

20. See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/Default_en.asp)

and the Council of Europe's Kyiv Initiative,<sup>21</sup> foster approaches that promote peace-building and reconciliation in regions where countries are responding to common challenges in heritage management as a result of conflicts and war. Such programmes utilise heritage as a bridge to the understanding of diverse and often competing narratives about intercultural coexistence.

#### *Cross-Mediterranean co-operation in the arts*

The arts offer an essential means of encouraging intercultural dialogue. In February 2008, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) published a comprehensive report on critical issues in arts co-operation between Europe and its southern neighbours on the other shore of the Mediterranean (ECF, 2008). The report described most arts exhibitions and festivals as "unilateral, not reciprocal": art from Europe was brought to other countries and art from the Arab States region was brought to Europe, with "otherness" more in focus than exchange or co-operation. The report however evidenced a growing number of innovative projects, from music to arts festivals, organised by partners North and South and focused on exchange and joint production. Generally, the report gave some grounds for optimism, proposing support for more direct co-operation between arts projects in South-Eastern Europe and in the Arab States region. Meanwhile, co-operative research between European and Arab philosophers and arts specialists generated the recent publication *The Arts in the Dialogue between Cultures: Europe and its Muslim Neighbours*, reflecting the multiple perspectives in Europe and the Arab States on pictures in everyday life, on literature and music (Wulf, Poulain and Triki, 2007/2008).

#### *Museums*

As to specific instances of co-operation, the Museum With No Frontiers (MWNF) is one of the few cultural projects of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to develop its own structures and financing. It started by promoting the concept of digital (and thus widely accessible) museum collections and developed a co-operative approach between museum experts and artists. Two of the most interesting recent projects were the Young MWNF, bridging museum pedagogy and arts education in schools, and Discover Islamic Art, the first project on Islamic arts jointly undertaken by specialists from Europe and the Arab States.

#### *Culture and music festivals*

The Biennial of Young Artists from Europe and the Mediterranean (BJCEM), founded in 1985, was the first arts festival organised in co-operation between local and national arts associations from North and South (today, 75 institutions in 20 countries). The BJCEM invites young artists (under 30) to present their skills and talent in seven areas, which increasingly involve everyday culture: visual arts (including performance and other action in public places), applied arts (including fashion), show (theatre, dance and urban acts), literature, music (including DJs), gastronomy and moving images.

The aim has been for many years to hold the BJCEM in one of the southern countries but the last project in Egypt could not be realised due to lack of local and European funding for such unconventional co-operative events outside Europe. Among the arts festivals breaking new ground and operating within an international art discourse, however, are the Istanbul and Sharjah biennials and the new Art Dubai. Bringing arts to public spaces is a common feature: the Istanbul Biennial includes art production in public space, bringing artists together with shoppers.

The European Arts Festivals Association recently expressed a keen interest in introducing more co-operation and exchange in European Arts Festivals. In their Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue (Ljubljana, 8 January 2008), the arts promoters supported transforming multicultural into intercultural societies, strengthening the coexistence of cultural identities and beliefs, and looking respectfully at the differences of individual and local experiences. The declaration expressed a commitment "to give artists from all over the world the opportunity of increasing and developing their artistic experience, thus initiating a process of mutual

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21. The Kyiv Initiative is a regional and transversal programme that includes five countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine.  
See [www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default_en.asp)

exchange of artistic excellence among different countries”, highlighting artists-in-residence programmes which allow “artists to live and work in new contexts and to combine their own experience with the local one”.

As for music, the Marseille-based project Aide aux Musiques Innovatrices (AMI), founded in 1999, has inspired a wave of mutual interest and joint production between creators of contemporary popular music in Europe and the Arab States region. Euro-Mediterranean music festivals, recording of cross-over and joint performances, and awards for musical exchange have been organised. The Monte Carlo-Doualiya Music Award for the Dialogue between Cultures was established in 2007 by Radio France Internationale in partnership with the Festival of Jerash, the Palestinian Edward Saïd National Conservatory of Music and the Austrian International Music and Media Centre. The award criteria focus on young performers’ creativity in using music to build bridges between countries and cultures.

### *Mobility*

Exchange of ideas in word and image, exchange of cultural goods and services, and exchange of persons are the three classical aspects of mobility reflected in virtually every international cultural agreement over the last 60 years. Almost every local cultural identity now includes elements that have found their way into the most remote and most closed communities, forming new “transcultural identities” (Robins, 2006). Yet mobility of persons seems much more unevenly distributed than mobility of information, goods and services.

“Free international movement of artists” and their freedom “to practise their art in the country of their choice” were among the international standards arising from the UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980). Yet artists and other cultural actors from the Arab States region and, to a lesser extent, artists from non-EU member states of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe are in a particularly difficult situation.

Data from the World Observatory on the Status of the Artist and the recent study on artistic mobility in the Mediterranean, undertaken by the Roberto Cimetta Fund in conjunction with the Council of Europe, ECF and UNESCO (2007), reveal the obstacles. Surprisingly, it is, in many cases, not the visa regime that is considered most important. Rather, it is the lack of funding opportunities and of relevant mobility programmes, followed by a lack of information about the few schemes available for artists and other cultural actors. In addition, funding schemes give support mainly on a case-by-case and individual basis. Even grant schemes which are deliberately based on the principle of equality (such as the Anna Lindh Foundation’s 2+2 formula for North-South co-operation) have noted a very significant dominance of project leaders and co-ordinators from the North, and have, therefore, embraced capacity-building among cultural actors in the South.

A “comprehensive strategy for mobility in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership”, presented by the Anna Lindh Foundation and the Robert Cimetta Fund in autumn 2006 to several civil society and intergovernmental meetings, recommended “a coherent cultural strategy with measures for improving conditions of equal partnership between North and South”, including “training and provision of advisory services enabling cultural actors in the South to organise a larger number of exchange and co-operation projects in the South”. The strategy also proposed to “transform support schemes to individual mobility into fostering exchanges”.

On mobility and information and communications technology (ICT), the 1997 World Congress on the implementation of the Recommendation on the Status of the Artist concluded that “the new technologies cannot be a substitute for direct contact between artists and their public or for traditional branches of the arts”. The report on “Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean Area” (Prodi Groupe des Sages, 2003) similarly warned against restricting exchange and networking to virtual communication, since only meetings in physical locations, with face-to-face contact, could offer “experience of all aspects of dialogue”.

## **The role of cultural ministers in intercultural dialogue**

### *Developing the common ground for intercultural dialogue*

The Council of Europe White Paper, as well as the European and Euro-Mediterranean Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, mark a turning point. Ten years after the Stockholm conference, it seems as if, finally, cultural policies are about to move centre stage on national and international agendas, integrating with social policies and other priorities, as proposed more than a decade ago by the World Commission on Culture and Development and by “In from the Margins” the associated Council of Europe report by the independent Task Force on Cultural Policies for Development (1997). This is associated with what appears to be emergent common ground on cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and international co-operation.

A new “European Agenda for Culture” was presented by the European Commission in May 2007 and approved by the European Council in November 2007. This strategy “builds on the principles stated in the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the relevant international references”.

The 3rd Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture (Athens, 29-30 May 2008) signalled a new phase in Mediterranean cultural co-operation. According to its conclusions, it marked “the starting point of a fully-fledged Euro-Mediterranean Strategy on Culture, encompassing co-operation in both the dialogue between cultures and cultural policy”. Although it is a pillar of the European agenda, declaring promotion of culture “a vital element in the Union’s international relations”, was not reflected in the conclusions. The new strategy will be elaborated by a group of experts before the next meeting of culture ministers, scheduled for 2010. Meanwhile, the Franco-German initiative to upgrade the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Euromed) into a “Union for the Mediterranean” could be an impetus for more cultural co-operation.

The Alliance of Civilizations process held its first international forum in January 2008 in Madrid. It set up important new instruments, such as the Rapid Response Media Mechanism to cope with major cross-cultural crises, and established partnership agreements with UNESCO, the League of Arab States, ISESCO, ALECSO and United Cities and Local Governments, with a memorandum of understanding to be signed with the Council of Europe and co-operation envisaged with the Union for the Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the Islamic countries, at the 5th conference of culture ministers in Tripoli in November 2007, adopted the “Tripoli Commitments” on renewing cultural policies in the Islamic world and adapting them to international changes (ISESCO, 2007).

Cultural policies, coming “in from the margins” to the core agenda, meet citizens demanding visible improvements on everyday issues of social cohesion, of living together in dignity and mutual respect, of opportunities for a decent life. This entails a human rights-based understanding of culture as an entitlement to access and creativity, and a recognition that cultural diversity between and within countries is a common heritage of humankind. The preservation, development and management of cultural diversity and the promotion of creativity are essential for sustainable economic development, as well as all-round personal development, and should be pursued within an integrated policy approach.

As for intercultural dialogue specifically, the complex and overlapping cultural identities of individuals must be recognised, with dialogue seen as an opportunity for learning. Individuals and associations should be seen as actors in civil society, in addition to government. And if priority fields are education, culture and the media, priority participants are youth, migrants and women. These considerations invite governments to link international with national and local cultural policies, and to enhance the contribution of cultural policies to improving the quality of life of citizens at large.

The Intercultural Cities project, which has been developed as a joint action between the Council of Europe and the European Commission is a practical approach to developing intercultural models of urban governance at local level.<sup>22</sup> One strand of this project focuses on 12 pilot cities that have been selected to concentrate on a number of central themes, such as

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22. See [www.coe.int/interculturalcities](http://www.coe.int/interculturalcities)

governance structures and leadership, the media, intercultural mediation and the role of cultural policies and action. Successful cities of the future will be intercultural; they will be capable of exploiting the potential of their cultural diversity to stimulate creativity and innovation, and so generate increased economic prosperity and a better quality of life. Other projects of the Council of Europe, such as the inclusion of Islamic art and traditions in its future series of exhibitions, and the development of the practice of cultural routes to feature intercultural connections<sup>23</sup> are initiatives that can offer model approaches.

By recognising the importance of joint projects in the arts and cultural sectors between the Council of Europe member states and those of ALECSO and of ISESCO, and developing new proposals for action between countries which have not yet participated in projects, especially in partnership with civil society organisations and artists, there will be a more clearly focused transition between an understanding of the principles of intercultural dialogue and their realisation.

#### *Topics for discussion at two ministerial panels*

Ministers are invited to exchange views and discuss responses to urgent questions that can translate policies for intercultural dialogue into practice. Two panels could deal with:

1. Cultural policy, programmes and initiatives for intercultural dialogue: new concepts on the governance of diversity:

How best can we ensure intercultural dialogue is made an explicit part of the cultural policies of states? How best can cultural activity be helpful in promoting intercultural competences? Which new joint actions will strengthen practical co-operation and have an impact on the intercultural practices of cultural institutions and organisations?

What needs to be done to enhance interaction between the various levels of intergovernmental and civil society co-operation in intercultural dialogue, particularly from the perspectives of the different regions that are represented at this conference?

How can regular exchange, co-ordination and interaction between the numerous national focal points for international intercultural dialogue programmes be improved?

How can intergovernmental organisations improve their services to member states, to provide them with up-to-date and action-oriented information on new developments in intercultural dialogue, in particular new formats of monitoring and reporting on diversity and good practice exchange?

2. Heritage and intercultural dialogue: from national to universally owned heritage:

The Council of Europe Faro Convention promotes shared responsibility towards cultural heritage and emphasises the contribution of heritage to society and human development. Do ministers agree with the proposal to promote more effectively a shared responsibility towards heritage?

How can local pride over world heritage or masterpieces of intangible heritage be better linked with the idea of cultural diversity as a common heritage of humankind? How can heritage be managed to encourage dialogue rather than incite conflicts?

What common initiatives could be launched in the region hosting the conference? Do ministers support the idea of increased co-operation through transborder heritage projects?

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23. There are several intercultural routes in Europe, such as the Castilian language route, the Al Andalus (Arab heritage) route, the Jewish heritage route and soon the Roma heritage route and route of migration heritage, as well as, beyond Europe, famous UNESCO initiatives such as the Silk Roads Project.

How can particular intercultural cities, cultural capitals or cultural routes embrace the notion of a universally relevant and pluralistic heritage? How could cultural tourism be developed as an instrument for intercultural dialogue?

### *Possibilities for future action*

Based on the common ground for intercultural dialogue as set out above, international instruments on human rights and a human rights-based understanding of culture offer an essential foundation for intercultural dialogue. With a view to contributing to the follow-up to the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and promoting the implementation of its recommendations, the ministers responsible for culture might envisage the following actions (tentative list). Proposed actions that are of the greatest relevance and importance to the regions that are represented at the conference might be considered as priorities, taking into account the interests both of the member states that are parties to the European Cultural Convention and the other states that are participating in the conference:

- promotion of creative arts as a key instrument for intercultural dialogue;
- implementation of the UNESCO Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- support for instruments for the mobility of artists (Robert Cimetta Fund, ECF, etc.) and proposals for their expansion, transforming individual exchanges into multilateral exchange programmes;
- launch of activities, such as the Artists for Dialogue initiative<sup>24</sup> and an intercultural project involving children and music, with the creation of a fund for interested partners to join and support;
- exploring collaboration on cultural issues with the Alliance of Civilizations;
- developing partnerships with appropriate civil society organisations, networks and platforms, foundations and private sector businesses who are interested in supporting intercultural initiatives;
- follow-up to the Council of Europe White Paper in the field of culture;
- organisation of joint expert meetings between the Council of Europe and ALECSO on arts and heritage for dialogue, peace and sustainable development (re-enforcing the Faro Agreement with ALECSO of 2005);
- exploring and developing collaboration on cultural issues and activities with ISESCO, following the examples of the Council of Europe's education and youth sectors;
- considering extending the Kyiv Initiative approach to inter-regional projects (South-Western Europe/Maghreb, South-Eastern Europe/Black Sea Region/Eastern Mediterranean, Central Asia, etc.) or using the Kyiv Initiative approach for new projects;
- promotion of joint activities between cultural experts from Europe and the Arab States region, such as:
  - a. art exhibitions on Europe's Islamic heritage, past and present;
  - b. Islamic Arts within European Institutions (Euromed project of the Museum With No Frontiers Association), and European Arts within Institutions of Arab States;
  - c. cultural routes;
  - d. non-formal arts and music education for youth;

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24. As mentioned in the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, Section 5.5.

- Using major existing festivals as platforms for special activities that promote inter-cultural dialogue;
- joint reflection on heritage issues concerning shared heritage and co-ownership of heritage across frontiers;
- bridging the networks of local and regional authorities in Europe and in the Mediterranean/Arab region, through promoting good practices, twinning arrangements and enlargement of the Intercultural Cities project to the Arab States;
- invitation to non-members of the Council of Europe to join the Compendium project (in particular in the field of cultural diversity/good practices, management of cultural diversity) and possibly the European Heritage Network (HEREIN).

Other actions may be proposed by participants at the conference. These would be pursued through the following mechanisms: and processes of co-operation:

- joint activities by Council of Europe member states and non-governmental or civil society organisations;
- activities in the framework of the co-operation memorandum between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and of the co-ordinated activity programme between the Council of Europe and ALECSO in education, culture, cultural and natural heritage, youth and sport, as well as in the framework of the platform for intercultural dialogue and co-operation between the Council of Europe and UNESCO, open to other international or regional partners;
- joint activities with the European Commission, e.g. building on existing initiatives;
- sub-regional activities;
- activities between Council of Europe member states and partners from neighbouring regions;
- practical co-operation activities with ISESCO in the cultural field – as they exist in the youth and education sectors of the Council of Europe;
- inviting the participation of foundations and key businesses;
- extension to partners interested in the expansion of existing bilateral projects;
- organising a follow-up working meeting to the Baku Conference (2008) with high officials and other interested parties in 2009 to elaborate projects, monitor action, evaluate the preliminary outcomes of the Baku Conference and agree priorities for future action, in order to maintain the momentum of the process.

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## Appendix

### *The Council of Europe fact sheet*

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals.

The Council of Europe has a genuine pan-European dimension. It has currently 47 member states<sup>25</sup> and one applicant country (Belarus). Observer states are the Holy See, the United States, Canada, Japan and Mexico.

The aims of the Council of Europe are:

- to protect human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law;
- to promote awareness and encourage the development of Europe's cultural identity and diversity;
- to find common solutions to the challenges facing European society, such as discrimination against minorities, xenophobia, intolerance, bioethics and cloning, terrorism, trafficking in human beings, organised crime and corruption, cybercrime, violence against children;
- to consolidate democratic stability in Europe by backing political, legislative and constitutional reform.

The current Council of Europe's political mandate was defined by the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, held in Warsaw in May 2005.

The main component parts of the Council of Europe are:

- the Committee of Ministers, the Organisation's decision-making body, composed of the 47 foreign ministers or their Strasbourg-based deputies (ambassadors, permanent representatives);
- the Parliamentary Assembly, driving force for European co-operation, grouping 636 members (318 representatives and 318 substitutes) from the 47 national parliaments;
- the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, the voice of Europe's regions and municipalities, composed of a Chamber of Local Authorities and a Chamber of Regions;
- the Secretariat recruited from member states, headed by a Secretary General (elected by the Parliamentary Assembly). The Secretariat is organised in directorates general (among them Directorate General IV, dealing with education, culture and heritage, youth and sport) and directorates.

For further details see [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int).

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25. Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.



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## Round table

### Common ground for intercultural dialogue

*Informal discussion paper prepared by Robin Wilson  
as input to the debate*

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*Are there realistic alternatives to the vision of a multicultural society held together by universal values, as expressed in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue?*

All societies nowadays are multicultural. This is in some cases the result of what the 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe described as the “upheavals of history” – upheavals which have left many disjunctions between the perceived boundaries of national “imagined communities” and state borders. More generally, it has stemmed from the movement of people in a globalised environment, whether as migrants aspiring to a better life or as refugees fleeing an intolerable one. The “unity in diversity” upheld by the White Paper then depends on a common commitment to universal norms.

Such trends can, in theory, be reversed to secure a vision of a homogeneous society. But this can only be achieved by the “ethnic cleansing” of members of minority communities internally and/or by constructing a fortress against the “alien” at the gate. Neither is compliant with states’ international commitments to conventions on human rights or asylum. At worst, a homogenising drive can only bring wars of suppression or secession, and with that new flows of displaced people, or “frozen conflicts” with the potential to erupt into violence at any time. At best, the result would be a static society unable to keep up in a world where economic and social innovation is at a premium and is widely recognised to be enhanced by cultural diversity.

*How can the promotion of cultural diversity be translated into practical action in the cultural field?*

Cultural diversity can be thought of along the lines of the model of biodiversity: it naturally occurs and cultural policy is not so much a task of creating it as of managing the cultural “ecosystem”. This means ensuring that the “environment” sustains diverse cultural actors and maximises the opportunities for “cross-fertilisation” between them.

Rights to freedom of cultural expression and a non-discriminatory regime of public support are essential if diverse cultural products are to thrive. Minority languages should be preserved, and broadcasters should ensure proportionate minority programming. Encouraging networks and exchanges among cultural practitioners, particularly across perceived cultural dividing lines – internally or internationally – can stimulate new “hybrid” forms. A managed but open policy on migration and a willingness to support innovative cultural outputs can maximise the benefit to be drawn from the “transcultural” identities of many migrants.

*Is the so-called intercultural approach, as described in the White Paper, equally applicable in all societies and cultures?*

The White Paper has emerged from the Council of Europe, but the intercultural approach is not confined to Europe. This is not only because the White Paper stresses the contribution of other transnational organisations and the importance of partnerships with them, particularly where these represent Europe’s “neighbours”. It is also because the *alternative* approach – encapsulated in the phrase “the clash of civilisations” – is itself conceived in a global fashion.

The Council of Europe is conscious that the values it embodies – of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – are not narrowly “European”, founded as they are on the principle of equality of human dignity. The same case can be made for the “political architecture” which

the White Paper identifies as required to engender a culture of tolerance and broadmindedness: equality of citizenship (including gender equality), reciprocal recognition by persons belonging to different communities and impartial public authority to deal fairly with their competing claims. Indeed, where these conditions do *not* apply, there is a risk of the “Balkanisation” of states and regions along ethnic or religious fault lines, where walls embody the spurious security offered by communal leaders manipulating fears of the “other”.

*Does the White Paper provide a coherent conceptual framework and a useful guide for policy makers and practitioners, as well as for partners from regions outside Europe?*

The White Paper is also of universal provenance in its conceptual framework. It identifies two models for the management of cultural diversity which have failed: assimilation and multiculturalism. The former assumed that members of minority communities should assimilate to a prevailing majority ethos, which rendered them invisible and liable to discrimination and exclusion. The latter envisaged that minority communities be treated as if they were homogeneous collectives whose “culture” and “traditions” should be recognised, which fostered ghettoisation and mutual suspicion and jeopardised the rights of individuals, notably women, within such communities.

The White Paper breaks with this schematic, majority/minority way of thinking, recognising the uniquely complex, dynamic and relational character of every individual’s identity and stressing the importance of dialogue among such individuals, and their associations, across communal lines. In policy terms, intercultural dialogue thus provides the social “glue” of a diverse society by addressing the differences which inevitably arise. In practice, that means sponsoring open and respectful exchanges of views, on the manifestation, for example, of religious symbols in the public sphere – an issue as divisive at the margins of Europe as at its core.

*What weight needs to be given to the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue?*

Religion is a major factor in social life and inter-religious dialogue necessarily looms large – all the more so as the “clash of civilisations” is understood to mean “Islam” versus an implicitly Christian “West”. A case can be made that all the world religions advance universal values of peace and tolerance. Nevertheless, all religions also make faith-based truth claims about who “we” are and where “we” are from, which can be interpreted by fundamentalists – of any religion – as a divinely ordained mission to be defended against the heretical “other”. Such claims are not rendered amenable to resolution on the basis of objective evidence; indeed, *in extremis*, religion can be deployed in support of the denial of established historical events.

Inter-religious dialogue is thus both essential and essentially difficult. It cannot take place if religion is confined to the private sphere under the banner of official secularism. As with intercultural dialogue in general, however, it can only take place if public authority is neutral between competing views – itself a necessary guarantee of freedom of conscience for all – rather than upholding one particular religion, or even sect, against another. Nor is it appropriate to see inter-religious dialogue as exclusive: the moral and ethical questions central to religious concerns are also legitimate concerns of agnostics and non-believers.

*Are the five policy approaches proposed by the White Paper of equal importance everywhere, or do priorities need to vary from one country to the next?*

The five policy domains identified in the White Paper are: the democratic governance of cultural diversity, democratic citizenship and participation, learning and teaching intercultural competences, spaces for intercultural dialogue and intercultural dialogue in international relations. These are the interlocking building blocks of intercultural dialogue, which demands a political culture in which diversity is valued, where diverse individuals engage with one another as fellow citizens, where all citizens have a basic intercultural competence for dialogue, where dialogue can take place in safe spaces, and where such spaces can extend to the transnational.

Inevitably, in any particular context, priorities may vary. In societies riven by violence, finding safe spaces for dialogue is at a premium. Where access for migrants to citizenship is

restrictive, equally, democratic participation will seem to them a remote possibility. And so on. The beauty of intercultural dialogue, however, is that it is inherently as diverse as the individuals who engage in it. It is not an official ideology, to be imposed regardless of circumstances on the ground. On the contrary, it depends on local authorities and NGOs to fill in what is otherwise an outline sketch of a framework.

*If so, what are the parameters of national policies for the promotion of intercultural dialogue?*

Because intercultural dialogue is not like a medical prescription for all ills, national policies have to be elaborated in a way which addresses the problems as they manifest themselves and comes up with concrete solutions. That means full engagement of NGOs, particularly minority and intercommunal associations, which will also be critical to ensuring policy has credibility at street level.

But some common parameters remain. In every society, education and the media are critical spheres where taken-for-granted identities are either reproduced, at the expense of a stultifying conformism, or questioned in a manner conducive to democracy and diversity. In education, including non-formal and informal education, intercultural competences must be recognised as being as basic to successful adult life as numeracy and literacy. As for media organisations, while protecting freedom of expression, they must ensure they are internally diverse so that they can offer virtual spaces for dialogue, rather than rendering members of minorities invisible or breaking down along ethnic lines and reproducing stereotyped identities.

*What are the key obstacles?*

Obstacles can be practical. For example, members of different communities may literally not be able to talk to each other because their very difference is defined by language. Planning and urban policies may foster a lifestyle which is mobile but private, organised around the car and the home, with only an attenuated public sphere, so there is no *agora* where intercultural dialogue can take place.

The structure of society can itself engender barriers. A climate of discrimination against minorities, even their social marginalisation, will mean that members of different communities have little social contact and confront each other in a mistrustful fashion when they do. Political leaders may lack the will to face the challenges of intercultural dialogue or may even exploit xenophobic or sectarian sentiments in a populist fashion. On a global scale, fundamentalist organisations are defined by their very refusal of dialogue with the “enemy”, while talk of a “war on terror” reduces the challenge of dialogue worldwide to unilateral military operations.

*Which examples of good practice exist that could help governments to overcome these obstacles?*

While intercultural dialogue is still quite a new idea conceptually, in practice there is much valuable experience on which to draw. On language, the intercultural approach is not to require members of minority communities to assimilate to the predominant language and abandon their own; nor is it to suggest they simply celebrate their mother tongue at the expense of social participation. It is to endorse bi- and multilingualism on the part of all members of society, so that language becomes neither a stigma nor a marker of division and intercultural dialogue can be a reality. On planning, cities can be designed to foster open spaces, freed from the dominance of the car (on the model of the public square), which are conducive to dialogue and can abjure the residential segregation of communities along ethnic lines.

Cultural policies offer a host of examples of good practice. The visual and performing arts, including public art, can inspire audiences to reflect critically on their senses of themselves and others, and on how others see them. They allow new social possibilities to be imagined in a safe, indeed entertaining, way and can ensure intercultural dialogue engages the heart as well as the head. Music and sport have a particularly wide reach: popular music is in a

constant process of fusion of elements with different cultural origins, while sport can bring people together under universal rules of fair play. Best practice has been to collate cultural, social and economic policies which impinge on intercultural dialogue into a national integration plan, joining up action across government departments and offering a voice for members of minority communities in the design and delivery of the plan.

*How can intercultural dialogue (as conceived in the White Paper) contribute to an Alliance of Civilizations, as conceived at UN level?*

Intercultural dialogue is premised on the idea of our common humanity, that, in addition to whatever national citizenship rights we enjoy, whether based on the principle of *ius soli* or *ius sanguinis*, we are all entitled to a universal *ius humanitatis*. Within this perspective, it is impossible to reduce the population of the world to undifferentiated consumers of global commodities or to conceive of global civilisations as hermetically sealed and inherently in conflict.

In the past, “representative” dialogues, where it is assumed that dialogue is about rehearsing positions rather than learning from the other and that “cultures” are homogeneous social wholes, have often proved sterile. A concept of intercultural dialogue contributes to the Alliance of Civilizations an appreciation that “civilisations” are open to interpretation and democratic contest, and are in a state of flux in their mutual relationships. By the same token, the recognition that intercultural dialogue must be underpinned by universal norms – of democracy, human rights and the rule of law – is equally applicable to the global level. Without such a framework of impartial constraints, there is always the risk of a collapse into the exchange of self-serving propaganda statements.

#### **Draft elements for the Baku Declaration**

The overall background paper for the conference has already set out several elements which could be included in a Baku Declaration. The above considerations however imply an additional, and major, element for consideration – a co-ordinated and sustained dialogue *about* intercultural dialogue within the Caucasus and Middle East, of which Azerbaijan is at the heart.

Within this region, there are a host of conflicts – latent, frozen or overt and violent – which can only be resolved through intercultural dialogue, across national, ethnic, religious and linguistic lines. A “Baku process” following on from the conference could establish a normative framework in which such challenges could be discussed in the spirit of intercultural dialogue, founded on universal values, as opposed to the conventional articulation of established official positions.

Were such a process to be initiated by culture ministers, it might not immediately run into the well-known political roadblocks. It could focus initially on cultural exchanges, events and symposia. It could be spearheaded by the mooted Artists for Dialogue network, and would give the latter a focus within the region. The Council of Europe could be asked to play a neutral broker role in assisting the process to get under way.



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## Panel 1

### **Cultural policy, programmes and initiatives for intercultural dialogue: new concepts on the governance of diversity**

*Informal working document prepared by D. Cliche  
as input to the debate*

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#### **Governments identify intercultural dialogue as a priority**

Intercultural dialogue emerged as a priority on the agendas of ministers responsible for culture over the past ten years. Following the publication of two landmark reports on culture and development, "Our Creative Diversity" (UNESCO, 1996) and "In from the Margins" (Council of Europe, 1997), intercultural dialogue was addressed in a series of declarations and strategies adopted by national governments which express new concepts of cultural diversity. These concepts, going beyond multiculturalism, identify intercultural dialogue as a tool contributing to the governance of cultural diversity within individual societies, transnationally across countries and internationally with other world regions.<sup>26</sup> Mutual respect and recognition of the protection and promotion of cultural diversity and of diverse cultural expressions become underlying principles upon which policies and programmes for intercultural dialogue can be built.

In October 2003, the European ministers responsible for cultural affairs adopted the Opatija Declaration which for the first time committed European cultural policy makers to promote intercultural dialogue. This commitment was reiterated in their 2005 ministerial meeting and the resulting Faro Declaration, emphasising intergovernmental and regional co-operation as well as the need to develop strategies to promote intercultural dialogue. The involvement of civil society, particularly young people in Europe and beyond, was emphasised.

In parallel, ISESCO member states adopted an Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004) which emphasised intercultural dialogue as a unique alternative to the prevailing "culture of violence and exclusion of the other" and called for constructive co-operation and dialogue based on the principle of cultural diversity. Indeed one of ISESCO's main culture and communication programme lines "Cultural Plurality and Dialogue among Civilizations: from Theory to Practice" is to address the "unity and diversity" of Islamic culture, dialogue and solidarity among Muslims, as well as international cultural exchange to promote dialogue and alliance among cultures and civilisations.

The May 2008 Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue set forth a new conceptual framework and five policy approaches to intercultural dialogue as signposts in the continuing development of policies and strategies including for culture. The question to be addressed is: how can these ministerial commitments be carried forward in concrete terms, in other words, to ensure that intercultural dialogue becomes an explicit component of cultural policies, strategies or programmes?

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26. For example, the Council of Europe and UNESCO declarations on cultural diversity (2000, 2001), the Opatija Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention (2003), the ISESCO Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2004), Faro Declaration and Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue (2005), UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Arab Position on Dialogue and Diversity (2006), Non-Aligned Movement Declaration and Programme of Action on Human Rights and Diversity (2007), EU Culture Agenda (2007), etc.

## **Intercultural dialogue as an explicit component of cultural policies?<sup>27</sup>**

It is important to recognise that not all countries have comprehensive cultural policy frameworks but may have a series of policies, programmes and measures – within and outside of the responsibility of ministries of culture – which are important for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. They can be described as creativity directed measures (e.g. direct support for joint arts productions and performances), market support measures (e.g. direct and indirect support aimed at enhancing the distribution of diverse artistic works, cultural goods and services through festivals and other events) and participation directed measures (e.g. aimed at dismantling barriers to participation in cultural life). It is also recognised that intercultural dialogue encounters are supported through funds and programmes to foster the transnational mobility of artists and cultural professionals (e.g. travel grants, scholarships, artist in residency programmes, etc.). These encounters can be hindered by internal economic and social frameworks and regulations on taxation and social security as well as internal security restrictions governing visas and work permits.

While there are diverse interpretations of the meaning of intercultural dialogue, concepts and models of public policies for culture, it is universally agreed that intercultural dialogue cannot be fully fostered unless cultural diversity is recognised and respected. In this context, there are certain preconditions upon which intercultural dialogue depends, such as:

- the full implementation of international laws and conventions on human rights and fundamental freedoms of expression, information and communication;
- efforts to address socio-economic inequalities within society and between societies;
- action to fight against the increasing daily incidents of racism and discrimination, including but not limited to the increase in Islamophobia;
- the recognition that diversity is an expression of dynamic hybrid cultural identities which are communicated through culturally different practices.

This implies that environments are needed where a person is guaranteed safety and dignity, equality of opportunity and participation, where different views can be voiced openly without fear. Creating conditions for intercultural dialogue is equally important as engaging in specific information exchange activities, artistic projects or promoting good practices. These conditions could vary depending on the needs, barriers and challenges facing individuals and groups engaging in dialogue activities that are from different countries, cultural or religious backgrounds and contexts. Engaging with the unique experience and potential of the culture sector, governmental and non-governmental actors can work together to:

- identify specific dialogue needs;
- address narrowly constructed mindsets and world views which may prevent dialogue from happening;
- provide support for projects which provide individuals with an opportunity to understand the other person and the other within (empathy);
- foster the emergence of sustainable shared spaces where interactive communication takes place between different cultures and all are equal.

### **What does this mean for cultural policy makers?**

When intercultural dialogue becomes an issue in the world of cultural policy, it is often associated with integration, culturally specific social cohesion or urban regeneration strategies. Interculturalism in the arts and culture is therefore strongly affected by other policy fields that lead (or not) to equality, openness and integration. One of the difficulties experienced so far has been the tendency for diversity to be located in either a social or cultural field of policy. The focus of each differs, with the former addressing specific problems, such as discrimination, employment, housing and schooling, and the latter addressing the inclusion of a diversity of cultural expressions. One can argue that a holistic and integrated approach is needed.

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27. For a more detailed discussion see: ERICarts Institute (2008), “Sharing Diversity: National Approaches to Intercultural Dialogue in Europe. A report to the European Commission”, available at <http://www.interculturaldialogue.eu>.

An important step towards making intercultural dialogue an explicit component of cultural policies is to ensure the development of instruments and measures that promote cultural diversity and address inequalities and discrimination within individual societies. In recent years, a range of initiatives have been introduced, such as the:

- establishment of special culture committees or councils working with minority or migrant communities;
- adoption of positive action measures aimed at diversifying structures and decision-making bodies/processes of publicly funded culture and media institutions;
- inclusion of diverse cultural expressions within mainstream culture and media institutions through, for example, regulations on programming, production and distribution;
- introduction of diversity performance agreements with publicly funded cultural organisations;
- creation of diversity fellowships, mentoring programmes and trainee schemes;
- design of new audience outreach and development programmes;
- organisation of conferences, symposia and diversity awareness raising campaigns.

Policies and measures which promote diversity and dialogue transnationally across borders and with other world regions are equally important. To date, these have been mainly developed within the framework of bilateral and multilateral cultural co-operation agreements, administered through the ministries of foreign affairs and culture, carried out through the activities of foreign cultural institutes and targeted to specific geographic or language regions. In this sense, support for dialogue in many countries has been developed within a larger package of cultural diplomacy activities, that is, to showcase different cultures and cultural expressions through support for one-off projects, events and media programmes. The objective is to give visibility to artists from different cultural backgrounds and educate the public, to reach out to diaspora communities or, more recently, to support cultural industry trade and export strategies.

Cultural funding programmes to promote cross-border dialogue and mobility are gradually moving away from diplomatic agendas, towards a more project or production based approach. This move is an important one to recognise and to build on. Support for the mobility and interaction between artists and cultural professionals in concrete projects leads not only to multiple encounters, rather than one-off events, but enables the process of dialogue to generate new levels of understanding as well as potentially new and diverse forms of cultural expression. Indeed artist-led partnerships across borders have opened corridors for dialogue. New communication technologies have also been employed to create new cross-border spaces for dialogue.

### **Cultural activities and practices of cultural institutions build intercultural competence**

Cultural activities can provide opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in the cultural life of the community, to engage in dialogue and to build intercultural competence. Such activities can be found within institutional and non-institutional environments where ideas and values can be respectfully exchanged and where intercultural connections are made. This could result in a deeper understanding of diverse views or practices, lead to new creative processes or forms of expression, also beyond established or emerging canons on mainstream culture. The cultural activities and projects of publicly supported culture and media institutions and of foundations, as well as of individuals and NGOs, play an important role.

Building intercultural competence has often been associated with the integration of new citizens within mainstream cultural institutions, by helping them to learn more about a country's history, values and traditions. Intercultural dialogue understood as an interactive process of communication would imply the need for joint action to open up publicly funded cultural institutions to become shared cultural spaces which encourage dialogue and cross-cultural mixing. In this sense, the challenge for cultural policy makers and managers of cultural institutions is to:

- review funding priorities and earmark funds to develop intercultural activities within the regular programme of cultural institutions;

- diversify the staff and governing boards of cultural institutions and retrain employees to build up intercultural competencies internally;
- diversify the content of their programmes by involving artists with different cultural backgrounds and artistic visions;
- engage the public (spectators, viewers or visitors) as an important resource in programme development, that is, to encourage people to become creators rather than only consumers of culture.

In recent years, some cultural institutions have introduced activities aimed at reaching out to diverse communities and diversifying their programmes by working together with independent artists and small and medium-sized cultural industry companies (SMEs). A long-term work commitment or partnership between public and private actors is needed to ensure that such activities are not one-off events but become part of the mission of such institutions to provide permanent spaces for intercultural encounters.

Indeed, non-institutional spaces, such as the neighbourhood, supermarkets, hair salons, city streets, train stations, subways, public parks, market places and virtual environments, are important spaces where barriers to dialogue – such as ignorance, stereotypes and prejudices – can be addressed. Cultural activities and experiences within these spaces can help make intercultural dialogue part of an individual's lived daily experience rather than a separate activity for which proactive engagement is required.

### **Enhancing intergovernmental and civil society co-operation**

It is important to recognise that cultural policy makers are not only government officials who work for ministries responsible for culture. The governance and management of culture involves a range of stakeholders who contribute to the policy-making process be they, for example, quasi-governmental bodies, regional and local authorities, NGOs, cultural and media institutions, artists and cultural professionals working in the cultural industries, or cultural policy researchers and academics. Dedicated platforms or spaces, which enable the participation of a range of actors in the policy-making machinery of government, are crucial for the successful development and improvement of cultural policies, strategies and programmes.

Such platforms or spaces for dialogue between the different actors involved in cultural policy making are also needed at the regional as well as international levels where input to policy discussions and the development of concrete projects can be realised. Existing regional multilateral platforms of co-operation between ministers of culture could be enlarged, for example, to include civil society input in their meetings:

- TÜRKSOY: ministers of culture from Turkic states, namely, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan form a permanent council and meet twice a year.<sup>28</sup> They provide support for various conferences, festivals and exhibitions.
- GUAM: ministers of culture from Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova signed a Protocol on Cooperation in the Field of Culture (2007-2010). In 2007, its Working Group on Cultural Cooperation launched a joint online cultural policy information observatory. During their Baku meeting in 2005, they recommended the creation of a Europe-Caucasus-Asia Cultural Policy Observatory.
- SEE: in 2005, the ministers of culture of South-Eastern Europe (SEE) signed a Charter of Cultural Cooperation which confirmed their commitment to work together on cultural policies within the framework of European integration and co-operation and to create a new forum for dialogue and interaction between the ministers of culture and other government and non-government structures to construct joint cultural strategies, opportunities and projects, and to exchange information and experiences. The latter has yet to be realised.
- Nordic ministers of culture co-operate within the framework of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The aim of their programmes is to promote Nordic cultural co-operation, the

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28. The Altai, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Sakha (Yakutia), Khakassia and Tuva republics of the Russian Federation hold observer status within TÜRKSOY, as well as northern Cyprus and Gagauzie of Moldova.

diversity of cultural expressions, to spread knowledge of artists and their work and to improve the quality and competitiveness of Nordic cultural life.

- Council of Europe: European ministers responsible for culture from the 49 signatory states to the European Cultural Convention meet in Baku, followed by the Compendium authors' annual meeting, which provides an additional opportunity for dialogue.

Intergovernmental organisations could agree to provide support for civil society actors involved in cultural policy processes<sup>29</sup> in order to expand their reach and engage in co-operation activities with colleagues from neighbouring regions, that is, from European/Arab/Asian countries. The goal is to provide independent spaces for dialogue and opportunities for direct encounters among cultural policy experts and other cultural professionals who are currently not involved in the activities of, for example, the national contact points of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures.

The main question to be addressed is whether existing inter-institutional partnership agreements<sup>30</sup> could be used as a framework for the creation of an inter-regional multi-stakeholder partnership and co-operation platform which would, among other things:

- bring together a range of cultural policy actors/contributors to the cultural policy-making process to engage in a regular and informal exchange on issues such as barriers to dialogue or on the "unity in diversity" approaches pursued both in Europe and by ISESCO member states;
- create transregional task forces of cultural journalists that meet regularly and can easily be mobilised when misinformation is circulated pertaining to intercultural or inter-faith issues and stereotypes ("intercultural media monitors");
- better pool existing information and data of relevance to the development or improvement of cultural policies, programmes and initiatives for intercultural dialogue:<sup>31</sup> this could include legislative monitoring, diversity data, policy developments, civil society initiatives and stories, web-based dialogue projects of artists and cultural professionals, bulletin boards to expose and dispel myths and address stereotypes, etc.;
- provide support for projects involving artists or cultural professionals from the different regions, which are not tied to specific national or diplomatic agendas, but view dialogue as inherent in the act of co-production itself.

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29. In some regions civil society actors are organised in platforms/networks.

30. Formal instruments outlining inter-institutional partnerships to promote intercultural dialogue have indeed emerged through, for example, the Faro Platform Agreement between the Council of Europe and UNESCO (2005) and co-operation agreements between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and ALESCO. In addition, programme/project partnerships have been set up between the Council of Europe and the European Commission, for example on Intercultural Cities (2007).

31. Improving the information services of intergovernmental organisations to member states is dependent on the existence of locally based research infrastructure to ensure the systematic and regular collection of relevant information and data in order to inform policy analysis and development. The participation of civil society (e.g. universities, research institutes, foundations, artists and other cultural professionals) in the process of collecting information and interpreting results is essential.



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## Panel 2

### Heritage and intercultural dialogue: from national to universally owned heritage

*Informal working document prepared by C. Paludan-Müller  
as input to the debate*

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In some contexts, cultural heritage has been seen as a factor in sustaining conflicts resulting in competing claims to cultural heritage. However, it can also be perceived as a tool for understanding other people's values and a vehicle for dialogue and communication. Because of this particular significance, it demands special attention in a discussion about intercultural dialogue. The organisation of a round table on "Heritage and intercultural dialogue – from national to universally owned heritage" at the Baku Conference on 2 and 3 December 2008 is an opportunity to consider the range of values which heritage conveys as a medium both for intercultural dialogue between communities and individuals and for the sustainable development of regions.

In preparation for the round table and as a contribution to the discussions, this document offers some historical pointers on the meaning given to heritage in the geographical area covered by the Baku Conference. It also refers to the successes of the Council of Europe's recent work related to the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro). Lastly, it puts forward some ideas on possible co-operation which could be developed following the conference.

#### **Pointers on the development of the concept of heritage**

##### *Heritage in nation states*

Our memory is part of what makes us individuals and groups, but our memory is never static, it is constantly evolving within each of us as individuals and within and between the collectives of which we are part. The cultural heritage can therefore be viewed as an aide-mémoire or a mnemotechnical resource for societies, to which they can link their narratives about the past, or upon which they may sometimes choose to construct new ones.

The development of legislative frameworks and institutions for the protection of the cultural heritage is an important part of the identity politics which have been employed in the construction of the nation state since the late 18th century. Historic buildings, archaeological monuments and landscapes became important parts of the national history narrative underpinning the much vaunted cultural unity and uniqueness of each nation state and its difference from others.

##### **Heritage in multiethnic empires**

Beyond the European peninsulas, that is, south of the Mediterranean and east of central Europe, the nation state did not appear on the agenda until the beginning of the 20th century. In these areas, most of the populations lived in multiethnic or colonial empires. In some parts of these areas, multiethnic empires such as the Ottoman Empire were supplanted by French and British colonial rule. Even with the end of colonial rule, external powers continued to interfere in the political processes of these areas. In other parts, the Soviet Union continued a multiethnic empire, controlling a range of ethnicities and territories in the Caucasus and Central Asia, some of which had earlier formed part of other imperial constructions, such as the Ottoman, Persian and Chinese.

This means that outside the European nation states, cultural heritage has not necessarily assumed the same essentialist role and status in the identity building of states. What characterises all the great empires is the fact that, at the height of their success, they were

able to integrate and draw on the diversity of cultures of the people they had brought under their control. In many cases, they even recruited particularly skilled people from distant lands. What we also see, however, is that, in periods of internal or external instability, tolerance would frequently be reduced and persecution of minority groups would then occur. This happened both in the Roman and in the Sassanid empires, when their confrontation was at its most fierce. It occurred again when the Ottoman Empire was collapsing under attack from the major European powers.

Often, ethnic diversity has been instrumentalised and manipulated by external powers to destabilise and break up a competing power's control over a territory. This, for instance, has contributed to conflicts and instability in such particularly culturally rich and heterogeneous areas as the Levant, the Caucasus and the Balkans. Sometimes, cultural heritage, for instance that of the Roman Empire in the Middle East and the Maghreb, was particularly appreciated by the (former) European colonial powers as their cultural and spiritual inheritance. This Eurocentric essentialist approach to a past shared with many non-European stakeholders has, so to speak, led to the Roman heritage being perceived as foreign in some of those countries from whose history it comes and to which it belongs in equal part.

### **A trend observable in nation states**

The traditional European idea of cultural heritage as part of a specific national identity may work as long as the nation state has a homogenous population. In most instances, however, this has never been the case and, at the present time, we are seeing an increasing (recognition of the) diversity of identities in the populations even within many European nation states. Furthermore, in many countries outside Europe, it is, and sometimes always has been, evident that European-style monocultural nationalism is at best a dysfunctional concept. Strong emphasis on ethnic, religious or cultural unity is no longer a viable means of ensuring the cohesion of civil society and the state. The need for a diversified concept of cultural heritage is a result of the fading ideal of the monocultural state and the diversification of identities.

### **The existence of a multicultural heritage based on exchanges**

Basically, we need to investigate the plurality of the heritage. Where the emphasis was formerly on eradicating ambiguity and cultural mix from our interpretation of buildings, monuments, cities, routes and landscapes, we should now aim at rediscovering the diversity of cultural contributions and narratives which can be found in them. We may wish to focus our attention on cities and routes. Together, they constitute the great links that over time have led to interaction between peoples and cultures, sometimes in harmonious ways and sometimes not, but almost always in ways that have left lasting inspiration with the other.

The rapid spread of Islam over vast expanses of Eurasia and North Africa was one of the results of the rich, global open commercial culture of the Arabs, who were well acquainted with distant places, and open to adding successes of other cultures to their own. In fact, travel itself is one of the five pillars of Islam (Arkân al-dîn) in the form of the obligation for Muslims who are in a position to do so to undertake at least once in their lives the pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). Later, Persian, Mongol and Turkic peoples took control of the important routes between East and West. The Silk Road and maritime routes were vectors of immense importance for exchanges that stimulated cultural and economic growth not just in Europe (for many centuries at the receiving end), but certainly also within Dar al-Islam (the Muslim world, or literally "the House of Islam") and in China and India.

No doubt, trade and pilgrimage have greatly contributed to exchanges both within and between Islam and Christianity. Indeed the greatest periods of our cultures were not when they sought isolation from the outside world.

Today, most of the world's population is urban, not because of higher urban birth rates, since cities have seldom been able to fully reproduce their own populations, but because of migration from rural regions with a population surplus. This demographic influx leads to a meeting of people, who often know little about each other, and sometimes tend to fear a loss of their own identity and values by mixing with the unknown other. Having different identities



cohabitating within the same community (e.g. town) may, in some instances, prove difficult, but often, during history, cohabitation acted as a strong impetus to progress and prosperity. Prosperous urban communities such as Cairo, St. Petersburg, Venice, Baku, Timisoara, Granada, Derbent, Istanbul, Toledo, Damascus, Tlemcen, Isfahan, Amsterdam, Thessaloniki, Vienna, Bergen, Vilnius, Marseilles, Jerusalem and London were, at the height of their success, marked by a high degree of openness and a multitude of identities. Their cultural heritage is therefore very much a result and an expression of this cohabitation.

Istanbul, or the Sublime Port,<sup>32</sup> has for long periods been the crossroads for interaction between North and South, East and West. This splendid seat of two empires, first the Byzantine, then the Ottoman, and thus an imperial capital for 1 600 years owes its material and cultural wealth to the cohabitation of people from all corners of the empires. The Turkish population was the most prominent, but still a minority compared with the combined numbers of other populations such as the Albanian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek and Jewish populations. The long historic development of Damascus reached its culminating point when it became the seat of the Umayyad Caliphate. The slow transformation from a regular Roman street with a grid-plan layout to a suq layout is well documented. During this process, the religious centre of Damascus remained the same. The Roman Temple of Jupiter Damascenus was transformed into the Byzantine Basilica of St John the Baptist, and subsequently integrated into the Great Mosque (still, according to the legend, preserving the head of St John). At the beginning of Muslim rule, Christians and Muslims even shared this unique place of worship. Christians still continue to live in the Muslim majority community as one of the many minorities that make up the rich palimpsest of cultures and religions of Damascus.

We should now ask what stories we should tell about these precious fruits of intercultural cohabitation and dialogue. It is of the utmost importance for us to take the opportunity to show how, in each instance, a unique piece of cultural heritage of lasting value is the result of the combination of resources from more than one culture, rather than the product of a particular culture not in contact with others. We should, however, also be willing and able to tell about, and to learn from, the way in which intercultural cohabitation and dialogue often came to a halt.

### **Towards a joint reflection on the interpretation of heritage as a tool for mutual understanding and dialogue**

#### *Improving historical understanding of the values of various population groups*

Our cultural heritage cannot speak for itself. It needs, as always, to be read and interpreted based on what concerns us at any given time. If we are occupied with building a wider Mediterranean-Euro-Asian region that can grow from its diversity and its openness, we should be clear in our choice of the narratives to which we give pre-eminence when we present our cultural heritage. We should not, however, forget readings of the past that contradict our preferred meta-narrative. Concealing alternative readings will not lead to their disappearance, but rather to an increase in their interest.

Today, more than at any other time, we need to identify unifying dimensions in our cultural heritage that extend beyond the limits of Europe. The Roman legacy is deeply embedded in both Christian and Muslim cultures, extending far beyond the geographical perimeters of the empire. Unfortunately, most relevant scholars today are specialists either in the history and culture of the Roman Empire, or in the history and culture of Islam. Many specialists have the knowledge to investigate the links between the Roman Empire and medieval Christianity. But very few have the necessary knowledge to explore the links between the later Roman Empire and medieval Islam. Correspondingly, little interest has been given to drawing attention to the considerable continuity between the Byzantine and the Ottoman empires. This academic perspective is both a product of, and a precondition for, a distorted view of our common past.

We should therefore develop our ability at all levels to understand the interwoven nature of the cultures we tend to perceive as unique. Doing this should not amount to a denial of differences and conflicts. The concept of citizenship, for instance, is very much part of a

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32. The Sublime Port is a synecdoche for the Ottoman capital, a translation of the official Turkish title for the central office of the Ottoman Government.

European legacy and crucial to our societies but does not seem to be an integral part of Islamic culture, where social affiliation is more likely to be determined in terms of kinship and religious belonging (*ummah*). This presents a challenge to the development of a common understanding of conditions of civic cohabitation in a new and culturally mixed Europe. But it is a challenge that can better be addressed when we shed light on common or parallel aspects of our cultural heritage at the same time.

In much of Europe, the idea of the monocultural nation state is still limiting our ability to look beyond a Eurocentric perspective and see the greater lines of cultural interactions through history. This hinders our ability to understand and recognise the important contributions to European culture that have come from its interaction with the rest of the world. In parts of the region outside Europe where Islam is the dominant religion, the history that is perceived as shaping collective identity sometimes emphasises the last 1 400 years to a degree that precludes the understanding of the long lines from earlier history that have heavily conditioned the political development of Dar al-Islam. Christianity and Islam share their roots and their claim of universality beyond questions of ethnicity. They share the idea of the garden with fountains as an earthly representation of the idea of Paradise (ancient Persian, *Paridaeza*), coming down to us from the ancient Assyrians and later the Jews. No doubt, Islamic gardens have provided essential inspiration for the achievements of European garden and landscape architecture. Exchanges have continuously cross-fertilised cultural, religious, technological and scientific successes across the Mediterranean basin and along the Silk Road.

In Europe, strong civil societies have appeared. They have resulted in transparency in political leadership and a corresponding security for human and civil rights. The basic distinction between secular and religious power has been essential in the construction of a potentially critical corrective to political rule. But it has also been conducive to a gradual loss of the ethical and spiritual dimension in the social and private lives of individuals in communities where markets and material consumption increasingly seem to guide the aspirations and actions of people, unchallenged by more profound values. In Dar al-Islam where Islamic laws (*Shari'a*) cover the entire spectrum of human lives, secular power and religious power have very different approaches. From a strictly religious perspective, secular political power is not regarded as legitimate. This, on the one hand, has ensured the presence of an ethical/religious perspective on the ruling of everyday affairs and in the lives of individuals. On the other hand, it has not been conducive to the development of a basis for strong, critical dialogue between ethical/religious power and political power.

Our main challenge should certainly not be that of having different cultures and religions. History, as we have seen, is full of examples of respectful and enriching interactions between different communities. Our main challenge may rather be the lack of another dimension in the ideas that guide our actions, and the lack of a proper dialogue between secularism and religion, between and within our present communities. The absence of a secular critique of religion and the lack of a religious critique of secularism may be equally harmful to both, as recently pointed out by the German “secularist”, Jürgen Habermas, and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI). Another independent dimension may help us, through cultural co-operation, not only to live more complete lives within our established communities, but also to open our communities towards each other through an exploration of shared values and a frank but respectful dialogue about contrasting values.

## **Developing dialogue through work with heritage**

### *Round table on heritage and dialogue*

The theme of the round table on heritage fits into the general context of the conference, which refers to the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and its commitment to human rights, the rule of law and democracy. The discussions between European countries and other countries taking part in the conference could usefully draw on a number of concepts highlighted during the preparation of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005). Exchanges of that kind would be stimulating, as they would provide a clearer picture of the current approach to heritage by a range of countries with different cultural traditions.

### *Enlarged concept of heritage and the “right to heritage”*

To what extent is there consensus today about the idea that heritage is a resource from which, through the investment of human ingenuity and efforts, originate the rich and varied present cultures of the participating countries? Conservation of this cultural capital is essential, both for its intrinsic value and its potential as an investment from which future development – cultural, social and economic – may be generated.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, access by individuals to cultural heritage is an aspect of the right to participate in cultural life and the right to education set out in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 13 and 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

### *The concept of “common heritage”*

For the first time, the Faro Convention defines the “common heritage of Europe” by referring to the democratic, political and social ideals which are Europe’s common intangible heritage and to all the tangible forms of heritage which are a resource for human development and improvement of the environment we live in. Going beyond the mechanism of world heritage which concerns major assets belonging to humankind and considering instead the whole range of cultural assets and historic landscapes, is the concept of “common heritage” introduced by the Faro Convention relevant in a wider geographical area than that of Europe? What advantages does it offer for promoting the image and attractiveness of regions whose distinctive character stems from deep and rich historical stratification and the interaction of a range of cultural influences? Is there not a need for inter-regional co-operation so as to draw greater benefit from the potential of heritage, whether for economic development in connection with tourism or for the environment people live in? Does the concept of common heritage not simultaneously imply the principle of shared moral responsibility for the cultural heritages of various kinds that are characteristic of a given area? The responsibility to have as much respect for the heritage of others as for one’s own heritage suggests how, through interaction, different cultural heritages may come together to form a common heritage.

### *Cultural heritage, dialogue and education*

Capitalising on cultural heritage in intercultural dialogue requires ongoing research and discussion, especially to take account of disagreements which arise in the course of interpretation, for example when an ancient site is sacred to more than one religion. History is scarred by conflicts caused or exacerbated by misrepresentations of the values, beliefs and practices of different communities. Heritage education in the school curriculum and out-of-school activities is a key factor not only in developing a sense of cultural belonging or “multiple cultural belonging” among individuals but also in developing intercultural competences within the meaning of the Council of Europe’s White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. How can the concept of intercultural interpretation of heritage be developed from the angle of the work recently undertaken by the Council of Europe? And how can teacher training be adapted and trainers be trained for the purpose of disseminating a message involving not only the education system but also for cultural and tourism professionals?

### *Heritage and sustainable development*

While fostering dialogue between communities from different backgrounds, especially through possible inter-regional and cross-border co-operation, capitalising on tangible and intangible heritage is a source of economic regeneration and job creation. However, a number of environmental and human-made factors are threatening the physical integrity of the heritage. These major challenges can only be tackled through international strategies and regional co-operation. Valorisation is a complex process which must include continuous research, discussion, information and training.

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33. According to the Faro Convention, the cultural heritage is a group of resources inherited from the past identified as a reflection and expression of the constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions of a group of people.

*What follow-up could be envisaged for the Baku Conference on the theme of heritage?*

Several possibilities could be considered during the conference:

- A system of inter-regional co-operation could be established in the geographical area covered by the conference. It could draw on the regional programmes carried out by the Council of Europe in South-Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus (in particular, the Kyiv Initiative).
- Encouragement of the signature and/or ratification of the Faro Convention would reflect shared commitment to an updated approach to heritage policies based on the sustainable use of resources and on dialogue. The convention will be open to non-European states at the invitation of the Committee of Ministers once it has entered into force. The monitoring of the convention could become a platform for analysis of three major aspects of heritage and education policies: methods and criteria for using heritage resources sustainably, interpretation of the heritage and heritage education (development of intercultural skills). Long-term dialogue between Council of Europe member countries and countries in neighbouring regions on the values currently attached to heritage could be of great mutual benefit.
- Consideration could be given to forms of co-operation involving the HEREIN European information system on heritage policies. Co-operation with non-European states has already been initiated between the Euromed Heritage Programme and the Council of Europe.

# **Proceedings of the Baku Conference**



## **Opening speeches**





## **Mr İlham Heydar oğlu Aliyev**

*President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

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First of all, I would like to extend to all of you a cordial welcome to Azerbaijan. Today, in the capital of Azerbaijan, the city of Baku, a very important step has been taken. I am certain that this conference will play a very great and positive role in reinforcing intercultural dialogue.

Once again today we have demonstrated through the conference of the ministers of culture of various countries that Azerbaijan has had the great good fortune to experience examples of religious, national and ethnic tolerance in recent years. In actual fact, in the various eras in our country, all the people have always lived as one family, regardless of socio-political structures. The representatives of all religions have always lived in a state of friendship and fraternity. I would like to state once more that this is a very important factor specific to our country.

After Azerbaijan had been re-established as an independent country, great care was clearly given to strengthening international relations and national and religious tolerance. Today Azerbaijan is a place of friendship and brotherhood in the true meaning of the words. Today all peoples and the representatives of all religions live like one family. I am sure that the experience that Azerbaijan has gained in this respect is very important. I do not doubt that a wide-ranging discussion will be opened on this subject at this conference.

I am very happy that representatives of various nations of the world are participating in this conference. As you know, this conference was organised by Azerbaijan together with the Council of Europe. I also wish to state that Azerbaijan has been a member of the Council of Europe for nearly eight years. During this period, as a result of measures carried out under the auspices of the Council of Europe, the political and economic reforms which have taken place in our country have advanced the development of Azerbaijan democracy very rapidly. The establishment, in accordance with the law, of political and economic reforms in this country and the application of progressive experiences in Azerbaijan are all-important events that have taken place in the last few years. We are very pleased with the co-operation that exists between the Council of Europe and Azerbaijan. I am certain that this co-operation will continue successfully in the future and will create additional opportunities for us.

At the same time, there are amongst our guests representatives of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). We are very happy and pleased that the representatives of various countries and religions are participating in the place where East and West meet, in the city of Baku. We attach great importance to this. It has great significance, because today, while people talk of dialogue between civilisations and cultures in many situations, events in some parts of the world unfortunately contribute to an increase in tension. I very much hope that the Baku process begun today in Azerbaijan may contribute significantly to the strengthening of dialogue, friendship and mutual understanding between civilisations.

Certainly, the historic and geographical position of Azerbaijan and its participation in various international organisations expand our possibilities even more. I am convinced that our country will hereafter continue in its successful development and that it is not only its political and economic reforms that will lead to this. At the same time, as I have just stated, the positive socio-political atmosphere prevailing in Azerbaijan secures the rights of all nationalities who live here and allows every individual and the members of all ethnic groups to live peacefully in Azerbaijan.

Our country has a very rich and long history. Thousands of years ago humans lived and demonstrated their creativity in Azerbaijan. The historic monuments, which reflect this, are given the necessary protection by the state of Azerbaijan. We are very attached to our cultural and historic heritage and we work hard to protect it. The people of Azerbaijan were deprived for centuries of independence. We have been able to take control of our own destiny in only a very short time. But apart from this, our history, our civilisation, our literature and our mother

tongue are elements that have protected the Azerbaijanis as a nation from assimilation and today the people of Azerbaijan are the masters of their own destiny in their own country.

When Azerbaijan was re-established in 1991 as an independent state, the situation was extremely serious. The political and economic crisis, the attack on Azerbaijan by Armenia and the occupation of a portion of its land as a result, all demonstrate the serious and grave situation Azerbaijan had to contend with. However, by our own endeavours and efforts and the will of the Azerbaijani people we have emerged from these trials with honour. This means that today Azerbaijan can fully ensure its independence. Azerbaijan has its own policies and our achievements in both the economic and political field have been considerable.

The Azerbaijani people live in tranquillity, safety and peace. Important steps have been taken to establish and strengthen civil society in Azerbaijan. There is no disagreement between these organisations in our country on how they should develop; on the contrary, our society is united in these efforts. The philosophy of Azerbaijan is bound to modernity, to our own historic roots and to our traditions. In Azerbaijan great respect is shown towards the participants of all religions. So these are the factors which influence our country today from a social and political aspect.

At the same time, Azerbaijan utilises a modern system. After it obtained its independence and integrated itself into the world community, a modern political system was formed in Azerbaijan. However, this system is still in the process of formation. The economic reforms undertaken in this country have increased our economic power significantly. In the last four years Azerbaijan has had the highest economic growth in the world. During the last five years our economy has approximately tripled. While our budget expenses have increased twelvefold, our industrial production has risen sharply. Our possibilities have expanded and we have obtained very positive results in fighting poverty. In the last four years the poverty level has fallen from 49% to 16% and I am certain that it will fall even further this year.

The long-standing and serious problem of unemployment in Azerbaijan has been addressed successfully. In the last five years new jobs have opened up to more than 740 000 people. Construction and development are under way in all regions of the country. Azerbaijan is consolidating itself economically. At the same time, our accomplishments in the field of energy have been extremely valuable not only for the country but for the whole region. Today the transportation of energy, which Azerbaijan has brought to the European and world markets, plays a positive role in issues of energy security. In this area, agreements have been signed between the European Union and Azerbaijan. We are also active in other international organisations. International forums on energy security regularly take place in Azerbaijan and the results of these forums are of great importance not only for the region but also for the world.

In short, we look towards the future with great optimism. Azerbaijan is a very stable country from the viewpoint of its political and socio-political situation and direct foreign investment in Azerbaijan reflects this. The successes achieved in the strengthening of economic potential lie before our eyes. At the same time, leaving all these achievements aside, reforms continue in Azerbaijan and must do so, both on the political and the economic front. It makes us very happy that this year the World Bank, the largest financial body in the world, has recognised Azerbaijan as the number one reforming country at world level. This shows that our reforms are courageous, successful and important.

At the same time, important steps have been taken to achieve complete transparency in the financial sector in Azerbaijan. Last year the United Nations honoured the Azerbaijan State Petroleum Fund with an award for its successes in achieving transparency. Again these are very important events. For the largest organisation in the world to have given this to Azerbaijan is a symbol of recognition of the processes taking place in Azerbaijan.

At the same time, the high level of religious and ethnic tolerance, of acceptance and the fact that all peoples live in peace and friendship is a clear source of strength. These factors are of the utmost importance for the development of every country. I want the successes we have had in our country so far to continue. For this to happen, clearly, true peace must be established.

We very much desire that all the conflicts in the Caucasus will finally be resolved, that peace will be established and that opportunities for co-operation will open up in the region. This is important for all countries. The events which have occurred in the South Caucasus show that international legal norms must be totally complied with. When international legal norms are violated, unfortunately, serious and dangerous events take place.

The greatest danger in our region is the non-resolution of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the conflict of Nagorno-Karabakh. Our land has been occupied for long years. As a result of the policy of ethnic cleansing carried out against Azerbaijan by Armenia and of Armenia's aggressive separatism, 20% of our land is under occupation. One million Azerbaijanis are suffering from this occupation and have been made refugees from the land of their birth. Azerbaijan's territorial integrity has been violated.

Nagorno-Karabakh, which has been Azerbaijani land since time immemorial, and the seven municipalities around it are occupied and our countrymen and women who have been deported from them are suffering greatly. This is a great injustice.

The decisions of the United Nations, four Security Council resolutions, demand that Armenia withdraw its armed forces unconditionally from our territory. Armenia has no desire to do this. This year in March it was stated in a resolution accepted by the UN General Assembly that Azerbaijani territory was under occupation and that this occupation must be ended. There is no will to do this. The Council of Europe issued a resolution some years ago about the conflict and stated that Armenia was carrying out a policy of occupation against Azerbaijan. But Armenia pays no heed. The OIC has issued similar decisions. We see that international legal norms are being violated in the region and unfortunately the decisions of international organisations, particularly the most esteemed organisations, are not complied with. This is a great danger for the events unfolding in the region.

There is no doubt that international legal norms must be established, the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan must be restored and the occupying forces must quickly vacate the territories they have occupied.

This occupation and military aggression has inflicted grave damage to our cultural heritage. Everything has been destroyed in the occupied territories. We say this and international organisations confirm it. In 2005, monitoring was set up in the regions occupied by Armenia by the fact-finding mission of the OSCE. A meeting was organised and took place concerning this and it showed that everything had been destroyed and not one building had been left standing. All the buildings, all the historic monuments had been destroyed by Armenia. The cultural sites had been destroyed, all of the exhibits in the museums stolen and the museums looted. The tombs of our ancestors and the mosques had been destroyed. All this was done by the Armenian state. The OSCE fact-finding mission showed all of this.

We, on the other hand, approach the cultural and historic heritage of all peoples living in Azerbaijan with great respect. The places of worship and monuments of all religions, which have been preserved, maintained or restored in Baku and elsewhere in our country, are visible confirmation of this.

I would like to sincerely congratulate you once more on the occasion of the conference. I would once more like to say that we in Azerbaijan attach great importance to the holding of this conference. I am certain that it will produce excellent results and, on the basis of these results, dialogue between civilisations will be further strengthened.

I would very much like the "Baku process" begun today to be a long-term thing. I hope that practical mechanisms will be set up after this conference and that a concrete plan of action will be drawn up. I hope that such activities become a tradition in Baku and in other cities. I hope that your discussions are successful and that we reach the goals we have set for ourselves. I welcome you once more and wish you success in your conference activities.

## The Right Honourable Terry Davis

Secretary General of the Council of Europe

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The question I would ask everyone here today is very simple: are we ready for dialogue?

The theme of this ministerial conference reflects the core objective of the Council of Europe, namely preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Intercultural dialogue is a political priority, as re-affirmed by the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in 2005.

And yet, this conference in Baku is an event with a series of preoccupations with dialogue. Why?

It is indeed the first Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture of Council of Europe member states organised in a composition which goes beyond the geographical boundaries of the Council of Europe and which associates ministers from neighbouring regions. It is intended to reflect jointly on “intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development” and on the common ground for future action.

Baku in Azerbaijan is a unique place. It has been at the crossroads of different cultures throughout its history and a natural bridge between East and West and between North and South.

And this is a very special event because it was only in May 2008 that the Council of Europe launched its White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue. This conference is the first event at ministerial level following the publication of this key policy document, and we need to look at how it is put into practice – *from* dialogue about dialogue *to* dialogue in practice.

For all these reasons I am glad to be here to open this conference together with the President of Azerbaijan, Mr Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, and with the Representative of the Spanish Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and my distinguished colleagues from UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO.

I should like to stress that intercultural dialogue is one of the priorities of the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers, and that it is no coincidence that the conference in Baku is the first event organised since Spain took over the helm of the Council of Europe less than a week ago.

We are here to share experience and make progress together. In different ways, we are all exposed to cultural diversity in our ever more multicultural societies, and in many ways cultural diversity is as important to humankind as natural diversity is for the environment. Yet, we are all too often still caught in thinking along national, ethnic and linguistic lines, and stereotyped identities.

Continuous intercultural dialogue is the “social glue” that we need inside our societies. It is an antidote to intolerance, division and violence. Dialogue is not an ideology, and it is not a recipe for blind application, abstracting from particular political contexts. But if we make sure that diversity is valued, that diverse individuals engage with each other as fellow human beings, and that people have the opportunity to engage in dialogue, then there is a chance for all of us and future generations to live in a better world – with mutual respect, justice and safety.

Culture is a great facilitator in this endeavour, starting from language and language policies, through the design and use of public spaces, architecture and cultural heritage, to artistic creation in the visual and performing arts, popular music and sports. Culture nourishes our senses and our ability to see, meet and understand each other and ourselves. In this

endeavour, our hearts, minds and bodies are all involved. Good policies therefore allow for many such intercultural spaces and opportunities.

It is extremely important that we are relevant and specific. It is always good if people speak to each other, but intercultural dialogue should not be reduced to exchanges of benevolent platitudes at international seminars. The objective is to encourage dialogue between real people about real problems in real life. The make or break test of our activities is not the number of international conferences or brochures they generate, but their impact on how people live and cope with their problems at home, at school, at work, on the street, in their local mosque, their local church or their local synagogue.

I want us to engage in this dialogue, which cannot take place in the absence of respect for the equal dignity of all human beings, human rights, the rule of law and democratic principles. These values guarantee mutual respect and understanding, and they are essential to ensure that dialogue is governed by the force of the argument rather than the argument of force.

## **Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme**

*Representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers  
of the Council of Europe*

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Let me start by thanking the Government of Azerbaijan for its hospitality and for the organisation of this conference on intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions.

It is truly a great honour for Spain to chair the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in a semester during which such important decisions will be taken for culture and cultural diversity. As you know, Spain is a European country, a Mediterranean country but strongly bound for historic reasons to its neighbours in the southern and eastern parts of the Mediterranean basin. For historic reasons Spain is in fact the result of a melding of the three cultures that constitute the richness and diversity of the cultural platform of this region of the world. In this sense we are particularly aware at the present time, when there are so many conflicts due, *inter alia*, to a lack of dialogue among cultures and to a shock of cultures. Because of this intercultural dialogue has become a true need and it must, as underscored by the White Paper of the Council of Europe, be positioned in a new conceptual framework. Public authorities and civil society must rise to the occasion and meet this need for the promotion of intercultural dialogue as the best way of combating these difficult conflicts. The Spanish Ministry of Culture is of course aware of the complexity and transversality of the concept of cultural dialogue, in particular with respect to the prevention of conflicts, co-operation in development, the promotion of youth commitment and social inclusion. We consider that intercultural dialogue must be a permanent, ongoing and visible process and that is why we are participating in several international fora aimed at creating a climate that is propitious to the advancement of proposals that promote intercultural dialogue.

One particular example of course is the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of the United Nations, proposed by the President of the Spanish Government, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and the President of Turkey, Mr Erdogan.

I would now like to refer to some of the fundamental principles and areas in which we believe that actions of transnational co-operation with Europe and its neighbouring regions should have very high priority. In so far as cross-cutting principles are concerned, I will stress three aspects: dialogue among cultures, which constitutes a foundation for mutual understanding and knowledge, respect and acceptance of the cultural diversity of this region of the world and, thirdly, a balance between trade, material trade and flows in cultural goods and services. Without that balance the development of a culture that is truly shared by all would be unthinkable.

I would like to highlight the following areas for action. Firstly, we must include the media, who are essential tools for the formation of a public opinion that is favourable to the understanding and respect for cultural diversity. Secondly, mobility of artists and other cultural workers is important, as they are the true agents of cultural partnership. Thirdly, we must ensure the protection of cultural heritage, which is a testimony to our common and shared history, by combating illegal trafficking in cultural goods and through the development of technologies to digitise the content of culture in order to facilitate access to it for our citizens, as, without it, they would have no concept of a cultural reality. We need programmes of support, promotion and co-operation among our cultural and creative industries. It is essential for mutual, cultural understanding and knowledge.

We are convinced that the working sessions here in Baku will be an occasion for genuine exchange about our cultural diversity and we are convinced that in the Baku Declaration to be signed here tomorrow, those ideas will be reflected.

Finally, before concluding, I would like – once again – to urge you to participate in the forum of the Alliance of Civilizations which, as you know, will be organised in the month of April by our Turkish colleagues in Istanbul. The Alliance of Civilizations believes that the conflicts of our time are occurring on a planetary scale, that they are common to all members of humankind. The conflicts are taking on a dimension that was never the case in the past: combating poverty, dealing with global warming and dealing with migration flows. Those conflicts are therefore common to all and they go beyond problems associated with misunderstandings among cultures. However, within the Alliance of Civilizations intercultural dialogue is viewed as a peaceful way of solving conflicts, of insuring respect for diversity and the dignity of individuals, of improving the conditions of our citizens through education, of combating exclusion and for the promotion of culture and social cohesion. More than ever before, the Council of Europe and the Alliance of Civilizations are assets of key importance for the promotion and the protection of cultural diversity, for the development of intercultural dialogue and for the establishment of good relations of co-operation among different regions and continents on the basis of principles and criteria of understanding, mutual trust and co-operation.

## **Mr Farid Mukhametshin**

*Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe*

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I am pleased to have the opportunity to attend today's conference and to welcome you on behalf of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe. This venerable institution represents more than 200 000 local and regional communities across Europe, including the multiethnic population of the Russian Federation and its constituent entity, the Republic of Tatarstan.

The concept of intercultural dialogue being discussed here is extremely topical at the present stage of social development. Unique, ground-breaking advances in science, technology and economics are changing our quality of life. Globalisation has led to an unprecedented widening and deepening of all kinds of contact between states and peoples.

Humankind's rethinking of its role and its own cultural heritage is a dynamic process. The most important task is strenuously to resist loss of identity and to see solutions in the past to urgent problems in the future. Never before has the scale of transformation in values and frames of reference affected everyone, society, the economy or the state so profoundly.

The search for self between the poles of modernism without a foundation and fundamentalism without modernisation is a difficult one. We should not rush headlong to meet the future without thinking and without regard to history, but neither should we stand aloof, rejecting all that is new and living only in the past.

Preserving cultural diversity, fostering traditions of inter-ethnic interaction, achieving spiritual, moral, social and political harmony and the unity of peoples are key issues for the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, on behalf of which I have the honour to speak today. They are what could be called the foundation of global security in the most direct sense of the term.

Today's conference fits into the framework of our activities in the best possible way, in establishing and supporting intercultural dialogue and tolerance in our cities and regions, with special attention being given to national and linguistic minorities. Our experience in this area, gathered from fieldwork and the work done by local and regional authorities, makes a substantial contribution to efforts at state level and in 2006 enabled us to define 12 principles for intercultural and inter-religious dialogue at local level. These 12 principles form the basis of the Congress's activities today.

The year 2008 has been declared the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This year, forums for discussion on a wide variety of topics have been organised by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (and also with its participation). An international round table on the theme of "Art and sacred beliefs: from collision to coexistence" was held in Athens (Greece) in February this year. In April, Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation, hosted an international seminar on "Universities, cultural development and regional identity", and in October I attended and spoke at an international conference on the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in Lulea (Sweden). Forums and conferences on appropriate topics were also held in Brussels (Belgium), The Hague (Netherlands) and throughout Europe.

Dear colleagues, permit me now to say a few words, based on personal experience. As Speaker of the Parliament of Tatarstan, I am pleased to note that our republic is a historic site where principles of tolerance came into being and have been perfected over the centuries, and unique experience has been gained in good neighbourliness and in the synthesis of various national cultures. Civil peace and inter-ethnic harmony, combined with dynamic advances in economic development and in social stability, have become the hallmarks of Tatarstan.



The Tatarstan Peoples' Assembly plays a vital part in this process, the main thrust of its activities being the preservation and development of the ethno-cultural identity of our peoples.

In this context, we see a further process of cultural cross-fertilisation between national minorities and preservation and development of their customs, languages and traditions. All this is a major factor in improving the general state of any nation. These are the values that guide us in our actions.

During the conference we will be discussing a wide range of issues affecting various aspects of enhancement of intercultural dialogue and the preservation of diversity and spiritual heritage. On behalf of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, I wish all those attending a successful and fruitful session. I hope that they will be able to give an in-depth, expert assessment of the issues involved in preserving cultural diversity and devise common approaches to addressing these problems.

## **Mr Rafael Huseynov**

*Representative of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe*

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I welcome everybody on behalf of the Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Culture, Science and Education and wish success to your extremely important conference.

One of the major topics of the debates conducted over recent years in the Council of Europe has been the problem of inter-religious and intercultural dialogue. In fact this issue has always been on the agenda, not only during the last few years. However, the recent increase in attention to this problem is clear and it is not casual at all. Cultures differ from one another, each with their own peculiarities, but no matter to what extent cultures differ, they are tightly inter-related, they learn from one another, they complete and develop one another. The supreme purpose of cultures is not to increase the distinctions already existing between human beings and peoples; on the contrary it is to become the bridge connecting them.

The heritage created by the various cultures is a wealth. Though this wealth has been created by real individuals and peoples it actually belongs to the whole of humanity. I suppose that the debates and exchanges of views related to intercultural dialogue that take place today have their roots in this point – what to do to better protect our common wealth, how to direct our united efforts to make the world better, how to use our common wealth to make peoples and countries closer to one another.

I consider that choosing Baku as a venue for the European Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture was a very correct and expedient action. I suppose most of you have previously been to Baku and others have taken the opportunity to get to know the city through the official programme. There is an Old Town in the centre of Baku with a territory of 20 hectares and it is a vivid indication of the tolerance that has existed in Azerbaijan for 2 000 years. The Zoroastrian temple, Albanian Christian church and Moslem mosque coexist there.

In Baku, western and oriental architecture, as well as the best features of Asian and European cultures, have been developing in an inter-related way over the centuries. If different cultures do not inter-relate and adopt each other's best values, they cannot develop. Over the centuries, different cultures in Azerbaijan have coexisted in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect and they continue to do so in the same rhythm today. I wish the world this rhythm. As long as this rhythm exists, the world will be healthy and its heart will continue to beat strongly.

We should not try to usurp and destroy one another's cultural heritage or to humiliate one another. We should try to support and benefit each other. Because if we choose the former the coldness will increase, disputes will appear, an undesirable relationship will form. If we choose the latter option, friendliness, mutual understanding and good relationships will prevail. We should certainly choose the second option and serve the supreme humanist duty of cultures.

In this high-level conference I would like to express a wish that I once voiced in the Assembly of the Council of Europe. If we take into consideration the fact that today the leading people responsible for the development of culture in the major European countries are present here, I hope that my proposal will lead to definite thoughts about taking concrete action.

There are certain cities which are symbolically called the capitals of Europe. I wish that the Culture Museum of European Countries could be founded in one of them, no matter whether this be in Paris, Strasbourg, Berlin, London or Rome. If necessary, Baku could be a very appropriate place for this museum, as it unites different cultural traditions organically within itself. I imagine that museum as follows.

Each country is given a separate room in the museum, which consists of 50-55 rooms of equal size. Each country is charged with the task of establishing an exhibition of its culture in the given room. Anyone entering this museum, founded through the joint efforts of the European countries, will thus have the opportunity to follow the history of the development of all the European peoples within the shortest while and, at the same time, will discover for themselves the common and diverse aspects of these cultures. Visitors will visually witness the extent of the closeness and relativity of these peoples, as well as the depth of the ties connecting them.

I believe that the establishment of such a museum would really contribute to the effectiveness of inter-religious, intercultural and inter-moral dialogue.

Once again I wish your conference every success and assure you that the questions raised by you will be taken into consideration by the members of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Culture, Science and Education; they will be thoroughly debated and I believe that this will affect our future activity in a positive way.

## **Mr Mongi Bousnina**

Director General of ALECSO

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In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate, it is a great pleasure for me to participate in this conference and to salute you in the name of ALECSO. Representing 22 Arab countries, this organisation works towards educational, cultural and scientific promotion in the Arab countries as well as for the reinforcement of dialogue between the Arab culture and all the other different cultures.

ALECSO strongly believes that dialogue between cultures is an instrument for peace and sustainable development. I have the immense pleasure to contribute to this discussion of the conference theme by representing the organisation's expertise in promoting intercultural dialogue and in reinforcing favourable conditions for peace and living together in our common world. I would like to start by thanking Mr Haydar Aliyev, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and Mr Terry Davis, Secretary General of the Council of Europe, for their generous invitation to attend the conference and to congratulate them for their excellent choice of Azerbaijan to host this conference.

Enjoying a unique geographical position in the centre of different cultural and religious spaces, Azerbaijan acts as a real bridge between various cultures, civilisations and religions and is now required more than ever to take part in dialogue and to make alliances.

At ALECSO, we believe that dialogue is our destiny. If we would like to live in harmony and peace and choose to refuse war and conflict, we have to make cultural dialogue our first priority. We have organised different actions and programmes that have, we hope, demonstrated a clear Arab position on cultural dialogue. The Abu Dhabi Declaration, issued in January 2006, outlines the organisation's conception of dialogue, as well as the necessary conditions for its success. This declaration sums up the insights gained from the various symposia and conferences on dialogue held by the organisation since the beginning of this century in collaboration with a number of partners, such as the European, Ibero-American, Russian, German and Latin cultural arenas.

When speaking with these different partners, we came to the conclusion that dialogue can be fruitful and efficient only when it is based on a number of practical actions that serve mutual comprehension and communication.

We also came to realise that cultural dialogue and the principle of respecting cultural variety have to be backed by cultural policies that guide the main actors towards the valorisation, as well as the spread, of the concepts of dialogue and diversity.

During the last conference of the Arab ministers of culture, ALECSO included these values in the updating of the global strategy for Arab culture. This is a primary reference document describing the common Arab cultural strategies. Fortunately, the present conference discussing cultural policies and intercultural dialogue provides us with the opportunity to share and discuss our respective positions and conceptions related to this issue.

Besides our awareness of the need to have cultural policies that spread the values of dialogue and diversity, at ALECSO we are also fully aware of the necessity to demonstrate a political culture that serves these aims and that uses education as its major vehicle. Thus, we included in the "Plan for the Development of Education in the Arab Countries", recently approved in the Damascus summit in March 2008, a vision for educating future generations in the Arab countries which encourages learners to acquire the necessary skills for intercultural dialogue and living together in a fast-changing and diverse world. To achieve this aim, we have developed educational material and curricula in subjects such as history, citizenship education, democracy, human rights education and the teaching of foreign languages.

The ALECSO orientations are fortunately in line with Council of Europe policies. We both firmly believe in the necessity to build mutual bridges of dialogue and co-operation that are for the benefits of both parties, benefits that are deeply rooted in history but are also crucial for protection in the future.

The Council of Europe and ALECSO signed an agreement in Faro, Portugal on 27 October 2005. This is the first of its kind signed by the Council and an Arab or Islamic organisation. This agreement put intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity at the heart of the partnership between both organisations by undertaking a number of educational and cultural actions that achieve this aim and translate it from theory to practice.

Believing in the power of education for change, we started by selecting educational areas that can successfully lay dialogue bridges between Europe and the Arab countries and can help them get to know each other. Thus, we studied the image of the other in history textbooks used in Europe and the Arab countries and examined them in detail for negative and harmful stereotypes. We chose to treat critical historical periods between the two cultural spaces, such as the crusades or colonisation, with more objectivity and less tension. In the future, we plan to emphasise the common cultural heritage shared between Europe and the Arab countries in the history textbooks, thus hoping to promote better conditions for getting close to the other and getting to know them.

In Tunis, on the 27 and 28 October 2008, we organised the Euro-Arab days on the teaching of history, the teaching of foreign languages and the image of the other in the mass media. These days have resulted in the elaboration of ways for future co-operation and partnership between the organisation and the Council of Europe concerning the teaching of history and foreign languages, and efficient ways to enhance and valorise the image of the other in the mass media.

In addition to our support for and belief in education, we firmly believe at ALECSO that culture is the basis for building and supporting intercultural dialogue. We think that different cultural and artistic forms of expression, as well as translation, are viable bridges that favour positive interactions between people and between cultures. We have often called for energising the mobility of artists, the organisation of partnered activities between different cultural spaces and the encouragement of artists from all parts of the world to co-produce different artistic creations.

This is the main reason why we fully support the Artists for Dialogue initiative and we declare our intention to contribute to it. We believe that artists play a considerable role in laying bridges of dialogue between cultures and that artistic creativity is one of the best methods to encourage mutual comprehension and acceptance between people from all over the world.

In our organisation we maintain that cultural dialogue requires different geo-cultural spaces to establish, in partnership, the common cultural legacy and to use this legacy as the basis for gathering together and uniting people from different regions. Fortunately, the Euro-Arab legacy is rich and contains a considerable number of unifying conditions, starting with the influence of the Al-Andalus Arab culture on the European renaissance through to the impact of the enlightenment thinkers on the pioneers of the Arab renaissance in the 19th century, not forgetting the shared Greek, Roman and Phoenician heritage.

We are delighted to widen, in the future, our partnership with the Council of Europe by co-operating in programmes that encompass the cultural heritage in general and the common human heritage in particular. We have already started to talk with the Council of Europe's administrative body in charge of culture and cultural and natural heritage, about the possibilities for ALECSO and the Arab countries to be actively present in the "European heritage days" which are organised by the Council and which will be an excellent opportunity to appreciate our common cultural legacy.

The Cultural Routes project offers another good opportunity for co-operation between ALECSO and the Council of Europe. This project links the Arab and European places united by a common history, by a common civil heritage or by outstanding personalities that have travelled along these routes, such as Ibn Battuta, who visited three continents and over

40 countries and practised his own intercultural and inter-faith dialogue while living with different sorts of people.

This conference, which I am greatly honoured to attend, is taking place only a few months after the publication of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue prepared by the Council of Europe. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Council of Europe on this distinguished achievement which opens up wide horizons for Europe to co-operate with its neighbouring regions. I would also like to mention that ALECSO worked alongside the Council of Europe in all the preparation stages of this document and insisted on participating in all the related conferences that were organised in Geneva, San Marino, Lisbon and today, as well as in the many other points of dialogue.

Today, I would like to declare our intention to join the "Faro Platform", the open platform of inter-institutional co-operation for intercultural dialogue, to co-operate with the Council of Europe, UNESCO and all the other organisations and institutions that have expressed their intention to take part in this peaceful "alliance". We all aim to develop strong foundations for intercultural dialogue and to strengthen its procedures in order to achieve a better world where cultural relations can play a significant role in international politics and where we can spread peace and achieve sustainable development.

I hope that this declaration further consolidates the partnership process between ALECSO and the Council of Europe. I would also like to extend my warmest wishes for a successful conference.

## **Mr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri**

*Director General of ISESCO*

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It gives me great pleasure to address you at the opening of this important international conference in Baku, capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan and haven of culture, dialogue and mutual understanding. I seize this occasion to express thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Mr Ilham Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the generous support and care he devotes to ISESCO.

This conference is a very substantive initiative, which clearly illustrates that dialogue among cultures and civilisations is indeed a reality of today's world and one of its most important aspects.

This conference is a strong sign of the growing co-operation and partnership between the member states of ISESCO and the member states of the Council of Europe. It also demonstrates the advancement of the idea of coexistence between the Islamic world and the West and the extent to which it is in line with the principles of international law, the values of intercultural dialogue and the Alliance of Civilizations.

In 2002, ISESCO jointly published the *White Book on Dialogue of Cultures* with the OIC General Secretariat. This document builds on the resolutions and recommendations issued by the UN General Assembly and the international conferences organised or co-organised by ISESCO on dialogue and other relevant issues.

We, at ISESCO, consider the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue as a timely initiative, which translates this into concrete terms, setting it up as a prerequisite for sustainable development not only in Europe and neighbouring countries, but in every part of the world. World issues and problems are actually interconnected, reducing the world into a truly global village, with universally accepted values, principles and, unfortunately, problems and challenges.

The title of the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue – "Living together as equals in dignity" – is in full accordance with the Quranic verse: "We have dignified the sons of Adam." In Islam, all human beings are equal in terms of rights and obligations. It is a noble principle shared by one billion, three hundred million Muslims across the world.

As you know, this very title is inspired by the first article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." We are required to materialise this article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We believe this can be achieved through the promotion of the culture of dialogue and peace, in co-operation with governmental and non-governmental institutions, the ultimate aim being to entrench such concepts and principles and to make this theme a concrete reality in our lives.

The core values of the Council of Europe are shared by both the European and Muslim communities. We all believe that every person has the right to freedom and to live in dignity. We believe in justice and equality, and that human life is sacred; we believe in the values of virtue and honour; we believe in solidarity with the oppressed; we believe in the right of every individual to live in security; and we believe that enhancing and defending such sacred values and principles is a prerequisite for mutual understanding and coexistence between humans.

Here lies the significance of this international conference. This event, the first of its kind, brings together the ministers of culture of the Council of Europe and the ministers of culture of

a number of ISESCO member states. This makes this conference another major step in the right direction and we look forward to furthering our efforts to this end.

We, in ISESCO, are determined to work towards spreading the culture of dialogue and peace, and towards educating generations on the universally shared human principles that favour dialogue and peaceful interaction of peoples. We will also continue to work jointly with the Council of Europe to further our partnership and to collaborate in implementing relevant activities.

I should very much like to thank all of you. And I beseech God Almighty, the Source of Peace, to grant us success in our endeavours towards peace for the greater benefit of all. *Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.*



## **Ms Katérina Stenou**

*Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue of UNESCO*

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I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of UNESCO on this important issue just a few months after the laudable initiative of Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, the First Lady of Azerbaijan and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, who brought together more than two hundred women at this very place to consider their role in the promotion of intercultural dialogue in our increasingly diversified societies.

I am all the more pleased to be taking part in this conference, which has been co-organised by the Council of Europe and the Government of Azerbaijan, as UNESCO is a loyal partner of the Council of Europe, with which it launched the Faro Platform on intercultural dialogue. The presence of ALECSO, ISESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations sends out a strong signal on the relevance of such a meeting.

What better place for our meeting than Azerbaijan, throughout whose history it has been an immense challenge to bring about a dialogue – sometimes friendly and consensual, sometimes wary and critical – among a rich diversity of ethnic, linguistic, religious or political entities?

This intercultural dialogue is age-old: I am Greek, I was brought up under the influence of the myth of Prometheus, and I discover here, close to Baku, the place where the Titan was chained – according to the 5th century BC tragedy – after defying the gods by stealing their fire. So it was that Prometheus had to take and pass on the fire that generated human civilisation, and while Azerbaijan means “land of fire”, it is also a land where humanity – regenerated – was able to escape from its primary condition.

At this crucial moment in the history of humanity, we are pleased that a Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture is entirely devoted to intercultural dialogue as a way of ensuring development, mutual understanding and peace.

Europe, which throughout its history has constructed mythologies concerning the exclusion or welcoming of “otherness”, is thus becoming a testing ground not only for an epistemology of dialogue but also its implementation, and the Council of Europe’s White Paper is a very timely instrument in this respect. Today, Europe is in a position to benefit from all its failures as well as its successes, and tomorrow it could be ready to share its experience on this subject with other regions of the world.

I would like to take the opportunity of this meeting to draw your attention for a few moments to the UNESCO strategy concerning the – increasingly explicit – promotion of intercultural dialogue. The word “dialogue”, which it became necessary to use from the beginning of this century in response to the theory of the “clash of civilisations”, has gradually entered UNESCO’s vocabulary. The organisation’s constitution stresses that “ignorance of each other’s ways and lives has been a common cause ... of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war”. It also states that it is necessary “to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other’s lives”.

That is why UNESCO has always made intercultural dialogue a central concern in its five areas of competence: education, culture, the sciences (social and human sciences – natural and exact sciences), communication and information. Three major phases can be identified in the six decades in which UNESCO has been in existence.

Since its foundation, UNESCO has been involved in many practical ways in promoting mutual understanding and appreciation among peoples, by means of mutual knowledge and recognition of the contribution of each culture to universal culture, in particular through the dissemination of knowledge and of literary and artistic works (for example, the UNESCO collections, such as the Collection of Representative Works, the Traditional Music of the World collection, the Atlas of World Art, the general or regional histories or the Major Project on Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values, 1957-1966).

During a second phase, it proved necessary to go back to the common roots of civilisations, to promote the idea of a collective world heritage and to further receptiveness and tolerance in a world increasingly aware of its interdependence. Thus it was that the concept of “roads of intercultural dialogue” was launched in connection with the World Decade for Cultural Development (1987-1996), starting from the assumption that the momentum generated by contacts leads a culture to evolve and become transformed in all its components. The aim was to highlight a long-term process that, for centuries, gave rise to movements, meetings and interactions, which are today somewhat overlooked (such as the Silk Roads, the Slave Route, the Roads of Faith, the Routes of Al-Andalus, the Iron Roads and the Arabia Plan).

In the present context, ten years after the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development (Stockholm, 1998) and 60 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the acceleration of the globalisation process and the spectacular development of the communications media offer fresh opportunities in relations between peoples, nations and cultures at the global level, but also present new challenges. A lack of understanding and a feeling of mistrust between individuals from different cultural backgrounds have increased in recent times, and a general feeling of insecurity has developed. The realisation that there is a considerable shared vulnerability, a lack of reference points and a need to act in order to preserve peace and resolve conflicts shows that dialogue, in response to a need for trust at the national, international and global levels, has become essential.

Given this new situation that is felt and experienced the world over, intercultural dialogue is becoming an overriding necessity for sustainable development and peace. Such an undertaking cannot be improvised. A structured and innovative approach is necessary in order to guarantee its success and it must be employed in such a way as to counter sweeping statements based on ignorance, prejudice, humiliation, frustration, resentment, fear and exclusion, which lead to a spiral of tension, insecurity, violence, conflict and, sometimes, war.

Faced with the new challenges of this increasingly interconnected world of ours, we need first of all to demonstrate the complexity and added value of dialogue as a means of promoting cultural diversity and, consequently, as a guarantor of sustainable development and lasting stability. We must never lose sight of the fact that dialogue unleashes not only cognitive abilities but also the imagination and the diverse sensibilities of dialogue participants. This is particularly true in the new audiovisual and digital landscape, which is imposing “uninvited guests” on us and directly presents feelings and antipathies before moving on to reasoned argument. In the exciting venture ahead, four priority concerns need to be addressed:

- *The conditions for dialogue.* Who lays down the conditions for the debate and the agenda and who will preside over it? What are the conditions for, and limits of, the dialogue within and between civilisations, cultures and peoples? What are the minimum requirements for any dialogue and, in particular, inter-religious dialogue? What other obstacles to dialogue are there apart from indifference, ignorance, prejudice, the excesses of the market economy and religious excesses, which have already been identified by many NGOs?
- *The values of dialogue.* There can be no dialogue between different peoples and different cultures without common ground. How can this common ground be defined at the present time? Is it a language, a religion, a *modus vivendi* or some other element, such as human dignity? What are the relevant values that might foster dialogue? How can dialogue invite us to enjoy the enchantment of reason and emotion without falling into hollow lyricism or reductionist moralism?
- *The scope and practicalities of dialogue.* How can policy makers, civil society and, in particular, youth opinion leaders take account in their work of the dynamic concept of

cultural diversity and of the fact that this is perceived as both an asset and a threat? How can they become aware of the cultural prejudice that permeates their own speeches, work and policies so as to avoid stumbling into the everyday traps awaiting them?

- *Ways of thinking and policy frameworks:* In an effort to deliver on the commitments made in the political and institutional bodies within the United Nations system, UNESCO is called upon to provide a set of approaches (for example, on dialogue<sup>34</sup> and culture<sup>35</sup>) and methods (for example, on intercultural skills<sup>36</sup>) as well as practical data that make it easier to translate principles into action.

In addressing these four concerns, it is becoming increasingly necessary to take account of the relations between culture, dialogue, development, security and peace. These five solidarity-based notions need to be reconsidered in a new approach: culture, beginning with its rich diversity; dialogue, which reveals that diversity; and development in its dual sense of physical and symbolic development, for lasting peace and security.

We have all become aware that there is a constant two-way relationship between diversity and dialogue, with the one being in a way the condition of the other. In other words, diversity is the raw material of dialogue, and it is this recognition of the porous and moving borders of our cultures that enables dialogue to become established through a kind of alchemy or osmosis that creates or regenerates a cultural kinship.

In the present economic situation, UNESCO must more than ever before remain vigilant by being a think tank in which concepts are clarified and new methodological tools are developed for formulating relevant educational, cultural, scientific and communication policies (for example, the Cultural Diversity Lens or the New Cultural Policy Profile). However, UNESCO does not confine itself to the role of an intellectual watchdog but enables policy-makers and civil society players to understand the challenges of the dialogue in all their complexity without playing the manipulation game.

In this new beginning, to cope with the momentous challenges of governance and “living together” in a global era, we need co-operation on a world scale to consolidate the position of culture, which is the only permanently renewable energy and originates from the legacies and dreams of the whole of humanity and the sum of its skills, knowledge and wisdom.

It is clear that UNESCO does not seek to identify, deal in isolation with and preserve each culture by treating it as sacred but, rather, to foster a “dialogue” approach that avoids ghettoisation, counteracts any drift from identity awareness and, accordingly, prevents conflicts. In this context, the need to devise a major project for a dialogue of cultures becomes imperative. This project must take into account not only the historical foundations of each culture but also an up-to-date analysis of the aspirations of individuals and groups, with each a co-author of meanings, values and images that shape a common future.

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34. The term “dialogue” cannot be used as a synonym for “negotiation” as the aim of the latter is to defend specific interests. “Dialogue” is an exercise that involves a considerable intellectual commitment amounting to a meeting of two or more minds to try to break new ground (“dia –logos”: the prefix “dia” is similar in meaning to the prefix “trans” and does not, as is often thought, refer to the figure two). It is very commonly, and often inappropriately, used in the media and political speeches and, by its very nature, stirs our cognitive and emotional capabilities into action, and it should become the quintessential means of permanently renewing the thought process and challenging well-established certainties.

35. Today, although there are many definitions of culture, it should be understood in a very broad sense as “the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, ... it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs” (MONDIACULT, 1982 and UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, preamble, 2001).

36. The development of multifaceted educational, cultural and scientific content in order to improve dialogue and mutual understanding, the role of the media in the new digital landscape and international co-operation and solidarity by implementing the various legal instruments of the UN or UNESCO and the various co-operation agreements concluded with governmental partners (the Council of Europe, ALECSO, ISESCO, the Alliance of Civilizations, etc.) and non-governmental organisations are key prerequisites for acquiring intercultural skills, thus making us genuine “beings of dialogue”.

The present context makes it necessary to implement a series of urgent measures both at the international and at the regional and national levels. This leads us to hope that in each European country and its neighbouring regions dialogue will be able to infuse all institutions, be they in the world of publishing, the audiovisual field, museums or the media, to mention but a few key areas. This development has long been foreseen by UNESCO which, under its mandate, works as a global legislator to capture all the resources of the memory and of human creation.<sup>37</sup> The main virtue of its legal instruments is that they unite the most varied manifestations of the creative genius of all the world cultures in order to affirm or reconstruct the fundamental unity of humanity and find that “mother tongue” that everyone can hear and speak, whatever their cultural, linguistic, religious or other roots.

UNESCO therefore permanently redefines its strategies in order to:

- demonstrate the beneficial effects of diversity through the recognition of cultural exchanges and the enhancement of cultural footprints, the aim being to influence discussions and writings on cultural diversity, which is often presented – at least implicitly – as a necessary evil and as a limiting factor with which it is necessary to come to terms and to which governments have to adjust as best they can;
- promote the learning of “living together” without conflicts of cultural and civic loyalty; there is an urgent need to move beyond the celebration of diversity to the construction of pluralism, which is not just the recognition of a diversity of objects and concepts but also recognises the dynamic role of individuals belonging to many different groups in the construction of a cohesive society.

The difficulties of our task are considerable. Making culture the focus of every development project and peace initiative may indeed also involve a number of risks: culture is, as we are all aware, a creative and therefore liberating force. We must not play the sorcerer’s apprentice as our generous intentions could be betrayed and instrumentalised: “culturalising” the shortcomings of political, economic and social measures would be a serious step backwards. Culture, which has been ignored for too long, could then ironically become the “punch-bag” of unsuccessful projects and an excuse for our failures. I do not want to conclude on this pessimistic prediction but only point out the need for self-criticism and vigilance, which UNESCO, like each of the institutions present here today, has to exercise.

In conclusion, I would like to recall a poet’s proud claim that artists, writers and philosophers are genuine legislators as the force of words and pictures ineradicably fashion ways of thinking, human relations, social life and our relationship with nature. If we accept these links between the aesthetic, the legal and the political, then freedom, justice and equity have no better servant than culture and art, which are quintessential areas for dialogue.

Allow me to make a brief detour via the Azerbaijan National Museum of Art to illustrate these links. Many of the works exhibited attest it to be a showcase of intercultural dialogue. I will confine myself to just one example: the extraordinary Tabriz “Four Seasons” rug (see the appended picture), and say a few words about it: the four seasons are an ever-recurring theme going back as far as or even farther than European antiquity. Two striking examples are the sculptures of the façade of Paris’s 13th century Notre Dame cathedral and the superb painting by Francesco Del Cossa in the Schifanoia Palace in Ferrara. Attempts were subsequently made to standardise the iconography of the four seasons, as Ripa did in 1603 in his “Iconologia”, a treatise on images. However, artists have constantly renewed the theme, and have done so with considerable liberty. When Vivaldi wrote his “Four Seasons” in the 18th century, many castles had drawing-rooms in which spring, summer, autumn and winter, represented by children or winged geniuses, were depicted. The magnificent “Four Seasons”

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37. I am thinking of the 1972 Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, the list of which contains two superb sites in Azerbaijan: the fortified city of Baku with the Palace of the Shahs of Shirvan and the Maiden Tower (2000) as well as the Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape (2007). I am also thinking of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and, of course, the latest instrument, the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In connection with the 2003 Convention, I would like to mention the “Mugham”, which is on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Masterpieces (2003). This traditional music genre echoes the various historical periods of the country and its fertile contacts, for example with the Persians, the Armenians and the Georgians.

rug shows, on a grand scale, the art of the Tabriz illuminators and offers a new interpretation of the four seasons theme, a theme with which all peoples, or at least those who live in the temperate zones, can identify. With its combination of poetry, painting and weaving, it captivates us by intertwining secular themes (based on daily life) and religious themes (such as Adam and Eve and Abraham's Sacrifice). Its plastic language can be understood not only in the region in which it was produced but all over the world.

Intercultural dialogue is an age-old dialogue. The flame that is the national emblem of Azerbaijan is not only the symbol of freedom that Prometheus snatched from the gods but also, in the troubled world in which we live, the bright promise of a dialogue that welcomes, transforms and transmits a legacy that spans thousands of years by offering us new prospects.

Tabriz "Four Seasons" rug



Details from a Tabriz "Four Seasons" rug







## **Round table speeches**



## **Mr Abulfas Garayev**

*Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

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We are now moving from the theoretical framework to the practice of dialogue which is the core objective of the Baku co-operation process in the framework of the White Paper. This is, therefore, the right time for us to discuss the requirements of cultural dialogue not only in Europe but also in its neighbouring regions. After the adoption and launch of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, this conference offers an important opportunity for discussions at ministerial level on the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law through intercultural dialogue and cultural policy, to create new mutual contacts and to exchange mutual cultures. I would like to thank the Council of Europe for preparing an outstanding document – the White Paper mentioned above – which promotes transparency and honesty in all aspects of dialogue. The White Paper responds to an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help appreciate diversity while sustaining social cohesion. It seeks to provide a conceptual framework and a guide for policy makers and practitioners.

The strategy of Azerbaijan on intercultural dialogue is mainly directed to supporting and protecting cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is not only a fact which has the right to be protected, but also an economic, social and political advantage, to be developed and effectively managed. The protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity are factors of human development and a manifestation of human liberty, and they are an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations. The cultural diversity of a country is a rich asset for individuals and societies.

All groups, minorities and communities living in Azerbaijan comprise the social base of the Azerbaijani people. That is why activities of the government and non-governmental organisations should be aimed at establishing social equality and protecting their rights in public life in our country.

All of us are aware that the normal development of society depends on mutual understanding among different nations and representatives of different cultures, as well as on the state itself and its citizens.

Intercultural dialogue is also linked with the level of development of the economy in our country because one of the priorities of the state policy of Azerbaijan is to use its economic growth and increasing income for the development of culture and intercultural dialogue, as well as to support the intercultural initiatives of different groups, communities and NGOs acting in this field.

Activities are being realised by the government and non-governmental organisations aimed at protecting the cultural rights of different groups, minorities and nations. As outlined in the constitution and in the Law on Culture, national cultural policy is based on the principle of equal opportunities to create and use cultural values and to preserve the heritage in Azerbaijan. Every person has the right to create, use and disseminate cultural values, irrespective of their social and material status, nationality, race, religion and gender. The problems of dialogue among civilisations, protection of cultural rights and fundamental freedoms, guarantee of respect for cultural diversity and cultural heritage, the right of everyone to the preservation and development of their own cultural heritage in the framework of their society and assistance to historical and cultural tourism are always the focus of attention of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The project and programmes being realised in the area of intercultural dialogue help us to:

- identify differences and similarities in different cultural traditions and perceptions;
- share best practices particularly in the areas of intercultural dialogue, the democratic management of social diversity and the promotion of social cohesion;

- help in managing cultural diversity in a democratic manner by making the necessary adjustments to existing social and political arrangements of all kinds;
- bridge the divide between those who perceive diversity as a threat and those who see it as an enrichment;
- improve the ability to find a common language for understanding and respecting cultural differences.

Once every two years we organise a festival of national minorities living in Azerbaijan. We are planning to organise an International Festival for Minorities next year. It is also another contribution to the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Azerbaijan participates in a series of multilateral cultural projects. Co-operation with the Council of Europe is one of the key elements of our foreign cultural policy. We have been participating in the Kyiv Initiative Regional Programme for the Black Sea region and South Caucasus since 2006. In response to this initiative and the recommendations stemming from the STAGE project, the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, jointly with participating countries, identified the objectives and defined the conditions for their realisation. It implements, in the framework of the Kyiv Initiative, multilateral projects such as heritage management, wine culture and tourism exchange, the Alexander Dumas Cultural Route, cross-border cinema culture and cultural policy and exchanges. The Alexander Dumas Cultural Route project in the Caucasus, initiated by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, is of particular interest. The project is realised with the participation of Azerbaijan, Georgia and the Dagestan Republic of the Russian Federation and is supported by France, with methodical support from the European Institute of Cultural Routes in Luxembourg. We have very good co-operation with UNESCO, ISESCO, TURKSOY (Joint Administration of Turkic Arts and Culture), GUAM (Organization for Democracy and Economic Development) and other international organisations. At the 5th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Tripoli, 21-23 November 2007), Baku, the capital of the Republic of Azerbaijan, was proclaimed the Islamic Culture Capital for 2009. The programme of activities for 2009 includes various official international and national events, linked to practical science, education and training, arts and cultural tourism, film festivals, book fairs, projects on the protection of Islamic cultural heritage and culture days.

## **Ms Gabriella Battaini-Draroni**

*Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe*

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### **Intercultural dialogue: a necessity and challenge of our times**

Intercultural dialogue is a necessity and a key challenge of our times. More than ever, in an increasingly diverse and globalised world, talking across ethnic, religious, linguistic and national dividing lines is imperative to secure social cohesion, trust and to avoid conflict. Events of recent years have raised the crucial question of how members of different communities relate to one another.

### **The Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: origins, consultation and launching**

But as these episodes suggest, questions have been more evident than answers when it comes to coping with cultural diversity. It was for this reason that in 2005 the heads of state and government of the member states of the Council of Europe, at their Warsaw Summit, decided to put intercultural dialogue at the top of the political agenda of the Organisation and to appoint a co-ordinator for intercultural dialogue. Later that year, you and your predecessors, Council of Europe ministers responsible for culture, took a courageous and unprecedented initiative and called for the preparation of a White Paper, to provide guidance on policy and good practice in this field.

The Council of Europe was well placed to take this initiative, since our core mandate is to defend and extend human rights, democracy and the rule of law across our 47 member states. The promotion of intercultural dialogue can draw ample inspiration from long-established work of Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms, standard-setting instruments and co-operation and assistance activities addressing important aspects of intercultural dialogue in the human rights field. Since 1980, the Committee of Ministers has formulated more than 80 recommendations to member states with relevance to intercultural dialogue. The Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe have adopted more than 50 resolutions and recommendations with content relating to intercultural dialogue. The White Paper builds on these experiences but at the same time is in many respects fundamentally new, as it provides a new political culture enabling us to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically, on the basis of shared universal values.

The consultation itself proved a vast affair. It lasted six months and engaged 47 member states of national parliaments, local and regional authorities, religious communities, cultural and other non-governmental organisations, journalists and media organisations as well as international institutions. On 7 May 2008, the foreign ministers of the Council of Europe launched the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue: "Living together as equals in dignity".

### **The White Paper's five policy areas: from the democratic governance of cultural diversity to international relations**

Allow me to briefly present the basic thoughts which inspired the White Paper in five broad policy areas.

1. First, the Council of Europe argues that intercultural dialogue will only thrive if we develop the democratic governance of cultural diversity, for example by building a political culture of diversity that recognises the rights of minorities and migrants, by promoting policies and – if necessary – by taking positive action for the equal enjoyment of rights by all citizens.
2. Secondly, we must strengthen democratic citizenship and participation for all. Dialogue without participation is a sterile, hypocritical exercise that will not lead far.
3. Another task is to support the learning and teaching of intercultural competences in all parts of the education sector; the knowledge of other cultures and religions, of

history and heritage, languages and life-styles, compromise and conflict-resolution is essential here.

4. Efforts must be made to create more – and more accessible – spaces for intercultural dialogue, be it physical spaces or virtual spaces like in the media or the arts.
5. Finally, the principles of intercultural dialogue must also inspire international relations, including for instance the contributions that local and regional authorities, the media or civil society can make in this context.

### **A focus on three main policy areas**

In my speech today I will focus on three of these areas which are of particular importance in the context of our ministerial conference.

#### *The democratic governance of cultural diversity*

One of the clearest lessons from the consultations with member states which led to the adoption of the White Paper was conceptual. This process revealed that the weight of recent challenges was related to the imperfection of traditional approaches to addressing cultural diversity.

The first of these approaches, the notion that members of minority communities should assimilate the dominant ethos of the state, even though that ethos has been defined by the “host” majority, has proved increasingly difficult to sustain in ever-more diverse societies. Also, it does not sit well with Council of Europe affirmations on the rights of persons belonging to minority communities, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

In contrast, the alternative multiculturalist approach argues that the distinct ethos of minority communities should be politically recognised as being on a par with that of the “host” majority. But this also turned out to be problematic, as it unwittingly led to closed communities, to a sacrifice of the rights of individuals – notably women – *within* communities, and it tended inadvertently to create stereotypes and ghettoisation.

It is in this framework that the new paradigm of intercultural dialogue has emerged. This has taken from assimilation, at its best, emphasis on the universality of the citizen and his or her equality, allied to the exercise of impartial public authority. It has taken from multiculturalism an appreciation of the reality of cultural diversity and its potential for cultural enrichment. Critically, however, it shifts the focus from the relationship between the individual or community and the state to the necessity for dialogue across communal barriers. And it is marked by a culture of broad-mindedness, which recognises the fluidity of identities and the need for openness to change in a globalising context.

Interculturalism thus offers a third way, a new answer to the question of social integration. If assimilation placed the burden to integrate entirely on minority communities and multiculturalism did not consider the need for integration at all, in the spirit of intercultural dialogue, integration is re-conceptualised as a two-way street, in which every player has roles and responsibilities.

#### *Democratic citizenship, participation and the full enjoyment of rights*

The White Paper puts these thoughts in a much wider context. It makes the point that we will only succeed in reconciling respect for different identities with the need to strengthen social cohesion if we base our policy on universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. They are the common denominator holding together our societies. They inspire our political institutions and they are the precondition for social trust.

Intercultural dialogue must be founded on a firm and well-reflected set of values; this is another of the main messages of the White Paper. Dialogue presupposes openness of mind in all partners, including the capacity to look at their own values and frame of reference with critical distance. These are also essential values and characteristics of education and cultural work. Intercultural dialogue, however, does not mean that all cultural practices are equally valid. Some values are non-negotiable, and many of them are found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. Not all views

and values are of equal worth, and there are views that are unacceptable in modern democratic societies, notably those that deny the human dignity of others.

In this area, the Council of Europe is currently preparing the publication of the case law of the European Court of Human Rights on issues relating to intercultural dialogue. Two groundbreaking manuals on “Hate speech” and “The wearing of religious symbols in public areas” have just been published as a result of recent case law on Articles 9 and 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Finally, the White Paper reminds us that any form of discrimination or exclusion means intercultural dialogue does not take place between equals or does not take place at all.

### *Intercultural competencies*

Yet, intercultural dialogue depends not only on a supportive political environment, but also on the capacity of individuals to engage in dialogue with others. The empathy that stems from reciprocal recognition of our common humanity may generate goodwill, but particular competences are needed. These include some familiarity with other languages, a basic understanding of the world religions and an appreciation of the multiple perspectives which may be brought to bear on the history of one’s own society.

Therefore, intercultural education is critical, if intercultural dialogue is to thrive! Indeed education, but equally culture, are key to intercultural dialogue because they open minds. In educating and allowing for cultural expressions, including diverse ones, we decide the future of our societies. If our schools, cultural services, our media and civil society organisations look inward, our societies will too. If, on the contrary, they are open to the world, our societies stand a good chance of seeing diversity not only as an unavoidable reality but as an opportunity for joint human and economic development. Who, in a culturally diverse world today, can seriously maintain that learning how to “live together as equals in dignity” is not a necessity?

Education and culture are in my view not just functional – learning “facts and skills”. They concern as much the attitudes and competences to use this knowledge in a responsible way. They are thus multidimensional in: developing and maintaining a broad and advanced knowledge base; preparing for the labour market; allowing for personal development and self-fulfilment; and preparing for and enriching the lives of active citizens in a democratic society.

But, are we not neglecting a fifth, increasingly urgent purpose? I cannot imagine that the society we want would not be fluent in intercultural dialogue! This conference provides us with a wonderful opportunity to study the specific contribution and assets of the cultural sector as regards intercultural fluency, and I am more than happy to learn about approaches, examples and paths taken in Europe’s neighbouring regions to complete the picture and reinforce our efforts.

How is the Council of Europe planning to follow up the recommendations of the White Paper in the field of intercultural competencies? I wish to give you a few examples, many of which we have implemented in co-operation with our international partners, UNESCO, ALECSO, the Anna Lindh Foundation and ISESCO and, most recently, the Alliance of Civilizations:

- We intend to develop a framework of reference which describes the competences necessary for intercultural understanding, democratic citizenship and diversity education (with a special emphasis on teaching about religions and humanistic values in the classroom).
- We are committed to continue to develop approaches to history teaching based on critical analysis and multiperspectivity, mutual respect and tolerance, as well as teaching remembrance – education for the prevention of crimes against humanity.
- As regards language policies for intercultural dialogue, we will support the review of language policies in the education system, including through consultative guidelines and tools for describing common European standards of language competence.

- Through the newly established “Wergeland Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship” in Oslo, we will support research, training and professional development for those who have made education their career and their calling.

In addition to these measures, we are also running activities in the field of non-formal education – with a wide variety of non-governmental youth organisations. One of the very promising new formats is that of the “intercultural language courses”, where we combine basic language learning in mixed groups of young people with an introduction to the culture of the host society. The first examples in Morocco (thanks to co-operation with ISESCO) and Turkey show the great potential of this approach.

Despite the recent focus on developing intercultural competencies in the educational sector, the Council of Europe is also well aware that intercultural skills are needed in all sectors of society. It is for this reason that the Council of Europe is in discussion with a variety of professional categories, including police officers, media professionals, social and health service providers, local authorities, religious communities’ representatives, and others with a view to equipping them with the skills needed today for engaging in intercultural dialogue within and among our diverse societies.

### **Intercultural dialogue in international relations**

The White Paper also supports the notion that intercultural dialogue must be promoted at all levels: at the local level – with the work carried out within local and regional communities (Intercultural Cities project); in the national context – by monitoring the intercultural dimension of national cultural policies (the Compendium system) between European societies; with regional programmes, such as the Regional Programme on Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe and the Kiev Initiative; as well as specific post-conflict confidence-building measure projects in Cyprus, Kosovo and Georgia, and between Europe and other regions of the world.

The White Paper, which recognises of course that this year has been designated by the European Union as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, also explores how the Council of Europe can work with its international partners to promote dialogue beyond the European continent. The Council of Europe here benefits not only from its relationship with UNESCO but also with the UN Alliance of Civilizations and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation, as well as ALECSO. In addition, we co-operate with ISESCO on specific projects.

Finally, but importantly, the Council of Europe North-South Centre in Lisbon is our privileged tool for promoting intercultural dialogue between Europe and neighbouring countries.

It is the Council of Europe’s hope that this conference will be the occasion for expanding this co-operation to the cultural sectors.

### **Concluding remarks**

The Council of Europe is only too aware that intercultural dialogue, by definition, is an evolving activity which includes manifold partners and policy areas. Our organisation by no means seeks to claim a monopoly of wisdom in this regard and it very much hopes that the “White Paper process” can and will continue, for example through its translation and dissemination in many languages, including Arabic thanks to ISESCO, or via good-practice networks such as the Intercultural Cities project, the good practice collection of the Compendium system and the ongoing Council of Europe “Campaign against Discrimination”, as well as other projects as detailed in the Final Declaration of the conference.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue offers multiple answers to the questions with which governments have wrestled in recent years as to how diverse individuals can live together. Yet, intercultural dialogue is a “work in progress”, one step on a long road towards the construction of a social and cultural model for fast-changing societies, allowing everybody to “live together as equals in dignity”.



And you, ministers of culture gathered here today, have a fundamental role to play in fostering a culture of international diplomacy based on intercultural dialogue, diversity and mutual respect.

## Mr Marc Scheuer

*Director of the Secretariat of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations*

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What a great idea! This conference has been rightly presented as an innovative initiative and the opening up to a wider neighbourhood of Europe is much appreciated. We need more of that, I believe.

It is, indeed, particularly fitting that the conference is taking place here in Baku, a crossroads par excellence, and involves, next to ministers from Council of Europe member states, colleagues from Arab and Central Asian countries, vast areas which contributed so much, along different routes, to the spreading of new technologies, ideas, religions and all forms of cultural creativity and mean so much today for the future of stability and the art of living together.

The venue and the enlarged circle offer additional perspectives for looking at complex and diverse processes of cultural re-appropriation and exchanges, but also withdrawal, that are accompanying developments such as economic migrations, the end of blocs and empires, unequal development, fast globalisation and the communication society. They are the background against which much of our work is taking place.

The conference comes, as Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni reminded us, soon after the publication of the Council of Europe's remarkable White Paper, which is in strong demand and will be a standing reference and source of inspiration.

With representatives of so many friends in this room, the Alliance of Civilizations could not have been absent from a major meeting that promotes intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development, echoing its own single and compelling mandate. Thanks to the organisers for the invitation and hospitality.

As you know the Alliance of Civilizations was launched in 2005, at the initiative of Spain and Turkey, to urgently address widening cultural divides, in a world too often presented and perceived as made up "of mutually exclusive cultures, religions or civilizations, historically distinct and destined for confrontation".

Whether as a theory or confused belief, the notion of a clash of civilisations was – is – in effect, fuelling mutual suspicion and fear, sometimes helping turn negotiable disputes of a political, economic or social nature into seemingly intractable identity-based conflicts, with cross-cultural stereotypes then contributing to entrench already polarised opinions.

The *raison d'être* of the Alliance of Civilizations is precisely to counter the stereotypes and misconceptions that deepen patterns of hostility and mistrust within societies and among societies, to build bridges, to promote a "dialogue that delivers" – an intercultural dialogue supported by concrete initiatives and designed to make a difference in citizens' everyday lives – and to help release the collective political will to address the world's imbalances.

So far, the Alliance of Civilizations has given priority attention to aspects concerning the relations between Western and Muslim societies, trying to understand and to suggest remedies, while being deeply aware that a characterisation "Islam – West" does not reflect the vast diversity within each society. Next to general policy recommendations on resolving conflicts and removing obstacles to development, the report of the High Level Group of 20 independent persons from very different cultural backgrounds recommended the reduction of cross-cultural tensions and the building of bridges between communities through action on education, youth, migration and media. The approach is meant to help manage cultural diversity in a globalising world in a more general way.

Intercultural dialogue does of course not stand alone. It is part of a wider agenda for justice, inclusion, human development and peace. In that respect, it is worth noting that the “guiding principles” of the initiative of the Alliance of Civilizations, as contained in the report of the High Level Group (13 November 2006), are not very different from those of the White Paper, in particular the insistence on the rule of law, adherence to human rights standards and democratic governance. They also have in common the recognition that diversity of cultures is a basic feature of human society and a driving force of human progress, and that religion, an increasingly important dimension of many societies and a significant source of values for individuals, can play a critical role in promoting an appreciation of other cultures, religions and ways of life in order to help build harmony.

Building on such principles, the Alliance of Civilizations has been operational for almost two years now, steered by the former President of Portugal Jorge Sampaio, appointed High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon. It is a process supported by friends rather than an international organisation with members. Once a year it holds a major Davos style multi-stakeholder forum (Madrid, Istanbul) that is meant both as an exceptional platform of discussion and as a forum for decisions on new activities.

I will extract some elements from its working methods and achievements that might be useful in our search for “common ground for intercultural dialogue”:

- Civility and hospitality are values worth being rediscovered and placed at the centre of our societies, as they are the concrete expression of a minimum of common humanity shared by every man, woman and child on earth. They help put linguistic, religious, cultural and other differences – as important as they are in shaping different layers of identity – into their proper perspectives. I hasten to add, in front of this very audience, that in reality, as we know, the arts are probably the human activity which expresses most naturally our universal human commonality.
- The ambition should be to move from tolerance to respect and this, of course, requires from all greater awareness of and interest in the others, a lack of rigidity and a commitment to common overarching values. This is what dialogue is all about.
- We should find creative ways at the multilateral level of approaching some hot issues from slightly different perspectives, allowing us all to get out of emotionally loaded entrenched positions.
- Global is local. Global tensions are impacting increasingly locally. Conflicts anywhere are now conflicts everywhere. As a consequence, while a global strategy to promote good governance of cultural diversity is needed, much of successful conflict prevention and peace building are local tasks.
- Turning to *modus operandi*, the Alliance of Civilizations is a multi-stakeholder initiative, involving governments, local authorities, civil society, religious leaders and the corporate world, and it draws extensively on the capacities and achievements of relevant international organisations. In developing activities and policies, its role goes from being a mere catalyst to facilitator, partner or main implementing agency.

Let me give a few examples of activities so far, in areas closest to your fields of competence, and see what useful things they may tell us for this conference:

- working with the media:
  - creating the “Global Expert Finder” and the “Rapid Reaction Media Mechanism” (RRMM): a unique resource of expertise, for example on cross-cultural issues, religions, integration of migrants and radicalisation, being put at the disposal of journalists and media and representing the diversity of cultures, religions, languages and genders;
  - using the resource outside the context of crises as well;
  - regional meetings of editors and journalists, allowing them to debate and learn about the handling of cross-cultural issues;

- promoting responsibility and a code of ethics;
- encouraging the coverage of positive developments which clearly contradict the stereotypes;
- supporting the production of films and television series that conspicuously avoid negative stereotyping (Media Fund);
- promoting spaces for dialogue among young people and supporting concrete cross-cultural co-operation, thus preventing hostility and rigidity and allowing them to be what they are (the key actors, bold, risk-taking, people to people, involvement of all, both genders), for example through the Youth Solidarity Fund;
- promoting intercultural skills and more specifically media literacy education and education on religions and beliefs for example through:
  - Clearinghouse;
  - forthcoming UNESCO rotating Chair on Media Literacy Education (MLE);
  - academic networks;
  - support for dissemination of UNESCO universal history;
- developing a system of fellowships for emerging leaders, encouraging their early exposure to other societies and cultures with the support of foundations;
- promoting national action plans or strategies and holding marketplaces of ideas; reflecting on indicators of an accepted diversity linked by common values;
- involving the corporate world;
- aggregating independent projects like SILATECH.

Opportunities are numerous. This is a huge field for wider co-operation with all of you and many others – citizens, corporations, faith-based movements and associations of all kinds. The Alliance of Civilizations is a forum and a platform for concrete action. It supplements other forms of political work and a range of intercultural and interfaith debates, both private and public initiatives.

The ambition is that, in the difficult and alarmingly "out of balance" world of today, in the ever more complex and "present to everyone" world of tomorrow, individually and collectively, within our societies and across them, we do not miss the chances of diversity, we do not let ourselves be dragged into paralysing tensions, we become, in a way, "walking alliances of civilisations".

## **Mr Ertuğrul Gűnay**

*Minister of Culture and Tourism, Turkey*

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First of all, I would like to thank the Azerbaijani authorities for organising this Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture on “Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions” and their warm hospitality.

As you may assume, intercultural dialogue has had priority in the agenda of ministers responsible for culture for ten years.

The activities and events regarding the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 were initiated in Ankara with the contribution of the delegation of the European Commission to Turkey. Turkey is a part of the EU Cultural Programme and Istanbul has been named the 2010 European Capital of Culture. It is my firm belief that all the activities within this context will contribute to intercultural dialogue.

The main components of intercultural dialogue, which is chiefly described as cultural exchange, are living together in a globalised world, free expression of oneself and respect for differences. The location of our country, which has been the motherland of thousands of civilisations and cultures, is very unique in terms of intercultural dialogue. We, Turkey, consider the cultural heritage we have as a tool for understanding other people’s values, dialogue and communication. Turkey is a part of various multilateral initiatives which aim to foster intercultural dialogue, such as the summits of heads of state of South-East European countries, the Conference of Euro-Mediterranean Ministers of Culture and the Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture of the Council of Europe. Within this framework, Turkey’s “Alliance of Civilizations” initiative together with Spain is very significant.

In order to enhance intercultural dialogue, not only ministers of culture and government authorities have the responsibility, but also all the institutions in the field of culture; non-governmental organisations and other cultural actors have significant duties. All sorts of opinions, behaviour and policies for enhancing sustainable intercultural dialogue are the greatest legacy we can leave to the next generations.

I sincerely believe that agreeing on fostering intercultural dialogue will contribute to economic development, the creation of new jobs and development in every field in every society. We appreciate the initiatives and activities of governments, non-governmental organisations and international institutions which aim to enhance intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in order to strengthen peace in the world, stability and co-operation.

I would like to express my sincere belief that the conference, which brings together 49 ministers from States Parties signatory to the European Cultural Convention and other distinguished representatives from other international organisations, will make a great contribution to fostering intercultural dialogue in a broader sense.

I would also like to take this opportunity to underline my firm belief that the evaluations and opinions of distinguished participants will lead to new horizons in the area of cultural dialogue.

I wish all the best for the success of the conference and I avail myself of this opportunity to convey to you my best regards.

## **Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen**

*State Secretary of Culture, Norway*

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It is a pleasure for me to attend this important and timely conference. I would like to congratulate the host country of Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe for this well-organised event focusing in particular on the regional aspects of intercultural dialogue. Let me start by expressing how much the Norwegian Government appreciates the important work carried out by the Council of Europe to promote intercultural dialogue.

Dialogue – as an essential property of humanity – requires true freedom of thought and expression. Respect for human rights and freedom of expression are fundamental, and all the work we do promoting intercultural dialogue should be based on these values. In this regard it is of course significant that the draft Baku Declaration is firmly based on human rights, but it is nevertheless more important to respect these rights when moving from theory into practice.

On the political scene the promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity is of course closely linked to the implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Norway is strongly committed to co-operate with other countries in order to use this convention as a political tool to enhance the importance of culture at both a European and a global level.

Motivated by our ratification of the 2005 UNESCO convention, Norway celebrated the Norwegian Year of Cultural Diversity in 2008. The main purpose of the year has been to promote cultural diversity as an essential dimension of Norwegian cultural policy and to contribute to awareness raising on this issue in today's diverse and pluralistic society. I will provide you with more details on this during my intervention in the ministerial panel on cultural policy, programmes and initiatives later today.

The religious aspect of intercultural dialogue is also of great significance. It is encouraging that national governments, as well as international organisations, are seeking to improve understanding of the role of religion and culture in national and international politics.

We are very pleased with the appointment of Mr Sampaio as High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations. Likewise, it would be an important contribution if the Council of Europe were to nominate a leading European figure to be the voice for the Organisation and promote initiatives in the field of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue.

Let me conclude by assuring you that Norway supports the draft Baku Declaration. From a Norwegian point of view it is important that the religious dimension is incorporated in the declaration text and we are looking forward to its adoption tomorrow.

## **Mr Giuseppe Proietti**

*Secretary General of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, Italy*

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First of all I would like to thank the Azerbaijani government for the warm welcome and exquisite hospitality. I would also like to express my appreciation for the Council of Europe's initiatives, especially for the White Paper that we are discussing today. It is a very relevant issue, as establishing a true intercultural dialogue is the greatest challenge of our time, a time characterised by extremely rapid technological progress that, thanks to travel becoming increasingly fast and to the revolution brought about by the Internet, brings together millions of people from different cultures and civilisations to an extent that has never been seen before.

One important thing – and this consideration is not always given the attention it deserves – is the graduality and pace with which this dialogue should be conducted in order to avoid refusals and violent reactions. Some problems could actually be ascribed not so much to a lack of dialogue as to a dialogue conducted with too much haste. In this respect globalisation could cause an exceedingly abrupt meeting of different cultures.

In the past some very high levels of dialogue were achieved. In the Mediterranean area, for example, it is possible to find some churches in Sicily where Christian and Islamic decorations were painted side by side by artists of different religions. As for our future, it is obvious that it will be more and more characterised by "hybridisation", with a natural overcoming of the increasingly obsolete concepts of assimilation and multiculturalism.

Moreover, dialogue must apply to all sectors, not only because it is morally right, as it is based on the concept of equal human dignity, but because it is also useful as it prevents misunderstandings and enables us all to live better in serenity and harmony. In the words of the poet Arturo Graf: "knowledge and reason speak, while ignorance and wrongness shout".

If dialogue is so important, the state has a duty to foster it, not only by encouraging contacts between representatives of the various groups that live on its territory, but also by facilitating direct dialogue between single individuals from different communities. To do so, the various countries can also avail themselves of international initiatives aimed at encouraging dialogue, such as, for example, the Alliance of Civilizations and the Union for the Mediterranean. Each state should then identify a core of fundamental principles and display flexibility on anything that is not included in this core, assuming what some scholars have defined as a position of "relative relativism".

In practical terms, what should be done to achieve the goal of dialogue, especially in the regions to which our countries belong, namely, Europe, the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia? The excellent background paper of our conference identifies several instruments and means. On my part, I would like to stress some methods that in my view should be favoured.

Having spent a lifetime inside the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, I would like to begin by pointing out the need to privilege exhibitions that illustrate different cultures side by side in order to stimulate mutual interest. An example I would like to mention is an exhibition organised a few years ago in Tunisia by a museum of Florence, together with our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, entitled "Dress for the body, body for the dress", that illustrated, through a display of Islamic and Western clothing, the different approaches taken in the two conceptions: Islam placing greater emphasis on adapting clothing to the body's need for comfort and the West more inclined to sacrifice the body to the aesthetic aspects of clothing. For the future an exhibition on Islam that the Hermitage Foundation of Ferrara plans to

organise for late 2010 comes to my mind, based on the Islamic traveller Ibn Battuta, comparing his travels to Marco Polo's journey.

Another important path to follow is that of creating cultural projects that place young individuals living in strained situations in direct contact. In this regard, for instance, an original UNESCO project funded by my country has been set up to organise a master's degree course in "Social and Humanitarian Affairs" for both Israeli and Palestinian students in an Italian university (La Sapienza in Rome) and in some Israeli and Palestinian universities.

To remain on the subject of youth, it might be very useful to facilitate the residence of artists, musicians, directors and actors abroad to enable them to live and work in contexts different from their own and in contact with local cultures. I also think it is important to encourage local governments, such as in regions and cities, to implement policies to facilitate dialogue through initiatives that may include concrete incentives such as the assignment of awards. In 2008 – in the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue – Italy established the City of Dialogue Award as an acknowledgement of the city that displayed the greatest commitment in this field, in the hope of encouraging other cities to do likewise.

There are other ways to foster dialogue that are worth developing, including the creation of advisory bodies for governments, composed of representatives of the various communities (in Italy, for example, we have the Council for Italian Islam at the Ministry of the Interior), and innovative intercultural initiatives, such as multicultural orchestras (one of which, the Orchestra di Piazza Vittorio, has become famous in Italy and beyond).

Furthermore, I would like to stress the importance of supporting translations as a means of intercultural dialogue as well as the development of detailed statistics and data on the state and evolution of cultural diversity, especially by international organisations.

Last but not least, I want to express the full support of the Italian Government for the idea of increasing dialogue and co-operation through transborder heritage projects (I have in mind, for example, the Silk Road project in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage List).

I would like to conclude by emphasising that every culture is enriched if it assimilates the contributions made by other cultures. While it is normal for each human being to root him/herself in the values of his/her own environment, this should not lead to a short-sighted rejection of other approaches. Actually it is essential to open oneself up to the cultures of others because it is only through dialogue that one can become aware of the limits and shortcomings of one's own ideas and achieve progress. As the poet Senghor teaches us, no single culture can claim to be universal, because the specificity of each of them intrinsically gives greater prominence to certain features of the human being and of human thought instead of others.



## **Monsignor Claudio Gugerotti**

*Apostolic Nuncio in Azerbaijan, Holy See*

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The Holy See warmly thanks the authorities of Azerbaijan for the admirable initiative and perfect organisation of this meeting of ministers responsible for culture in Europe and the Caucasus region. The theme of our meeting, the scope of which is clear to everyone, is of particular importance in a constantly changing world in which the influence of globalisation, thanks to the extraordinary development of means of communication, fosters exchanges and brings us into contact with other ways of life, habits and customs, languages and arts. Cultural dialogue is therefore an irreversible characteristic – or rather a component – of the world that is currently taking shape. We need to foster this dialogue between men and women of different cultures so that together we may build a harmonious society in which every individual finds his or her place, at the same time respecting others.

The Holy See, which is a signatory to the European Cultural Convention, is happy to participate in the work of the Council of Europe and gives firm support to initiatives to promote intercultural dialogue to bring about peace. It welcomes the work carried out as part of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and is pleased to see that religion has clearly been taken into account in this dialogue, being convinced of its irreplaceable role in education and raising awareness in order to build a society of peace.

By agreeing to meet here in Baku we are demonstrating our shared desire to build bridges in order to forge links between two worlds with such different cultures, which have in common the fact that they are composed of men and women who are equal in dignity, who all have a right to happiness and are seeking to live in a world of peace and not hatred, of prosperity and not poverty, of freedom and not slavery, a world in which human rights, above all freedom of conscience, are respected.

Recently 138 prominent Muslims with varying religious affiliations from many countries on every continent published a letter addressed to the main leaders of the Christian churches calling for greater solidarity between Christians and Muslims in order to promote peace in the world. There we read: “Muslims and Christians together make up well over half of the world’s population. Without peace and justice between these two religious communities, there can be no meaningful peace in the world. The future of the world depends on peace between Muslims and Christians. The basis for this peace and understanding already exists. It is part of the very foundational principles of both faiths: love of the One God, and love of the neighbour. These principles are found over and over again in the sacred texts of Islam and Christianity. The Unity of God, the necessity of love for Him, and the necessity of love of the neighbour is thus the common ground between Islam and Christianity”.

In response the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the representatives of the 138 prominent Muslims who signed the Open Letter to Christian Leaders founded a Catholic-Muslim Forum, which has just organised – a historic event – its first seminar on this common principle, which is at the foundation of both religions: Love of God, Love of the Neighbour. Receiving the participants on 6 November last, Pope Benedict XVI expressed the conviction of the Church: “We [Catholics and Muslims] should thus work together in promoting genuine respect for the dignity of the human person and fundamental human rights, even though our anthropological visions and our theologies justify this in different ways. ... My hope ... is that these fundamental human rights will be protected for all people everywhere”.

Recognition of the central role of the individual and the dignity of each human being through the struggle for human rights is the foundation of every political and religious action for the construction of a more fraternal world, a world in which cultural antagonisms are settled peacefully. It is as much the responsibility of politicians as religious leaders to ensure free exercise of these rights in full respect of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion for everyone. This is an opportunity to pay tribute to the initiative of the Council of Europe’s annual exchanges on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue. They demonstrate the

Council of Europe's genuinely consistent approach when it calls for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Religions indeed create cultures: we can see this here in Baku in Azerbaijan, a country whose tradition of religious tolerance is well known to us all.

The Holy See wishes to speak out once more against all the forms of discrimination and violence that religious communities throughout the world are still experiencing. Such unacceptable and unjustifiable acts are all the more serious and deplorable when they are perpetrated in the name of God. This has been a leitmotif of pontifical speeches from John-Paul II to Benedict XVI: "The name of God can only be a name of peace and brotherhood, justice and love". Religious authorities have a duty to see that, through their words and actions, the ministers and faithful of their religions deliver an unambiguous message of harmony and mutual understanding, otherwise they will weaken the credibility and effectiveness not only of dialogue, but also of the religions themselves.

May this place of dialogue created here in Baku for a meeting of ministers responsible for culture in Europe and the Caucasus be reflected in the lives of the men and women who live not only in these regions, but throughout the wider world. There is no other path than that of love and therefore of the dialogue of truth, to give the men and women of our age a genuine service of reconciliation and peace.

## **Ms Zoé Kazazaki**

*Head of the Department of International Relations, Ministry of Culture, Greece*

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Please allow me, Mr Garayev, to offer you the congratulations from my Minister of Culture, Mr Michalis Liapis, on the holding of this Council of Europe conference in Baku, a conference which extends beyond the borders of the Council of Europe.

We believe that this conference here in Baku offers an outstanding opportunity to ensure follow-up action on the recommendations made in the Council of Europe's White Paper, and to welcome – and possibly take part in – new platforms which are open to inter-institutional co-operation, with a view to intercultural dialogue between us and new partners, with peace and sustainable development as our fundamental objectives.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, adopted by the foreign ministers of Council of Europe member states, makes it quite clear that we have the conceptual framework and the common basis needed both to move on to constructive practice of intercultural dialogue and to manage cultural diversity with a view to creativity, committing ourselves to develop our culture and heritage policies into operational strategies and initiatives that will lead us to:

- good democratic governance of cultural diversity and cultural expression;
- equal opportunities in the cultural sphere;
- democratic citizenship and active participation by civil society and the public;
- the teaching of intercultural skills to the younger generations;
- social cohesion; and
- successful management of the globalisation that is affecting the weakest economies and cultures.

The exhaustive lists in the Council of Europe's White Paper of the initiatives of international organisations such as UNESCO, the United Nations and the European Union demonstrate concern for the advancement of intercultural dialogue. Numerous good practices have been derived from joint programmes and activities launched on an institutional basis by states and international organisations (conventions, recommendations, declarations, etc.).

I do not intend to detail the list of good practices in Greece, which is very rich, not only within the framework of the EU's European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, but also in terms of independent private-sector initiatives and Euro-Mediterranean co-operation (the Barcelona Process). In the last-named context we organised in Athens last May a Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Culture on intercultural dialogue. In the same framework we also participated in and co-ordinated the "1001 Actions for Dialogue" campaign. I must also, of course, mention the strengthening of the transregional co-operation process through the Baku Conference.

I should like to conclude by expressing our view that the White Paper will facilitate the implementation of transregional intercultural dialogue. We have an opportunity here to decide to extend and develop this dialogue in neighbouring regions in order to promote peace and sustainable development.

I should like now to offer my congratulations to the Council of Europe and particularly to Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni, Director General of DG IV, who has co-ordinated the implementation of the White Paper, and to express my sincere thanks to the authorities of Azerbaijan for their warm hospitality in this splendid city.

## **Mr Kimmo Aulake**

*Deputy Head of Division, Directorate General for Cultural, Youth and Sports Policy,  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland*

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I particularly wanted to take the floor during this first session of the conference, not because I wanted to be among the first speakers, but because, as the title of this session, "Common ground for intercultural dialogue", suggests, we are now dealing with the building of a solid foundation for our efforts to promote intercultural dialogue. Without such a common ground and a shared commitment to maintain and further develop it, it would be difficult to come up with common responses to challenges that for the most part are common to all of us as well.

In the background paper for this session, Robin Wilson asks: "Are there realistic alternatives to the vision of a multicultural society held together by universal values, as expressed in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue?" As far as my delegation is concerned, the answer is an unequivocal: "No, no there are not".

Acknowledging that cultural diversity is, today, a de facto condition of all societies is the only feasible alternative and, therefore, the real question is how to best develop governance models that, instead of downplaying diversity, allow us to celebrate it and use it as a resource for cultural, social and economic development.

The reply implied by Mr Wilson, and the one offered by the Council of Europe, is that we should harness intercultural dialogue as a tool to foster democratic governance of our multicultural societies. This is, again, something that we can easily agree on.

However, as we all know, and have probably experienced several times, intercultural dialogue is a very complex theme. As I already indicated, it is difficult to develop intercultural dialogue policies of any consequence unless a shared understanding of what it means and on what it is based is developed.

According to the White Paper, that my delegation considers to be a most advanced text on the topic – or even the most advanced – intercultural dialogue is understood as a process that comprises an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups with different backgrounds and heritage, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. However, as is noted in the White Paper, such exchanges can only take place if a number of preconditions are met, including attitudes fostered by democratic culture and a willingness to exchange. This is exactly what the Secretary General of the Council of Europe was referring to in his opening speech when he asked the simple question: are we ready to dialogue?

Subsequently intercultural dialogue cannot be approached and used irrespective of the overall societal context. We are convinced that if these preconditions are met, intercultural dialogue can foster a virtuous circle, and, if not, the failure to meet them may make attempts to develop intercultural dialogue futile and lead to a vicious circle instead.

This being said, it is obvious that my delegation believes that the approach outlined in the White Paper provides for the solid common ground that we clearly need and that the draft Baku Declaration can be generally supported as further developing it in the field of cultural policy. If we can agree on the actual text of the draft declaration, the action elements included in it should enable us to take a significant step forward. It will enable us to promote intercultural dialogue in an environment which will lead to effective and constructive governance of cultural diversity and thereby not just help us to keep our societies together, but also make them more democratic, dynamic, and better places for our citizens to live in.

## **Mr Werner Wnendt**

*Director for Culture and Communication, Federal Foreign Office, Germany*

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I would sincerely like to thank you for this invitation to the "land of fire", one of the most eastern member states of the Council of Europe and a country which has been shaped by a wide variety of cultural influences over the centuries.

Azerbaijan has presented itself in an impressive manner during this year's Azerbaijani cultural year in Germany. Numerous events in several German cities showcased your country's ancient and multifaceted culture. The spectrum was broad, covering classical music and *mugham*, a unique Azerbaijani style of music, which goes well with jazz, dance performances and art exhibitions, as well as a presentation of Azerbaijani wines in Stuttgart. Incidentally wine-growing was introduced to Azerbaijan by German immigrants, most of them from Swabia, at the start of the 19th century. I was also impressed when I learned that the performance of the opera "Leyla and Majnun" here in Baku was an important event in the history of Muslim music.

Today, the people of this country and region are still characterised by diversity. This Council of Europe conference among partners and neighbours provides us with an excellent opportunity today to discuss concrete options for enhanced co-operation through intercultural dialogue. Allow me to single out three aspects which I believe are important for today's discussion.

Firstly, there is no alternative to dialogue among cultures. We have to offset the false but persistent image of the supposed clash of civilisations with our determination to forge a functioning partnership among different cultures. Dialogue proves effective when it comes to forming one's own sound opinion and to overcoming stereotypes and prejudices. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue adopted by the Council of Europe member states provides a clear orientation on how we can make the dialogue an enduring part of everyday life in our countries, in civil society, in our cities and among our young people. I would also like to mention the Alliance of Civilizations under the auspices of the UN, which has the support of more than 80 states and international organisations in the Group of Friends, and which is developing more momentum as a forum of dialogue among cultures.

Secondly, civil society networks are of key importance to the quality of intercultural dialogue. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue highlighted this. It is civil societies which conduct this dialogue, while governments provide the political framework for it.

In the process of Euromed – the Union for the Mediterranean – it has also been possible with the help of the Anna Lindh Foundation to establish a network of NGOs in the participating states, thus lending the intercultural dialogue a civil society basis.

The pilot programme initiated jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Union, within the framework of which a strategy for intercultural cities is being developed in 12 European cities, is a promising citizen-friendly approach. It would seem logical to invite interested cities from regions bordering on Europe to take part in a second stage.

I am pleased that we have a chance today to have an in-depth discussion with the member countries of ALECSO and ISESCO and hear from them which projects and civil society partnerships are conceivable in their view.

Thirdly, we need considerably more dialogue, especially among young people. The young people in our societies, in particular, need a nuanced image of each other without sweeping generalisations. Recognising diversity is the prerequisite for enabling different cultures and religions to live together, for shaping this coexistence in a positive way and for making it attractive.

Germany is supporting and funding numerous initiatives which serve this aim. For example, we have many years of very positive experience with international youth exchange projects. For instance, the Franco-German and German-Polish youth offices have been making a key contribution towards developing understanding with our neighbours, France and Poland, since 1963 and 1993 respectively. During the last few years we have also stepped up the German-Russian and German-Israeli youth exchanges. These initiatives foster relations and networks which continue over many years and also consolidate political relations between countries in a region in the long term. Anyone who learns to understand their neighbours and to acknowledge what makes them different while they are young will continue to benefit from this experience as an adult.

Another example of the successful integration of young people into intercultural dialogue is the first Euro-Mediterranean Youth Parliament, which took place in Berlin in 2007 and which was preceded by a preparatory meeting in Alexandria. The young people who took part in this, and who expressed their clear desire for social and political participation in a final session in the Berlin House of Representatives, have since built up a network and are engaged in their own follow-up projects.

These positive experiences can, and indeed should, encourage us to fund and support similar initiatives within the Council of Europe framework. The Council of Europe can be a credible source of ideas. According to its mandate, the Council of Europe is the forum for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It has a key role in safeguarding these common principles in our member states and in promoting them in neighbouring countries. In view of the importance of the parliamentary dimension of the Council of Europe as a "school of democracy", we could consider organising a youth parliament which also looks at culture and education issues. I expressly welcome the idea put forward by the Parliamentary Assembly that a youth assembly be organised to mark the 60th anniversary of the Council of Europe next year.

Allow me to conclude with the following remarks: we have made considerable progress in Europe's natural co-operation with its neighbouring regions. This interaction has huge potential. It needs a stable basis of democracy, protection of human rights and the rule of law. This is not inconsequential. This invitation to Baku is an encouraging sign that there is considerable readiness for this, as well as the will to enable large sections of society to experience intercultural dialogue, art and culture.

## **Panel 1 speeches**





## **Mr Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini**

*Vice-President of COREIS (Comunità Religiosa Islamica), Italy*

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*Bismillahi ar-Rahmani ar-Raheem.* In the name of God, the Most Merciful, may I welcome you all and thank, of course, Mr Garayev for the privilege I have this afternoon to speak as part of this ministerial panel.

As a start, I will try to actually give some explanation concerning the complicated issue of my names: Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini. It makes things very intercultural because the very simple explanation is that my father is Italian and my mother is Japanese. So, as you see, East meets West and I am the result of this intercultural and international policy.

The term policy probably helps us, if I may go into the subject, because we have to try to share and learn together. This session will actually discuss, as was mentioned already, cultural policy programmes and initiatives, and intercultural dialogue, as well as new concepts in the governance of diversity. There again, probably the only comment I would like to make would be, of course, what was also mentioned as an introductory note – how one should go beyond multiculturalism and identify intercultural dialogue. This should be done not only through respect in a passive way but through the respect of differences, of the varieties of identities, in intercultural dialogue and engagement.

As you all know, the involvement of civic society and of the new generations is very important in these policies. This is because we are trying to shape, create or empower future generations to make them aware of a common ground and a common society where respect for several identities does not lead to discrimination, assimilation or homogeneity, but is a common acceptance of the variety and richness of cultural, religious and spiritual engagements as well as dialogue and co-operation.

Now, as chairperson of one of the council's of ISESCO and as a Western European born Muslim, second generation, I was also privileged to be asked to be the chairperson during these last three years of the Council for Education and Culture in the West that became the new Council for Muslims in non-Muslim countries. There again, spiritual, cultural and international co-operation takes place, and one of the documents that you find at the entrance of ISESCO concerns the common wisdom that the culture of violence and the exclusion of the other is the challenge we have to try to erase as it is a danger to our society.

The declaration that ISESCO member states adopted was called the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity and, a year later in 2008, we have this wonderful example of co-operation and consultancy at a European level with the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

I will end my introduction, before giving the floor to the 13 speakers who have been selected for this first afternoon session, by quoting what could probably be a motto: unity in diversity, unity and diversity. We should be trying to shape the unicity and the specificity of each national, cultural, spiritual and religious identity within the framework of a critical but proactive and co-operative engagement. This should, through a new culture of respect and social cohesion, help us to really engage in international co-operation and to help new generations and young people be part of this unity in diversity, this wealth of cultural heritage and these new approaches to intercultural policies in each country.

## **Mr Nebosja Bradic**

*Minister of Culture, Serbia*

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It is my great pleasure to be here with you today and to personally contribute to the improvement of intercultural dialogue in Europe and the neighbouring regions. Allow me to congratulate the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the successful organisation of this conference in such a marvellous place and in such a beautiful and rapidly developing country.

Dear colleagues, we are witnessing huge political and economic changes happening all over the world. Both history and our everyday lives teach us that it is impossible to comprehend a specific cultural identity of a country in the region without taking into account the regional identities and influences of various cultures and civilisations. Today we are discussing the advancement of intercultural dialogue, not only from the perspective of our competences, but also as something contributing to peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions.

We would like to remind you that one of the priorities of the Serbian chair of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2007 was building a more humane Europe – more active participation of all citizens. We particularly tried to encourage the strengthening of a pan-European identity and unity based on core values, common heritage and cultural diversity. During this time, an informal regional conference of ministers from South-East Europe on "The Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue and the White Paper of the Council of Europe" was held in Belgrade in November 2007. At this conference the support for the Council of Europe policy of implementing obligations of the 3rd Summit was pointed out and a number of initiatives were proposed to improve intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, to strengthen co-operation with local and regional authorities, NGOs and religious communities, in particular. The participants agreed that dialogue with the neighbouring regions – especially with the south Mediterranean countries and Arab regions, as well as the Caucasus and Central Asia – is of utmost importance and that such initiatives should be developed further.

In 2008, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Ministry of Culture of Serbia implemented a special programme. We worked together with the Working Group for Promoting Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, made up of well-known artists and experts in the field of intercultural dialogue. We invited institutions, organisations and individuals to take part in the mapping and affirmation of projects and processes of intercultural dialogue in the Republic of Serbia. In this way we invited the public to inform us about projects in all cultural and artistic areas dealing with intercultural dialogue or about their activities which had been enabled, initiated and established through intercultural dialogue, in the manner they understand and implement it.

The map we are creating goes beyond the cultural hierarchies mentioned. We are treating artistic projects in an equal manner with activist projects, issues of cultural heritage alongside issues of contemporary hybridisation of culture, elite culture alongside popular culture, projects coming from major cultural institutions along with those belonging to alternative cultural expressions, and projects relating to life in large cities along with those attempting to improve cultural life in rural areas. This comprehensive map thus includes diverse cultural impacts, for example from research into the various cultural influences on our rich musical heritage, via artistic explorations of the public sphere and its potentials for a more active citizen's participation, to projects which affirm the existence of diverse and changeable cultural identities, beyond ethnic or religious identities traditionally associated with the notion of a fixed cultural identity.

Serbia is not a large country. The Serbian language and culture are just one rather small part of European and world culture. Yet in this small country we are proud to have national councils of the following ethnic minorities: Hungarians, Romanians, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Roma, Bosniaks, Ukrainians, Croatians, Bulgarians, Macedonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Walachians and Germans.

However, we should not be satisfied just with stressing the multiculturalism of our country. In the spirit of intercultural dialogue our ministry has been working with national councils to overcome any ghettoisation of these communities by encouraging dialogue and the participation of citizens simultaneously with diverse cultural impacts from creative individuals. These creative individuals may have different identities but are operating as a bridge not only to enable mutual understanding but also joint action by breaking down the barriers of cultural hierarchies and schematic divisions between majority and minorities.

It was particularly important to locate, document and support processes and activities of creative individuals and groups who were less known to the general public, or known only to an expert public, or those so far not identified with intercultural dialogue. Such an innovative approach within the existing measures of cultural policies helped us to open up a new perspective of understanding and promoting intercultural dialogue in a manner relevant in a European and global framework, and also to map the existing willingness and achievements of our institutions, organisations and individuals in the field.

All these various activities were performed in accordance with the Faro Platform and the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue as reference documents and within the conceptual framework for intercultural dialogue policy based on the *acquis* and Council of Europe values. We have come to this conference with an experience which enables us to understand the importance of the Baku Declaration on promoting intercultural dialogue, which we encourage and will use in our future work on the development of regional co-operation and intercultural dialogue. Ivo Andrić, the great Serbian author and the Nobel Prize laureate, wrote a story about the "Sahat kula" (clock tower) in Sarajevo in which he speaks about the four "times" this clock tolls: Catholic, Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish. These four times echoed ominously in the past, yet today they are indicators defining the dimensions of intercultural dialogue in our shared future.

## **Mr Farouk Hosni**

*Minister of Culture, Egypt*

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Many forums and discussions have often looked at major factors such as the economy, good neighbourly relations, geographical proximity and alliances between peoples as the basis for peace and development in the countries participating in those forums and meetings. Today, however, we are meeting together to study an important aspect of the peace and sustainable development we aspire to, namely intercultural dialogue. The necessity for such dialogue, as a prime factor in bringing peoples closer together, impels us to focus our attention on this important issue, as culture is a positive policy for all peoples, despite differences in the policies pursued by their leaders, administrations and regimes.

I believe we have to apologise for often having neglected and overlooked the culture factor, as we have been uncertain about its benefits, even though the evidence of our international situation and the whole of human history confirms the fact that intercultural dialogue is the most beneficial way of seeking a spirit of co-operation between us all. It is the firmest basis on which to build the peace we all strive for. Intercultural dialogue also constitutes a firm foundation on which to build sustainable development, which will ensure that peoples are able to continue along their civilisational path and without which it would be impossible to secure their present and future existence.

Our presence here in Azerbaijan brings to mind a number of major episodes of the past. Firstly, it holds the memory of the Caucasus, the repository of humanity and remarkable history, which gave rise to the races to which many of us throughout the world can trace our origin. It also makes me think of other significant moments in history, such as the interaction of the Sumerians and Akkadians in Babylon. This interaction confirms our ancestors' deep-rooted conception of both difference and unity, giving us an understanding of the source of the oneness of humankind and an understanding not only of the reality and importance of diversity and plurality, but also of the delight to which they give rise.

The final image of this overview of history is the inclusion of large parts of this unique region of the world in the Islamic civilisation and the contribution of its scientists to mathematics, sciences, medicine and philosophy, and also to theology and linguistics. Their culture was an example of dialogue and interaction between cultures and civilisations which the people of Azerbaijan are following, being perfectly placed to host this meeting as the country is European in appearance, geographically located in Asia and has firm links to the surrounding civilisations. It is a real and historic response to those who call for confrontation and rejection of dialogue with others, for it is precisely others whom we have a duty to get to know and with whom we must enter into dialogue, as their presence and diversity enrich our lives as an extraordinary example of creativity, humanity, originality and distinctiveness.

Intercultural dialogue is a duty in all our beliefs and a civilisational necessity for our continued existence in this world in which if the language of culture became silent, so too would fall silent the roar of the machinery of development; peace would cease to exist, leading to annihilation and destruction. Our meeting is a call for mutual recognition of all our values, the obligations inherent in our beliefs, the necessity of co-operation and the unity of our future.

I believe that the time has come for the world to unite in order to ward off these dangers unfolding around it, which weaken its powers and threaten its dreams with all these confrontations and acts of terrorism, whose victims are the innocent.

What approach should the world and intellectuals adopt in order to carry out a strategy and specific programme whose aim is to create reconciliation between peoples of different origins, religions and beliefs?

The world today badly needs to protect its inhabitants and in all our discussions we need to seek practical ways of doing this. This is what we hope to achieve in this conference of ours. I

suggest that we set up a standing committee to draw up a roadmap with the aim of establishing reconciliation and promoting human relations and breaching the gap between races, nations and religions. It is my view that this role can be fulfilled via UNESCO and the Council of Europe.

I wish to thank Azerbaijan, its president, government, people and its capital, as a regional metropolis with remarkable cultural importance. My thanks, also, to the Council of Europe, which assisted in organising this important cultural event.

## **Mr Vasyl Vovkun (given by: Mr Tymofii Kokhan)**

*Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ukraine (Deputy Minister of Culture, Ukraine)*

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First and foremost let me express my deep gratitude to those who organised this conference, that is, to the representatives of the Council of Europe, to our hosts and personally to Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan. We are indeed grateful to them for creating a perfect opportunity to meet in the beautiful city of Baku for professional discussion on the issues of intercultural dialogue.

The subject of our conference requires an in-depth review of the situation with intercultural contacts in the whole region occupied by Council of Europe member states and particularly of the complications for our cultures caused by both globalisation and, for many among us, also by the Soviet imperial heritage which is yet to be overcome.

We Ukrainians understand quite well the mixed blessing of existing at the crossroads of peoples and civilisations: it includes both great dangers and opportunities for dynamic development that derive from contacts, or even clashes, of cultures. Contemporary Ukraine is apparently a multiethnic country where several national minorities and ethnic groups coexist with Ukrainians who are regarded as the title nation. Our constitution, however, states that it is not only ethnic Ukrainians but also other citizens, members of all nationalities and ethnic groups living in Ukraine, that together make up the Ukrainian people. Minority rights are protected both by national law and by several international conventions of which Ukraine is a member party.

We can say quite firmly, that inter-ethnic peace and intercultural dialogue is a reality in Ukraine nowadays. The Government of Ukraine, and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in particular, are doing much to protect and develop the existing ethno-cultural diversity of our country. We have a specific department in our ministry that deals with minorities and their cultures; there is also a specific budget programme in the national budget of Ukraine that is targeted at the support of cultures of various nationalities and ethnic groups in Ukraine. The year 2008 was proclaimed the Year of Intercultural Dialogue in Ukraine by Decree No. 153/2008 of President Viktor Yushchenko. Within the framework of this nationwide action, our ministry designed and, for the most part, has already implemented a comprehensive action plan that includes dozens of cultural and artistic events in many regions of the country, such as festivals, concerts, artistic contests and fairs of folk crafts and artisans. Many artistic collectives, both professional and amateur, representing virtually all ethnic groups living in Ukraine, as well as numerous guest artists from all over the world, have been taking part in these events.

At the same time we support several affirmative actions and projects aimed at the protection of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian-speaking cultural practices. We regard this support as a necessary precondition for the survival of our cultural and national identity in our turbulent globalised times and as a consolidating factor for the whole of Ukrainian society. It is well known that Ukraine obtained national independence only 17 years ago and, before that, we were dominated by notorious empires which left behind not only the mass graves of victims of the famine of 1933 and of Stalinist purges, but also the deep impact of their cultural domination, which in many respects resembled colonial domination.

Among the five key policy aspects suggested by the proposed draft White Paper we find intercultural competence that creates a foundation for mutual understanding and dialogue between people of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. In this respect, however, the heritage left in Ukraine by the former USSR has not been helpful, despite all that "friendship of the peoples" rhetoric. Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian citizens who are members of minorities never learned the Ukrainian language and know very little about Ukrainian culture. This ignorance is, however, mutual: many ethnic Ukrainians know very little about the history and culture of other peoples living in Ukraine or, for instance, about Crimean Tatars.

Much has been accomplished already to diminish this ignorance and improve people's intercultural competence, both by the state and civil society. For younger generations, it is

schools that do most, but for adult citizens who do not know the Ukrainian language and culture, public cultural institutions can and shall be helpful. Currently we are working on a major project that implies the creation of a network of language courses for adults run by libraries, houses of culture and theatres.

The importance of international mobility of artists has also been stressed in the working documents prepared for our conference. For Ukraine this issue has two specific aspects. The first aspect is, again, a result of the imperial heritage and consists in remarkable lingua-cultural (not ethnic) differences between different regions of the country, notably between the eastern and western parts of Ukraine. Therefore, promoting and assuring vivid artistic and cultural contacts between East and West, North and South is a policy priority of no lesser importance for us than intercultural dialogue with minorities or international artistic exchange.

The difficulty of the latter is, however, our second specificity: nowadays the most serious obstacle to international mobility of Ukrainian artists is perhaps the problem of obtaining a Schengen visa, hardships and even humiliation often being related to it. There have been several cases of Ukrainian artists invited by European arts festivals or art agencies who were nevertheless denied visas. To many of us it seems that beautiful speeches about encouraging dialogue with Ukraine are one thing and reality is another.

Still another manifestation of the as-yet-unsolved problem of imperial residue in Ukrainian culture, with regards to international cultural contacts, is the situation when former imperial cultures insist on playing the role of unsolicited intermediaries between major cultures of the world and the cultures of their smaller neighbours. Obtrusive mediation of this kind is often supplemented with authoritarian and messianic ideas and is especially conspicuous in television and cinematography. For Ukraine, therefore, the problem of the protection of our national cultural space and of the national cultural product is regarded as a part of the broader issue of protection of cultural diversity, of which cultural originality of nations is a key element.

We are solving these problems in a civilised way, dwelling on the experience of such Western democracies as France and Canada. We indeed respect languages and cultures of other nations and admire their cultural achievements, but this does not mean that in admiring other cultures we have to neglect our own culture.

Three years ago, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine initiated the development and implementation of the Council of Europe Kyiv Initiative Regional Programme for democratic development through culture for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The programme is aimed at fostering democracy through culture and heritage and will contribute to the reinforcement and capacity building of the democratic institutions, development of good governance, harmonisation of national legislation, European norms, promotion of intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, and the development of participative policy. On 4 December national co-ordinators of the programme will gather to review programme implementation issues here in Baku.

In my opinion our poetic genius Taras Shevchenko, more than one hundred years ago, managed to express the whole concept of intercultural dialogue in two brief phrases:

*“I chuzhoho nauchaites, j svoho ne tsuraites”* [“You shall learn from the others, but not neglect what is your own”]. I think we should always keep these words in mind.

## **Mr Dragan Nedeljkovikj**

*Deputy Minister of Culture, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"*

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Allow me to express our gratitude for being part of this very important conference of the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan and for your hospitality. It is our great pleasure to have the possibility to visit this wonderful country with such friendly people.

The "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" completely supports the promotion of intercultural dialogue, which contributes to the essential goal of the Council of Europe for protection and promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and is a priority of the Council of Europe, as stated in the Faro Declaration of 2005.

The building of a multicultural society, which is still one of the most complex and sensitive political questions, is our long-term vision and a big challenge for the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The "former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" is full of contrasts – a small country according to its surface, but rich with different ethnic groups. Intercultural dialogue is a mechanism for complete establishment of tolerance, respect, trust, understanding and co-operation, as a condition for building a strong and powerful multiethnic society.

In accordance with the Macedonian Law on Culture, the Ministry of Culture prepares an annual programme for the realisation of the national interest in culture, through which the resources provided by the budget of the Republic of Macedonia are distributed for the current year, in keeping with the multicultural character of the society.

Many projects reflecting the cultural characteristics of the ethnic communities in the Republic of Macedonia have been promoted. The main purpose of these promotions is to establish the basic principles of a modern multicultural democracy on which the building of constructive intercultural dialogue is based.

According to the constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, cultural rights are part of the basic human rights and freedoms of citizens, and therefore the constitution guarantees the freedom of scientific, artistic and other kinds of intellectual achievement.

The state is permanently encouraging, supporting and protecting the development of science, culture and art. The freedom of association in order to realise and support their political, economic, social and other rights and beliefs is guaranteed to all citizens.

Because of the multicultural character of our state, we cannot discuss the cultural rights of the communities present in the Republic of Macedonia in isolation from the cultural rights of the majority living in Macedonia because culture as a basis for human creativity and value is unique and common to all citizens. The nature of this cultural policy also reflects the principle of multicultural dialogue.

For the Macedonian Government, intercultural dialogue represents an instrument for political and ethnic consolidation, whose direct practice should be developed further in the sense of trust among different entities and the will for a common future. This entails the encouragement of free expression of the cultural characteristics of the ethnic communities, wide support for intercultural dialogue and the search for new forms of co-operation between central and local government and civil society.

I would like to inform you that the Ministry of Culture, in co-operation with the Commission for Relations with the Religious Communities of Macedonia, organised the World Conference for Dialogue between Religions and Civilizations in Ohrid in October 2007, with the theme of "The contribution of religion and culture to peace, mutual respect and cohabitation". The



participants in the conference were well-known and respected religious leaders, intellectuals and politicians interested in inter-religious and intercivilisational dialogue.

The conference was organised within the framework of the UN/UNESCO “Year of Dialogue among Civilizations” and “Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010)”. A declaration was adopted by all participants at the conference and an international committee has been set up to organise the next conference, which will take place in 2010 in Ohrid.

In the context of activities for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia participated in the preparation of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe, where it contributed its experiences, characteristics, facts and thoughts and participated in the promotion of understanding and the reconciliation of society.

I do believe that we will return from this conference with enriched and shared experiences and with the possibility to strengthen cultural co-operation between Europe and its neighbouring regions.

## **Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen**

*State Secretary of Culture, Norway*

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### **Norwegian Year of Cultural Diversity 2008**

As mentioned earlier, I would like to share some information with you about the Norwegian Year of Cultural Diversity 2008. This initiative was parallel to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

There have been more than 1 000 registered activities and collaborations throughout the year which all aimed at creating a greater understanding and respect for cultural diversity. The ministry's focus has particularly been on the mainstream state-funded art institutions, but also on the media, politics, the voluntary sector and civil society in general. The ministry has provided about 6.5 million euros in grants for activities during 2008 and 2009.

All institutions have been asked to prepare and implement long-term strategies on cultural diversity. The focus has been on four main areas: management and decision making, programming, employment policies and audience outreach.

These four areas are all important aspects when considering diversity in society. Within one of these areas we now run a pilot project focusing on the recruitment of members with diverse backgrounds and experiences to the institution's boards. The initiative also focuses on the young generation in terms of education and decisions regarding choice of profession.

The year is now approaching its end, but has a long-term goal: strengthening an ongoing process that will change the understanding of cultural life in Norway. We will be able to provide the Council of Europe with some basic facts about the achievements of the Norwegian Year of Cultural Diversity by next summer.

### **Wergeland Centre and Oslo as a part of the "Intercultural Cities" programme**

Finally let me mention very briefly that following the recommendation of the Warsaw Summit in 2005, Norway – in co-operation with the Council of Europe – has established the Wergeland Centre – a European resource centre on education for intercultural understanding, human rights and democratic citizenship. The centre will be an important structural tool for implementation of intercultural dialogue.

The city of Oslo has joined the programme "Intercultural Cities". Bearing in mind that the most successful cities of the future will be intercultural, Oslo, together with the Council of Europe, will develop strategies for the management of diversity as a resource.

Speaking as a policy maker, I am convinced that we must continue to promote intercultural and inter-religious dialogue in the framework of the Council of Europe and on the basis of the values on which the Organisation is built. Our challenge as politicians is to provide the right mechanisms within the cultural field in order to be able to move from theory to practice in the management of cultural diversity.

## **Mr Siim Sukles**

*Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture, Estonia*

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We would like to thank the Government of Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe for organising a conference that is so rich in content. We find the subject chosen for the conference – intercultural dialogue – to be very topical. It has become an important issue for discussions in many international forums as well as a tool for people and cultures to communicate better with each other. The common, human values that derive from human rights, as well as the wish to understand other cultures, will certainly contribute to the promotion of the idea of world cultural heritage as a whole, while also acknowledging the special importance of its every constituent part.

The year 2008 was declared the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, which emphasises the idea that we should get even more acquainted with the diverse and multifaceted nature of the different cultures in Europe. Certainly, Europe is not a closed space but the cultural conversation also takes place with Europe's neighbouring regions and with more distant areas. This mutual communication should be favoured and activated by all means. From the practical side it is possible to learn much from the mutual exchange of experience on how to find the best solution in organising co-operative activities. For example, the Mediterranean region has already arranged a well-structured co-operation; similar practice has been in development and has already found use in other regions as well, for example in the Baltic Sea region. We try, of course, to find all suitable possibilities for co-operation with Europe's neighbouring regions and Islamic countries, which would lead to cultural co-operation projects.

Estonia supports the co-operation between the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Union in the field of intercultural dialogue. This particularly concerns the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), which Estonia has started to put into practice. This convention encourages interstate co-operation in the field of culture and cultural policy by strengthening the international position of culture. For this the convention pays great attention to the creative industries, which effectively help to strengthen the position of the creative individual and culture in society and to create an international co-operation network in the field of culture. This, again, contributes to the development of intercultural dialogue. We also give our support to all kinds of exchange programmes for creative people. On an internal state level Estonia underlines the importance of communication with the national minorities living in Estonia. We find it necessary to support their cultural associations, to give them subsidies for organising events so that their identity and self-determination can be preserved. The cultural aspect also has a significant role in the Estonian Integration Strategy for the years 2008-2013 in that it foresees the integration of members of national minorities into Estonian society, as well as the possibility for everyone to preserve and develop their national language and culture. The integration itself is a two-sided process that is based on such common values as democracy, personal freedom and the protection of human rights.

Thus, the more effective, open and tolerant the dialogue between different sides, the more successful also is the process of integration. Civil society should also be involved in the development of this dialogue by using the assistance and opportunities offered by the media. That also applies to intercultural dialogue on the international level.

## **Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme**

*Representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe*

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As a colleague from UNESCO mentioned just this morning, all efforts at intercultural dialogue face the same kinds of problem. It is apparently easy enough to embrace the concept of intercultural dialogue and share the understanding, as we all do, about its need and urgency, but it is much more difficult to design concrete steps and policies to be taken in order to promote effective intercultural dialogue. In this connection we fully share the idea expressed in the excellent paper by Mr Wilson, provided by the Council of Europe, which points out that intercultural dialogue cannot be considered as a goal in itself, but rather as an instrument to reach higher and more diverse objectives.

In this sense the role of government policies or state policies should rather be to ensure that the right conditions for the promotion of intercultural dialogue are in place and can bear fruit, to make sure that intercultural dialogue is possible and is developed freely, and not to determine its final content. Ideas happen by themselves not because they are directed.

Four points or four political approaches seem particularly relevant for us in this field, several of which have already been mentioned by previous speakers. First, of course, is the need to enhance the mobility of artists and all sorts of cultural agents. Mobility should, of course, not be understood from a unidimensional point of view but from a multidimensional one. It is not only a South-North or North-South mobility that we need to look at. It is rather, as I said, a multidimensional mobility where artists and intellectuals move in all directions including South to South. It is multidimensional also in the sense that we should not only look at the improvement of visa conditions, which of course is an issue, but also at other sorts of factors that have a high impact in the medium term. One example is the creation of appropriate conditions to attract new talent and to make sure it wants to stay once it arrives. Of course, the mobility of artists, intellectuals and cultural agents would mean nothing if freedom of speech was not also ensured. Ideas need to move even more than people.

A second point is to ensure effective access to culture. For us in Spain and also in the European Union as a whole this particularly means making a bigger effort to digitalise our cultural heritage. Of course, digital tools provide invaluable instruments to help everyone reach the cultural heritage. We are already facing big initiatives in this sense, as was proven recently by the launch of the Europeana, the digital European library, accessible to everyone. This also means the promotion of intercultural content online and a strong defence of intellectual property, without which free circulation of ideas on the Internet and in the digital environment is, of course, impossible.

Thirdly, we consider all public policies referring to the reinforcement and the promotion of cultural and creative industries to be an essential point, since these are essential to ensure an effective diversity of content and to guarantee the sustainability of cultural expressions. This is particularly true, for example, in the case of small and medium sized entrepreneurial projects and projects originating from minority communities or from women, who in many cases do not have a straightforward way to participate in the cultural life of countries. They could be enabled to do so properly through the development of all sorts of economic initiatives that can be easily supported by the state.

Finally, we also think that we should make sure that the full implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions is well underway, which means enlisting the participation of civil society, cultural industries and governments themselves. These are just a few points but I hope they can provide some ideas for action.

## **Mr Elshad Iskandarov**

*Secretary General, ICYF-DC*

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It is a real honour and privilege, on behalf of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), an institution affiliated with the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), to address this first plenary of this important high-level conference with an even more important title. Let me express, at the outset, our appreciation to the organisers – the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan – for inviting ICYF-DC, being the only institution concerned with youth policies, to participate and bring the perspective of young people into this important discussion. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to our host, the Minister of Culture and Tourism, for the warm hospitality and excellent working conditions at this conference.

Intercultural dialogue is not an invention of the modern age nor is it fancy and fashionable these days. The passing of secrets of arts and crafts and science to Europeans by Arab Islamic thinkers and artisans in Al-Andalus or the translation of ancient European philosophers into Arabic were among the examples of intercultural dialogue which existed on a global scale many centuries ago. The novelty and importance associated with intercultural dialogue, as we understand it in our day, is that for the first time in modern history the dialogue of cultures has power well beyond the traditional understanding of soft power approaches. It has the power and the capacity to overturn insecurities and conflicts being caused by hard power forces. However, this is just a capacity and it is a long way from being turned into reality.

While these useful conferences and gatherings are important in shaping the political toolkits of such a transformation, the real success will be measured only by real life networks, associations and co-operation arrangements at the grass-roots level. It needs high schools, universities, museums, schools, mosques, churches, synagogues, youth organisations and social activists to join together in a broad alliance to overcome not only the side-effects of the clash of cultures and civilisations, which are prejudice, misunderstanding and fear, but also to cope with the issues at the root of such clashes, which are aggression, the wish for power, exploitation of natural and human resources, occupation and poverty. These core issues are the foundations which breed misunderstanding and prejudice and not vice versa.

A wide range of concerns and individuals, including governmental and civil society actors, should join together in a broad alliance to overcome these hardships. ICYF-DC, as the youth institution of the OIC, has contributed to the establishment and development of such a global bridge under the umbrella of the idea which inspired all of us – the Alliance of Civilizations initiative proposed by two prime ministers and now under the UN umbrella. This has been specifically mentioned today several times and its chief executive Mr Scheuer has given us a detailed presentation.

A year ago, in this very hall in fact, under the patronage of Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva, the First Lady of Azerbaijan, the ICYF-DC joined forces with the Council of Europe, ISESCO and the UNDP in bringing together high-level government officials, decision makers and young participants for the establishment of the Alliance of Civilizations movement. Its aim was to bring together young people, governments, academia and media to form a strong coalition to push for two major objectives: firstly to promote the idea of the Alliance of Civilizations at a grass-roots level globally and, secondly, to include the voice of young people, to empower them to become involved in resolving crisis situations and to bring an added value to the global efforts of overcoming prejudice and misunderstanding.

Since this earlier conference we have received a lot of pledges of support, including from ministerial conferences of the OIC, different ministerial conferences of ministers of culture and education, the first OIC youth forum, and through the co-operation which we have had on numerous occasions with the Council of Europe and the European Youth Forum.

We are also pleased to record here that some ideas of the Youth Alliance of Civilizations were reflected in the Council of Europe's White Paper, as the ICYF-DC was invited to participate in the consultations on its development. Following the broad consultation process with international institutions and regional youth organisations, the UN Alliance of Civilizations Secretariat developed a youth strategy and we understand that this is now complete. We hope that the efforts of the many partners of the Youth Alliance of Civilizations movement will contribute to giving this strategy substance and reality.

We are now preparing our contribution to the global forum of the Alliance of Civilizations which will be held next year in Istanbul. We are committed to this and we are ready to announce that we are looking forward to working with all partners, with friends old and new, to bring about the development of a real, strong, sustainable mechanism to promote intercultural dialogue and to strengthen the youth voice in this process.

Promoters of intercultural dialogue are often marginalised by those who believe only in hard power issues, but let me just remind all of us of the old proverb which says that you are either in the kitchen or on the menu. I really believe that those who believe in striving towards intercultural dialogue, this Baku effort being one of the cornerstones of this process, will be really put in the position of being in the kitchen to cook and to contribute to global peace and security.

## **Mr Rustam Ibrahimbekov**

*Oscar laureate*

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I would first of all like to say how delighted I am, as someone from Baku, that such a prestigious event is taking place in my city. Echoing what has been said about the importance of intercultural dialogue, I would like to remind you of one specific aspect of history: around the turn of the century from the 20th to the 21st, humankind has developed extraordinary technological achievements, civilisational achievements. At the same time, however, our spiritual and moral side, our humanistic development, is far behind the technology. There is a gap, an abyss between the two and we find ourselves in the position of a child all alone in an apartment knowing how to switch on all of the lights and all of the technical equipment but not really knowing what it is for.

One simple mistake in technology can result in terrible consequences. One shot fired by a student in Sarajevo in 1914 resulted in the First World War. Such a wild shot could result in the death of all humankind. Existence only exists when there is a threat of non-existence. That may sound paradoxical but the threat of total destruction – of total annihilation – is joining us together, is joining humankind into a unified living organism.

In this first decade of the 21st century, of the third millennium, we as humankind as a whole are beginning to learn as a single biological organism. The survival of an organism really depends on the cells, in this case the individual human beings, interacting properly, and that is why intercultural dialogue is so important now that each and every one of us can have an impact. The survival of humankind depends on the work of individuals representing all the different political parties, states, religious groups, faiths and cultures with a view to inspiring tolerance and respect for people who are different.

As we know, the world is divided into different regions, each with their own strong cultural traditions. There is the European zone with its values. You could conventionally talk of an American zone. Then there is the East with its own values and so on. Within each of these zones people have made substantial progress when it comes to accepting one another within that single spiritual sphere, but not to accepting people from other spiritual spheres, and what we really need to do now is to break down these frontiers.

Perhaps intuitively, some twelve years ago we started in Baku to do some interesting work by organising an East-West festival and, over these years, tens, even hundreds, of artists from the East and West have discussed with one another the many other interesting events that take place in Baku. I must highlight, however, the East-West festival in particular because its main objective is to establish links among concrete individuals, civic human beings from the East and the West.

It is very appropriate that this should take place in Baku because Baku really is on the border between Europe and Asia. I consider myself to be a European three days a week, an Asian three days a week and on Sundays I wonder who I am. And it is because of that internal conflict, that personal conflict that I have, that I have developed a sense of how difficult it is to reconcile these two world views. Having considered this and worked on it for many years, even decades, I have come to an understanding of the fact that if we do not overcome the contradictions of yesterday we will find ourselves in the situation of that child who inadvertently switches on the wrong piece of equipment.

## Mr Ahmed Saïd Ould Bah

*ISESCO*

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Thank you to the minister and also to our host for the wonderful facilities that have been provided for the success of this very important conference.

It is a great pleasure for me to share with you some aspects of the role of ISESCO in the promotion of intercultural dialogue and this information is quite practical. I will not take up your time elaborating on the theoretical part of the importance of dialogue and the dimensions of dialogue, as I am sure that everybody now has the right view of that.

I want just to stress four items in my presentation. The first is ISESCO's vision of intercultural dialogue. The second relates to all the points of reference that ISESCO is using in order to highlight this vision. The third point relates to the mechanisms that ISESCO has also adopted and adapted in order to carry out this process of intercultural dialogue, and last but not least I will include some words about our partners and our partnership policy concerning intercultural dialogue.

So, very quickly, the ISESCO vision of intercultural dialogue is founded on three main ideas. The first idea is that the universal ideals and values are actually broad enough to be incorporated and integrated in different views, and implemented in different ways and from different perspectives. We believe that the differences in conception, assimilation and practice of these universal values do not make any distinction within these values or contradict these values. We believe that the universality is actually strong enough and broad enough to envelop us all and incorporate all our views and all our standpoints.

The second element is that culture and intercultural dialogue are taking a more and more central position in our societies and in our countries. So we think that culture has now become one of the levers and vectors not only of dialogue and intellectual debate, but also for the development of economic prosperity and, of course, for social progress.

The third element is that there is a need, a growing need indeed, for new formulas for the management of cultural affairs. We think that this new position of culture and this view of the universality of values and ideals require new formulas and new ways of managing culture. Culture is no longer the unique space where intellectuals meet and talk and, moreover, it is no longer under the control of ministries or departments. There is horizontal growth that we will need to take into consideration.

If I move to the points of reference that ISESCO is using for intercultural debate we actually have three items to mention very briefly. The first is that we have developed many strategies for intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity for Islamic cultural action in the West. These strategies have been prepared in consultancy with our member states and have been approved and adopted by them. So now they can be considered as part of the national action plans and national strategies of the member states. I think that this is very important because it gives a depth to these references and it also gives them a sort of official position.

Our second point of reference is of course the White Book and White Paper. We have actually been in charge of the implementation of all the programmes of dialogue among civilisations within the framework of the United Nation's initiatives prior, of course, to the Alliance of Civilizations. So ISESCO was in fact the Islamic organisation which was entrusted by the Islamic summit to implement *all* the programmes related to intercultural dialogue in the Islamic world. We therefore produced the White Book and I am sure that some of you have got copies on your tables. Now we also have the White Paper, translated into Arabic, and the first copy has actually been handed over this morning. Our participation in the translation and preparation of the White Paper is a very important added value to our points of reference.

The third element relates to all the declarations that we have issued in the various conferences of ministers of culture, education, higher education, information, environment



and childhood. All these sectors are actually linked together in a way with the process of intercultural dialogue. We have the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity and we have also issued a very important document, which is a foundation for many parts of our common agenda, which is the Rabat Commitment. Our colleagues from UNESCO, ALECSO, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the Alliance of Civilizations and also from the Council of Europe know that this Rabat Commitment was issued after a very important conference that we organised in Rabat, Morocco. Lately we also organised a very successful second conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, which is actually a continuity of the Rabat Commitment that was signed in Morocco.

These are our points of reference in intercultural dialogue, most of which have been made available to you this morning, and they are our credentials to the international community concerning intercultural dialogue. This is what we present to the world, not only to you here today but also to the international community; this is ISESCO's groundwork for intercultural dialogue.

We also have some ad hoc mechanisms to promote and highlight intercultural dialogue and I will also mention very quickly the programme of ambassadors of dialogue among cultures and civilisations. This is, in fact, a very happy opportunity to speak about it in Baku because Her Excellency the First Lady of Azerbaijan is a UNESCO and ISESCO ambassador for dialogue among cultures and civilisations. We also have three or four other ambassadors that have been selected because of their prominent role in promoting intercultural debate and intercultural dialogue and we are also in consultation with UNESCO in order to have a partnership with the UNESCO ambassadors.

We also have Islamic "capitals of culture" and again we can speak about Baku today because Baku will be the Islamic Capital of Culture for 2009 for the Asian region. I think that Baku is our connecting point each time and we are happy about that and we are also very grateful for it.

We also have a council of education and culture in the West and, as the chair of this session is the current president of this council, I think that he is in a better position than me to speak about it and its role to promote dialogue among cultures between the Islamic world and the West. It is not only the West, however, because the concept of the West and the duality of the West and Islam is very questionable, so maybe we should say between Islam and other parts of the world.

Finally, I would just like to say some words of gratitude and thanks to our partners in the promotion of intercultural dialogue and of course to the United Nations and especially to the Secretariat of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, our strategic partner in this field. We signed an action plan and a memorandum of understanding with their secretariat in Madrid on the occasion of the first forum. We also attended the first meeting of the France group that was held in Paris a few weeks ago and we are in a continuous process of consultation and co-ordination with the Alliance of Civilizations for a common project.

We are grateful to the Council of Europe for helping us to translate the White Book and to UNESCO of course and also to our member states for their support of ISESCO in this field.

I just want to finish with one very quick sentence. The representative of UNESCO earlier mentioned a quotation of Levi Strauss but I would like to speak about another quotation, and this is a very quick translation, that there are many more things changed when there is a change of things.

## **Ms Eleni Nikita**

*Director of Culture, Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Cyprus*

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I should like to begin by thanking the Government of Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe for their initiative in organising this important conference and for their warm hospitality.

The Minister for Education and Culture of the Republic of Cyprus has put in place a series of actions for the following reasons:

- Intercultural dialogue is considered to be not only a major challenge of our times, but also an essential precondition for democracy, social cohesion, peace and sustainable development.
- We hope that the objectives of intercultural dialogue as described in the White Paper will become a reality for all citizens in the multicultural societies in which we live and will enrich the actions of civil society.
- Political decisions should take into account the concept of intercultural dialogue in such a way that all the citizens of the world are able to live in peace, with their rights respected and in conditions that permit peaceful coexistence, communication, creative co-operation, solidarity and the development of every human being.

The National Action Plan for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was devised and has been implemented in the light of all the particular characteristics of the population of Cyprus, and has encouraged artistic and other forms of expression among all the inhabitants in a spirit of co-operation and respect for diversity.

Within this framework, several actions have been implemented, such as musical gatherings, a plastic arts competition and exhibition, and publications presenting the artistic expression of artists of various nationalities who live in Cyprus. The Ministry of Education and Culture has responded to the appeal by the Anna Lindh Foundation for “1001 Actions for Dialogue” by supporting projects in line with the spirit and objectives of our action plan for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

In co-operation with cultural organisations we have organised several festivals with the participation of European and neighbouring countries and we are supporting a large number of artistic activities that cultivate intercultural dialogue. We also participate in networks that foster this, such as the South-East European Cinema Network, whose aim it is to promote bilateral and multilateral co-operation and the development of an artistic culture based on diversity. For Cyprus it is also very important to support existing activities that aid dialogue, such as the International Theatre Festival in Cairo, “Damascus – Arab Capital of Culture”, the activities of the Francophonie and all the major international events that our neighbouring countries organise, such as the Cairo and Alexandria biennials for the Mediterranean countries, the Art Triennial in New Delhi and others.

Cyprus has also developed a large number of actions involving civil society in the framework of the bilateral and multilateral agreements it has signed with a great many European, Asian and African countries. We believe that before inventing new actions, we should try to enhance, support and implement traditional strategies, activities and practices, such as bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries.

We are convinced that co-operation in cultural creation can only promote the process of personal and social development towards democracy, peace and sustainable development. For this reason we welcome the Baku Conference and are convinced that it will give renewed impetus to the development of intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and the neighbouring regions.

I will end with the words of a Greek poet, Costis Palamas (1859-1943), who said, "The more one knows others, the more one loves them".

## **Ms Alina L. Romanowski**

*Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional and Cultural Exchanges  
in the Department of State, United States*

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Thank you for inviting the United States to be an observer to this important conference and to share our perspectives and practices on promoting culture and intercultural dialogue. The concept of governance of cultural diversity is an interesting discussion for the United States to participate in, since the United States does not have national cultural policies. That does not mean that we are not interested in culture or in sharing cultural diversity or in intercultural dialogue, quite the contrary: it simply means that we have a different way of approaching this issue than most nations, starting with the fact that we do not have a minister of culture. Instead we have a variety of government agencies that promote culture: the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Library of Congress, the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and my bureau – the Education of Cultural Affairs at the Department of State.

We also have a large number of independent organisations, numerous national, regional and local non-governmental organisations, philanthropists, corporations and universities that provide resources and assistance to cultural initiatives all over the United States and overseas. This approach reflects the fact that we are an extraordinarily diverse country with 50 very different states that deal with the enormous values, traditions and interests of the residents who come from all parts of the world. So let me say that culture is alive and well in the United States. It is a vibrant area that involves almost all of our citizens and there are no values we cherish more passionately as a nation than the freedom of expression and the importance of promoting and protecting cultural diversity. We believe that cultural diversity will flourish in an open environment of tolerance, freedom of expression and the broadest possible diversity of access and choice for citizens and consumers of cultural goods and services.

The United States has a long tradition and track record in promoting mutual understanding and deepening cultural understanding and dialogue. Through the Fulbright-Hays legislation enacted in 1961 and later amended, the United States through the Department of State has been supporting programmes that promote and engage people-to-people dialogue around the world. We also recognise that governments are not always the most powerful voices to promote and articulate a nation's values, traditions and culture. That voice often comes from its own people. We recognise that many of the tools that promote cultural dialogue are not in the hands of government but in the hands of the private sector and individuals. Our role in government is to harness those institutions, universities, non-governmental organisations, private foundations, businesses, private philanthropists and individual citizens to amplify, if not lead, our cultural engagement and intercultural dialogue.

Although our mission of promoting mutual understanding has not changed, our cultural diplomacy programmes continue to evolve and change with American artists, writers and musicians acting as the milestones for how Americans view themselves and how foreign societies view us. Artists and our cultural programmes help to celebrate our history, define our hopes, answer our questions, challenge our preconceptions and bridge our differences. We are moving our cultural exchange programmes in new directions to reach younger and more diverse audiences around the world. Our cultural diplomacy programmes strive to reflect the diversity of America's creative spirit, partnering with small and large cultural institutions, emerging and established artists, individuals and ensembles, with the goals of engaging, empowering and educating diverse audiences abroad. By connecting American performers with foreign audiences, by having American artists and performers engage their foreign counterparts in one-on-one workshops, we help to show the universality of culture and arts as a language and a vehicle for bridging our differences and sharing common experiences.

In addition to expanding public-private partnerships and traditional international exchange programmes the Department of State is at the cutting edge of using new technologies, such as digital video conferencing and Internet social networking sites, to amplify the reach of our

cultural programmes and international dialogue by providing virtual exchange opportunities. Just recently we have established a social networking site called "Exchanges connect" with the goal to create an online community of people dedicated to bridging cultures and making a positive difference in the world. This virtual platform promotes mutual understanding among adults and youth by highlighting cultures, customs and values through the submission of user-generated content.

In conclusion we must remember that the foundation of all cultural programmes, be they traditional or new experiments, remains the transformative power of human contact and shared experience. It is through this shared experience and shared respect for each other's cultures that we can create relationships with people in institutions that will endure beyond changes in government or disagreements about policies. Cultural programmes can provide vivid, compelling expressions of openness, tolerance and creative expression that will neutralise the poison of hatred and intolerance and they invite all of us to revel in the cultural richness and artistic endeavours that are one of our birthrights as human beings. All we have to do is accept the invitation.



## **Panel 2 speeches**





## **Ms Nina Obuljen**

*State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Croatia*

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As the day is coming to an end, I hope that we will still have enough energy for another lively ministerial panel. We would like to address the issue of "Heritage and intercultural dialogue: from national to universally owned heritage".

I am sure that you have all seen the background paper, prepared in advance and sent to all participants, which touches upon some of the most important points that have been discussed in the context of intercultural dialogue, particularly those related to heritage. Very briefly, there has been a discussion, and it still goes on, concerning the relationship of the treatment or understanding of heritage in nation states vis-à-vis the understanding or perception of heritage in multiethnic or, as they are sometimes called, colonial empires.

We know that the historic developments are different and that the trends, of course, which follow those developments, are also different. We all know about the work of the Council of Europe in this regard and here I would like to particularly point to the initiatives and projects that have focused on the roots of cultural heritage – exploring roots as an introduction to exploring how dialogue has been happening throughout history.

In today's panel in the second round table, however, we would like to explore how we understand the heritage, and the protection and promotion of heritage, in the context of the work of the Council of Europe, the work on intercultural dialogue. How does it link with the reflections expressed in the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue? How do we, as one of the questions asks, go from this idea of a monocultural nation state beyond this concept and understand heritage as something that is not monolithic, not subject to only one understanding, but actually a notion and a denominator of many understandings and many traditions.

I would like to invite you to engage in dialogue on one or more of the topics that were raised prior to this discussion.

## **Mr Hamad Abdulaziz Al-Kavari**

*Minister of Culture, Art and Heritage, Qatar*

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Since time immemorial, thinkers and intellectuals have understood the importance of dialogue between peoples, especially on the cultural level, although, over the centuries, there was a tendency for those holding power to prefer the values of supremacy to the values of culture. Unfortunately, as civilisations have developed, there has been little change to this position, which has been expressed in various ways, taking advantage of scientific progress for purposes far removed from the essence of cultural values. Humankind has paid dearly for this error.

In contrast, the forces of good in the world have consistently called for dialogue, co-operation and an exchange of positive experiences in international relations. Perhaps the trend of globalisation in the last two decades towards the imposition of hegemony through the authority of power, and the ensuing consequences in terms of instability in the world, have been the reason for renewed emphasis on the need for dialogue between civilisations or dialogue between cultures. There is no doubt that peace is the all-embracing and archetypal environment conducive to dialogue and co-operation.

Humankind, throughout its history, has learnt that culture is the means by which we can move from conflict to peace and development. We are living in a time in which the world is becoming one, geographically and culturally, without borders. It is appropriate for us to take advantage of this cultural interaction to create other areas of interaction at various levels in the interests of humanity's right to peace, prosperity and progress without the strong dominating the weak.

Let us work together to promote cultural dialogue between our peoples and our countries in order to foster a culture of peace and eradicate the mentality of war and violence, firmly establishing co-operation for the sustainable development of all states, especially the poorest ones. We believe that the industrialised countries bear a historic responsibility to ensure the success of this endeavour and achieve these goals. We are honoured in Qatar that our leaders have taken many initiatives and have hosted many international events in pursuance of this objective in Doha, firmly convinced of the effective role which culture plays in providing the tools of positive interaction between peoples.

Qatar has struck a balance between cultural investment in human development and investment in other sectors in order to bring about a thorough, modern renaissance in line with the vision of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of Qatar, who sees human beings as the most precious resource in the country. Qatar has drawn up ambitious programmes to establish a cultural infrastructure capable of keeping pace with global and local developments. In this context, Qatar has recently seen the opening of the Islamic Arts Museum, thought to be the biggest museum of its kind in the Middle East, to bear witness to the civilisational role of Muslims in the writing of history and in the arts, and a testimony to the renaissance in Qatar.

Meeting today here in Baku, we see in Azerbaijan an appropriate geographical and civilisational model for discussing cultural dialogue together as a basis for peace and sustainable development. Lastly, it is an ideal opportunity for us to call on you to give pride of place to the cultural dimension in political dialogue if we wish to see cultural dialogue serve as the foundation for peace and sustainable development.

## **Mr Božo Biškupić**

*Minister of Culture, Croatia*

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First of all I would like to thank our host – the Republic of Azerbaijan – for the warm hospitality and excellent organisation of our gathering. I am particularly satisfied that this conference on intercultural dialogue is being held in Azerbaijan, a country at the crossroads of different cultures, religions and nations – the right place for addressing the topic of intercultural dialogue.

It is my great pleasure to participate in this conference that witnesses the continuity of efforts and activities of the Council of Europe and its member states for improving intercultural dialogue and fostering cultural diversity not only between European regions and countries but also with neighbouring regions and non-European organisations. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which was launched by the Council of Europe ministers of foreign affairs in July this year, contributes to the general efforts of the Council of Europe in preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The rich and diverse cultural heritage of the European countries reaffirms the key role of culture for intercultural dialogue and sustainable development of European regions.

In my contribution to this panel on the relationship between heritage and intercultural dialogue I would like to add a few reflections on the need for understanding heritage as a dynamic vehicle for transferring knowledge about each other and for learning how to respect and nourish diversity. My question to you today is: do we need an intercultural pipeline? Or rather, how can we work together in order to build one?

At a time when indiscriminate attempts are made to explain and justify numerous conflicts and crises exclusively through differences that exist in terms of civilisation or culture, championing and promoting other and diverse ways of appraising and understanding the world we live in today is called for more than ever before. More than ever in the past it is necessary to lay emphasis on the importance of communication and dialogue, of learning about and understanding other cultures and religions and providing opportunities, particularly to the younger generations, for direct contacts that will give them an insight of reality other than that of customary stereotypes and imposed prejudices.

Nevertheless, regardless of all the challenges we are faced with in the present day world, the roots of intercultural dialogue are deeply planted in our tradition and represent one of the most vital components of the cultural maps of Europe and the world as we know it today.

Peoples and countries cannot live isolated, therefore co-operation, tolerance, intercultural and inter-religious coexistence is a necessity of the modern world. The cultural and historic heritage that we inherited from previous generations or civilisations is under our protection and responsibility and must not be the reason for disputes or conflicts.

As a minister of culture one of my main tasks is, of course, to care about heritage – both material and intangible – and to secure and invest resources in order to preserve heritage. However, through an intercultural pipeline – a term that seems suitable to me given the fact that the conference takes place in Baku – we need to ensure that the heritage becomes a tool for mutual understanding and dialogue, as was proposed in the background paper prepared for this round table.

Our joint efforts start with support for the normative work of international organisations – in particular UNESCO and the Council of Europe. UNESCO heritage conventions, including the recent ones on intangible and underwater heritage, the World Heritage List, the Council of Europe conventions and recommendations, all of these instruments and documents create a basis for our collaboration. By designing international or regional projects dedicated to the promotion of heritage we are contributing to building my imaginary intercultural pipeline.

In this context I would like to mention a programme initiated by the Council of Europe and supported by the European Commission: the Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe 2004-2009 (RPSEE). It was initiated as a contribution to stability and co-operation in South-Eastern Europe. Nine countries of South-Eastern Europe are participating in this programme. The total of 160 monuments includes 18 monuments and sites from Croatia. This project in a proper manner offers the exchange of methodologies, experiences and skills between neighbouring countries that are facing similar situations in the fields of protection, conservation, treatment and improvement of the cultural and natural heritage.

Moreover, this project can serve as a good, practical example of how joint efforts in the preservation of heritage can also be useful for the launch of dialogue about both our past and our future. While we, through this project, individually work on the preservation of heritage within our borders, through the sharing of knowledge, exchange of experiences and joint evaluation we will fill our regional intercultural pipeline.

Let me stress, at the end, that in South-Eastern Europe we found ways to collaborate in cultural matters. While we still remember recent wars and while we are still struggling to return illegally stolen cultural objects or to rebuild cultural heritage that was often intentionally destroyed, at the same time we realise that without communication, dialogue and respect for the heritage of the "other" we cannot secure a peaceful future for our own citizens.

As is often the case, we have given many monologues today. However, a monologue can represent a seed, planted today, only if we return to our respective countries truly committed to leading a process of mutual understanding and if we engage in dialogue in order to bring them to life – intercultural and inter-religious.

I am convinced that a similar message will be sent from Baku after our meeting and after the adoption of the final declaration. Dialogue, as Madam Nikita says, is "sine qua non" for development of democracy. At the end, I would like to congratulate the Government of Azerbaijan once again for hosting this event and for joining forces with the Council of Europe in this important project.

## **Ms Touria Jabrane Kryatif**

*Minister of Culture, Morocco*

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I am extremely pleased to take the floor in order to greet participants in this conference and to contribute to raising the spirit of understanding that has pervaded it, as well as to welcome the work that has been done and its excellent organisation. I am sure this conference will be highly successful.

I am extremely pleased in particular to express my gratitude to this friendly country, the Republic of Azerbaijan, for what it has provided, as this is one of the reasons for the success of this conference, and also for its welcome and hospitality. We should like to thank the government of Azerbaijan, as well as its people, and say that my country – the Kingdom of Morocco – is keen to strengthen friendly relations with the Republic of Azerbaijan. It is a political symbol and has a rich and multifaceted history which we all consider to be a great strength.

Mohammed VI is the current King of Morocco and is extremely keen to keep up friendly relations with Azerbaijan. Last month he appointed an ambassador to the Government of Azerbaijan and we expect an embassy to be opened here in Baku in the near future. We in Morocco are also keen to continue our work and co-operation with our brothers and sisters in Baku and I should like to inform Mr Abulfas Garayev, in particular, that we have agreed to increase our efforts to further mutual understanding and initiatives, especially concerning the recommendations of this conference. We also aim to promote the highest level of cultural and civilisational dialogue and aim to work towards a rapprochement between peoples and governments on the basis of cultural and moral values, so that we have a new methodology in our work and in our relations, in our discourses and commitments.

I should like to seize this opportunity and state that in Morocco we believe that we are extremely close to most of the countries of Europe, not only as concerns cultural values but also for geographical reasons, despite the fact that we are in the southern part of the Mediterranean. This is because, quite simply, we are neighbours to Spain and we are only separated from Spain by 14 kilometres.

We have considered the opportunities that have been extended to us by Europe and I should like to bring to a close my speech by saying that it is up to us to strengthen the mutual actions for dialogue. This dialogue has to be a basis for cultural exchanges between parties and it is important that it must be seen to be fair as there are political issues which could damage states and also heritage. This means that it is absolutely imperative to have exchanges.

Dialogue between countries is part of open dialogue, of open negotiations, which is going to continue to be a basis for the future, for a just humanity. We cannot have a dialogue with an overall culture, which imposes its models on other cultures which want to remain separate.

Finally, I am extremely pleased to be able to attend this conference. I am happy to be able to participate in this dialogue and for the excellent spirit which has pervaded this conference. I should like to thank you all, especially the people of Azerbaijan and its government once again.

## **Mr Bogdan Zdrojewski**

*Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Poland*

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There can be no doubt that exchange of experience and co-operation in the field of culture strengthens mutual respect and understanding between the inhabitants of Europe and other non-European territories.

This conference in Baku is an important event in relation to the conclusions of the Third Summit of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, May 2005), which gave priority to the strengthening of a European identity and unity on the basis of values shared by numerous cultures. It should be recalled that the meeting of the ministers of culture in Azerbaijan is a continuation of the process started in 2003 in Opatija and continued in 2005 in Faro, which aimed at preventing ethnic and religious conflicts by building a new dimension of relations between diversified communities living in Europe and its neighbouring regions.

Poland has been a country involved in building multilateral platforms of intercultural dialogue by means of special programmes for a long time. For years the scholarship programme *Gaude Polonia*, implemented with my support by the National Centre for Culture (an institution reporting to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage), has provided artists from central and eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Balkans with the opportunity to improve their artistic skills. Since the launch of the programme over 200 artists from Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Moldova, Russia and Ukraine have taken part in its subsequent editions. I would like to emphasise here the values of the *Gaude Polonia* programme and encourage artists, in particular from the South Caucasus, to use the Polish scholarship offer.

An important complement to these activities at the ministerial level is the activity of Polish non-governmental organisations. It is worth mentioning the Borderland Foundation and the "Borderland of Arts, Cultures, Nations" Centre which focuses on the area of central and eastern Europe and is currently expanding its geographical scope. Since 1990, the activities of the foundation have been dedicated to the promotion of the so-called borderland ethos and building bridges between people of different nationalities and cultures. The documentation centre established by the foundation and the implemented programmes, including internships and workshops for artists and students, both from Poland and from abroad, as well as classes on cultural heritage and film meetings, create a valuable tool of dialogue and education. Another third-sector institution, which was established not so long ago, is the Other Space Foundation, which creates social and artistic projects focused on human rights. In 2009 the foundation will organise the third edition of the "Transcaucasia" festival which is a unique event inspired by the art of the Caucasus region. In 2007, the festival was co-implemented by independent artist organisations from the countries of the South Caucasus, in particular from Azerbaijan, for the first time.

The care for material and non-material cultural heritage and its protection is a priority of 21st century society, also because of the quality of intercultural dialogue.

International institutions taking care of the cultural heritage at a regional or global level contribute to the propagation of global responsibility for the preservation and protection of that heritage. However, the sense of responsibility should be propagated first of all among ordinary citizens at the level of local communities.

It is therefore important to carry out activities aimed at raising awareness of the diversity of cultural and historical heritage of a specific place, region or country.

Poland has unique experience in the protection of cultural goods. During 120 years of occupation and two world wars, my country irretrievably lost a large part of its heritage and what was left often had to be rebuilt from scratch. Therefore, Poland has abundant experience in the creation and development of institutions responsible for the protection and

rescue of heritage. Our tradition of university education in this regard is very long and its fruits include the Polish School of Conservators whose achievements we gladly share with our partners, also from the South Caucasus region.

We believe that the essence of activities in the area of heritage is to prepare personnel who are able to cope with the challenges posed by the modern protection of the heritage. This protection must, in fact, mean wise management of the heritage potential. This requires the conservators to know more about the economy, theories of management and marketing, as well as law and public administration. It is also important to shape modern attitudes towards heritage. It is a superior objective of the Academy of Heritage, established in 2001 in Kraków, by, among others, the International Cultural Centre. The International Cultural Centre has organised 56 summer sessions attended by over 1 600 participants so far. A majority of students come from central and eastern Europe, but many of them come from the United States, the Republic of South Africa and from Asian countries.

The importance of educational activities aimed at learning, understanding and respecting cultural heritage and addressed mainly to young generations is currently the key task of not only ministers of culture, but also civil society.

Finally, I would like to warmly thank our Azerbaijan hosts for preparing the meeting of the ministers of culture in Baku where the Polish presence is also visible, since it was Polish architects, inspired by the local art, who created the unique atmosphere of this metropolis. It is no accident that Baku, a place where numerous cultures meet, was chosen as the place to host the conference.

I strongly believe that the atmosphere of discussions in such a unique place as Baku will facilitate the free exchange of ideas and opinions which is necessary to create a new quality of international co-operation in the field of culture.

## **Mr David Jalagania**

*Deputy Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport, Georgia*

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It is my honour and privilege to address such a distinguished audience – participants of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture.

First of all I would like to thank the authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan and organisers for hosting this conference, for an excellent management and their warm hospitality. I would also like to thank the Council of Europe, which is playing a key role in promoting intercultural dialogue.

This conference on "Intercultural Dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe and its neighbouring regions" is yet another important opportunity to discuss the issues related to intercultural dialogue, which are and will remain high on the agenda of the culture ministers across our continent and beyond.

Outstanding efforts taken by leading experts in the field made possible the preparation of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, which is a great achievement. The unity through diversity of our multicultural communities is a key principle whose importance is clearly stressed in the White Paper.

Throughout its history, Georgia, located at the crossroads of Western and Eastern civilisations, has always been a place where different cultures interacted and where a synthesis of different cultural idioms created a distinctive model of multiethnic society, a society which provides an outstanding example of tolerance, inter-religious and intercultural dialogue.

The harmonious cohabitation of different ethnic, religious and cultural groups, which in Georgia has a thousand-year-long history, is a milestone of the Georgian nation. "Strength is in unity" reads the motto of the Georgian coat of arms.

No doubt common heritage and intercultural dialogue are the best ways to construct bridges between the communities now divided by the tragic legacy of the conflicts which were inspired in the Caucasus by external forces. Georgia considers common cultural heritage as a reconciliation tool in the process of conflict resolution on its territory.

The occupation of swathes of Georgian territory by a fellow Council of Europe member state, among others, has endangered the cultural and natural heritage of my country. A number of monuments have been damaged by bombings, shelling, looting and arson carried out by Russian forces and the militias of the breakaway region operating in their wake.

I would like to underscore with special appreciation the prompt response of the Council of Europe to the request made by the Georgian authorities to develop a joint operational framework aimed at addressing the issue of the damage to Georgia's cultural heritage after the aggression of August 2008. Two monitoring missions were organised by the Council of Europe, one of them headed by the Director General Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni. Fact-finding missions examined the situation on the ground with respect to the heritage-related consequences of the Russian aggression.

Three pilot projects were put together jointly by the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Georgian Ministry of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport to take immediate post-conflict actions for the social and economic revitalisation of communities and the cultural environment in the municipality of Gori – capital of the Middle Qartli region of Georgia.

One of them envisages preparing a feasibility study for the assessment and repair of the Nikozi monastery buildings within the context of the wider community and village. A second project has the objective to draw up guidelines for various Georgian institutions and international organisations responsible for the reconstruction processes, the return of



displaced persons and the revitalisation of the cultural and living environment. A third pilot project is aimed at helping the national, regional and local institutions examine the long-term potential of the Gori region and to design a medium- and long-term regional development strategy based on the region's cultural and natural resources.

Georgian authorities welcomed the innovative approach proposed by the Council of Europe in line with the extensive definition of cultural heritage, as defined by the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada Convention) and the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention).

As a matter of fact, the rehabilitation process in the conflict-torn areas in Georgia must include cultural heritage and the preservation of community identity in multicultural communities.

Finally I would like to express my support for the Kyiv Initiative – a transversal project of cultural co-operation, initiated by the culture ministers of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine and developed by the Council of Europe Secretariat. The 8th meeting of the Kyiv Initiative National Programme Co-ordinators will be held on the sidelines of this conference. I am pleased to announce that Georgia would be glad to host the next meeting (9th) in Tbilisi.

## **Mr František Mikeš**

*Vice-Minister of Culture, Czech Republic*

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I shall refrain from further analysis of the interesting ideas and positive evaluations which have been voiced here already, and I can assure you that I shall be brief. It would, however, be remiss of me not to express my sincere thanks to the Republic of Azerbaijan for its generous hospitality and the flawless manner in which it has organised this meeting of European Ministers responsible for Culture and representatives of invited organisations. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts made by the Council of Europe to find a common language in our sphere.

As far as the countries represented here are concerned, the conference was generously conceived, and it is excellent to see that even in such large numbers and with such a diverse composition it is still possible to find a way to consolidate the established values of the Council of Europe, such as fundamental human rights and freedom for all citizens. The conference moreover offers an outstanding opportunity for efforts to improve co-operation between Europe and its neighbouring regions.

I am very pleased that we have succeeded in drafting the current text of a declaration which, we hope, to a greater or lesser extent, matches the visions and requirements of all the countries involved. This is all the more important in that this is the first meeting of ministers of culture of Council of Europe member states following the launch of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, and I am very pleased that a Czech translation of it is already available to Czech-speaking citizens. It is gratifying to see that interest in intercultural dialogue originates from the people themselves and is progressively assisting the development and consolidation of a sense of European cohesion.

The Czech Republic has taken on its measure of responsibility for the maintenance of cultural heritage and for the development of culture in the broad sense of the term. Specialists in the field of archaeology enjoy a high degree of international authority, as also do restoration workers, art historians and architects.

The Czech Republic has appended its signature to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the convention is under discussion. One expression of our concern for cultural heritage is the 12 immovable cultural properties included on the UNESCO World Heritage List, where one of our movable properties is also registered. It may serve as a topical comment to the above that the magazine *National Geographic* mentions a Czech town as being in 16th place among the 20 most beautiful towns in the world.

The Czech Republic is a long-term supporter of intercultural dialogue as a communication medium and tool for the support and protection of human rights, democracy and mutual understanding. I can confirm that support for intercultural dialogue and creativity will continue to be among the EU's priorities and I can assure you that the Czech Presidency intends to continue in that spirit.

In conclusion, I would like to say how pleased I am that there is such great interest in practical projects relating to intercultural dialogue, and that people's awareness of cultural diversity and social cohesion is currently growing deeper.

## **Mr Arnold Christian de Fine Skibsted**

*Ambassador for Human Rights, Denmark*

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My delegation would like to thank the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Council of Europe for organising this important event. In particular we would like to thank our hosts for their generous hospitality here in Baku. We all appreciate the hard work of preparation and enjoy this most pleasant framework for our discussion.

As part of its historical heritage and tradition the Danish Government puts great emphasis on increasing intercultural dialogue and understanding in order to ensure a dynamic and peaceful development of international relations. Inter-religious dialogue is an integral and indispensable part of this effort. The Danish Government therefore supports several interfaith dialogue initiatives – in Denmark as well as abroad. Denmark is actively taking part in the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue process and attended the Asia-Europe meeting in Amsterdam in June. With great interest we also took part in the session of the UN General Assembly devoted to “Culture of Peace” in November. The Danish Government actively supports various interfaith dialogue initiatives led by the Danish church. This summer we had an interfaith dialogue visit to Denmark by a delegation from Afghanistan, and Danish churches have helped organise an Iraqi reconciliation conference in Denmark last February.

Denmark attaches particular importance to promoting dialogue between young people. In today’s ever-changing world we need to consider carefully what we convey to future generations. Education is perhaps the single most efficient path to a peaceful handling of cultural and religious diversity.

Education should put a stronger emphasis on commonly shared values such as tolerance, mutual understanding, respect for cultural, ethnic and religious diversity, protection and promotion of universal human rights, including the rights of religious minorities, as well as adherence to the principles of non-use of force and peace and security.

For this reason Denmark was proud to host the “Copenhagen Conference: Education for Dialogue and Intercultural Understanding” in October. The conference was organised and sponsored by an impressive group of international and national organisations committed to the objective of the conference. These included UNESCO, the OIC, ISESCO, ALECSO, the Council of Europe, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue Between Cultures, the Danish Centre for Culture and Development, and the UN Alliance of Civilizations.

One of the three main themes of the conference was exactly how to combat stereotypes about religions and beliefs in our educational systems. We sincerely hope that the expert recommendations stemming from the conference will serve as an inspiration for practitioners throughout the world, as we hope this conference will do.

It is important that we, as responsible representatives of government, promulgate tolerance and mutual understanding to avoid conflict and hatred between peoples – just because they have different cultures, different beliefs or look different. If not us, who else?

When it comes to building bridges across cultures and religions, Denmark attaches the highest importance to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as to the international human rights conventions. The setting these days here in Baku reminds us that principles such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion or belief should be the basis of all initiatives aimed at promoting intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

## **Mr Krzysztof Zanussi**

*Film director, Poland*

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Thank you very much for the invitation to attend this conference. I feel very honoured as an artist, rather than a diplomat, to be among you. I am grateful for your invitation but I am afraid you may regret inviting me if you listen to what I want to say.

I listened to your debate that developed in an appropriate diplomatic jargon, which for a stranger like myself sounds very exotic but very nice. However, I feel that one word is repeated like a mantra in a Buddhist liturgy: it is diversity. All the time I hear diversity and I wonder, do we understand it correctly? I have no doubt that diversity is not an absolute value so maybe it is only instrumental. Like freedom is not an absolute value, dialogue is not an absolute value. If there is one absolute value, I would recognise intuitively that it is human growth. This is a value that I think we should all have in mind when we talk about our society and our world.

Only in the intervention of Ms Battaini-Dragoni did I hear clear-cut references to values and I am missing it very badly because without reference to values I am afraid we are talking about things which are obvious but maybe not that substantial to our world in danger.

As an artist I have to admit that I have no doubt that, in the world, all living organisms always compete and that is a natural thing for trees, for animals and for humans. It is not a particular kind of Darwinism that I am preaching; it is a simple observation. We try to be the best.

Dialogue is also a form of fight; it is a civilised fight in which we try not to kill but to seduce or to persuade the adversary. When we open a dialogue we want to get something or to give something, and sometimes to shout at the adversary. In life I know that when I enter into a dialogue with Islam, I learn and I accept from Islam the wonderful notion of unity, but I reject the idea that non-believers should be persecuted.

When I watch Buddhists' notion of empathy I think I am closer to my Christian notion of charity because it calls for an active attitude. However, when we talk about dialogue, we have to remember that dialogue is an exchange in which we want to persuade or to win over the adversary and, if we fail, we correct our ideas.

I deeply believe that dialogue hides the permanent contest between cultures, religions and languages. We must not forget this because it sounds too sweet when we talk only about diversity, forgetting that as well as diversity we have excellence. We want to see something that is better than something else. If we compare things, we confront reality and do not remain in limbo between a kind of relationship and a kind of exorcism because we are all afraid of terrorists.

So we charm each other by trying to be nice but it is not real dialogue. Dialogue is an exchange of values and an openness to accept that somebody is right and to take the best from him/her and achieve a better stage of human development in all ethical and material senses.

## **Mr Olzhas Suleimenov**

*Ambassador of Kazakhstan to UNESCO*

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I too would like to thank the leadership of Azerbaijan, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of this country and the Council of Europe for the organisation of such an important event, an unusual event, and I will explain later why it is unusual.

Over the last few decades there have been many meetings on this subject. What is intercultural dialogue? Well, I think it is not just a question of having intellectuals sit around various tables on this planet to discuss things. There may be good books and articles on the subject and so on but it really has to become human. The East-West divide that Rustam Ibrahimbekov has talked about is something that should be confronted, and that confrontation should take place within individuals and not on the battlefield. It is then that people will be able to develop a sort of global consciousness or identity. When we talk about cultural dialogue, the Alliance of Civilizations is the kind of thing that I think of, and if we promote that kind of intercultural dialogue so that it really seeps into the souls of human beings, only then will we achieve our objectives.

What is the difference, however, between this meeting and all of those previous ones in which I have had the good fortune to participate? There are two factors. First, it is a conference of ministers of culture, ministers who have been given a mandate by their governments to act to promote culture. Second, the conference is taking place at a time when there is a raging economic crisis affecting all countries of the globe and experience shows that it is under such circumstances that governments should pay particular attention to promoting culture.

I think that it is no accident that the conference is taking place in Baku. Azerbaijan has always had a well-developed cultural policy. Minister Garayev could give us the growth figures of the culture budget in Azerbaijan. I also met the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation – Mr Avdeyev – and he was happy to be able to tell me that next year his ministry's budget will grow by 30% compared to the present budget. Despite the current economic problems, such growth rates are particularly important because they show that, by investing in culture, states are demonstrating their vision of the future, and such support for culture shows what the spiritual and moral potential of the state is. I would be pleased to hear from other ministers as to what their culture budgets are in these times of financial crisis.

We need to hear from states and the Baku Declaration appeals directly to states. It reminds them of the need, in these difficult times of global financial and economic crisis, to support what is most vulnerable in developing civilisations, namely culture, because we know that culture will save the world if we save culture, and that is something that societies and states must put their shoulder to.

## **Irina Subotić**

*Europa Nostra Council Member and Europa Nostra Serbia President*

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Allow me, first of all, to warmly thank our Azerbaijani hosts and the Council of Europe, the two organisers of today's important meeting in this marvellous "land of fire". I would also like to greet all the participants of this conference in the name of Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage. Europa Nostra is an umbrella network of heritage NGOs, and is considered today to be the voice of Europe's organised civil society committed to cultural heritage. The network is composed of 230 member organisations, 160 associate organisations and 1 400 individual members from 53 countries, of which 45 in Europe. The power of our network comes from a shared passion for cultural heritage, and the readiness of our members to invest their expertise, their time, connections and often money for the pursuit of our goals.

It is extremely important to seize every occasion, and particularly those aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue in Europe, to speak about the significance of cultural heritage – both natural and built – and to stress its special role as a reflection and a building block of the European – and indeed world – civilisation. Raising public awareness of the need for heritage preservation and education lies at the very heart of this conference. Heritage defines the identity of Europe and Europeans; it stimulates dialogue between cultures and across sectorial lines; it contributes to the sustainable development of local communities and of their living environments; and it gives opportunities for the establishment of a variety of joint projects and partnerships with local, regional, national and international authorities.

Cultural heritage is the tangible element of the memory of our past that serves as inspiration and as a source of creativity for present and future generations. When we destroy parts of this inheritance, we destroy a part of our common European identity. However, if we preserve our cultural heritage and place it in the mainstream of public attention – at all levels, local, regional, national and European – and if we make heritage a priority for public policies and actions, we will be helping to promote transnational understanding, respect and co-operation. This is why Europa Nostra is always ready to underpin heritage campaigns, to advocate sustainable heritage policies and to strengthen capacity building across the heritage sector. One of our main aims is to establish co-operation between all levels of government with civil society organisations, and to carefully monitor and ensure that our common heritage is duly protected, preserved, kept relevant and alive for the benefit of all citizens in the wider community. Every object of national cultural heritage is a great asset for citizens' sense of national identity, but it also contributes in an important, substantial and recognised way to our rich and invaluable European heritage as a whole.

For all the above-mentioned reasons, in the name of Europa Nostra, and in my personal capacity as an art historian, I cannot be silent and close my eyes when faced with a great concern: the survival of the historic centre of this splendid city of Baku. More than 5 000 years old, it was placed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in the year 2000, but since 2003 it is on the List of World Heritage in Danger, clearly demonstrating the world's concern and distress at recent developments. In recent years and months, Baku has been and is still being systematically destroyed building by building. These demolished monuments were the witnesses of the fruitful intercultural dialogue of past generations and eras. By fundamentally changing or pruning the ensemble of historic monuments and the historic city of Baku as a whole, we risk impoverishing the dialogue between cultures of today and tomorrow, within Azerbaijan, but across the world as well. Let us therefore support all efforts to put an end to the current lack of vision, and realise that cultural heritage is the most important witness of history, traditions, values and memories of us all, of all human beings. In one word, cultural heritage is the witness of our multiple identities within Europe and in the world. Let us therefore raise our voices in support of Baku and keep its rich heritage alive and where it fully belongs.

## **Ms Gerarda Ventura**

*Vice-President of the Euromed Platform*

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First of all, on behalf of the Euromed NGO Platform, which encompasses around a hundred thematic regional and local civil society networks of Europe and the Mediterranean, I should like to thank you for your invitation.

We particularly appreciate the interest in art and culture that has been expressed over the last few years, although we believe that the time has come to move from words to action.

The first requirement of any dialogue is that the parties should start on an equal footing. But in fact the situations of the different countries are completely out of synch, absolutely unequal in terms of social and economic realities, democracy and the participation of civil societies. The first requirement of any dialogue is that citizens must be able to meet and work together. What, therefore, are we to make of the fortress Europe that is being built, preventing freedom of movement between countries?

This panel is devoted to heritage, so it will focus on memory. While this is an important theme, thought must at the same time be given to the development of that memory and to its potential, and therefore to cultural production and to independent contemporary artistic creation. When culture and contemporary art receive support, the specific characteristics of each country can be highlighted, young people's opportunities to express themselves can be developed, and women's access to cultural exchanges can be fostered.

It is vital to defend the independence of cultural players, so that the critical thinking can be developed that is essential to the definition and transmission of the fundamental values of community life.

In conclusion, if the word "dialogue" is to be given real substance, we must listen to the different countries' civil societies and cultural players: believe me, they are very well aware of how to engage in dialogue.

## **Mr Halit Eren**

*Director of IRCICA*

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It is a pleasure for me to greet you on the occasion of this important conference representing another multiregional and multicultural initiative towards dialogue amongst world cultures and nations. It is a pleasure to be here in Baku as it always has been on various occasions within the framework of Azerbaijan's scholarly and cultural activities: its hosting of OIC meetings in various fields and, in particular, activities organised as a result of co-operation between government and academic institutions in Azerbaijan on the one hand, and IRCICA on the other, as well as today on the occasion of this conference that Azerbaijan has organised together with the Council of Europe.

International cultural relations in the present time more than ever necessitate co-operation between organisations that represent regions, areas of common culture or groups of countries, in addition to existing bilateral co-operation between countries and their institutions. The government's partnership with international organisations in cultural projects not only offers the possibility of reaching a wider audience in their member countries, but it also makes it possible to deal with subjects of general or global concern.

Cultural action that has been implemented within the multilateral framework of the OIC and, since 2005, in the context of its ten-year plan of action, made it possible to address cultural issues of common concern for the member states, among them the issue of intercultural dialogue in mutual discussions with other international organisations. IRCICA for its part, and in its capacity as the OIC's cultural subsidiary, included several projects involving partnership with governments and international and regional organisations in its own work programmes. These projects are designed in a way to enlist multicultural participation from around the world and encourage mutual recognition between pupils from various cultures. The most significant example is IRCICA's Programme on Restoration and Conservation, Archival and Architectural Heritage, organised in collaboration with governments and UN agencies, which brings together professionals and students from all cultural backgrounds to learn by doing in an atmosphere of shared work and dialogue. Another very recent example of such partnership is the symposium that the Council of Europe and IRCICA jointly organised in Istanbul under the theme of "Globalisation and images of the Other: challenges and new perspectives for history teaching in Europe". It involved co-operation between groups of countries through their international organisations, namely IRCICA and the Council of Europe.

The present symposium represents another praiseworthy initiative in this direction. I believe this is a promising road towards dialogue. Before I conclude I want to take this opportunity to thank the President, the Government and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan, as well as the minister, Mr Abulfas Garayev, for this excellent organisation and generous hospitality. I wish this meeting success.



## **Concluding speeches**



## **Mr Robert Palmer**

*Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage, Council of Europe*

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The drawing together of conclusions from yesterday trying to combine the rich contributions of more than 50 people who spoke and attempting to define a consistent line through the varied landscape of the 46 countries that are represented here is very difficult this morning.

The writer T.S. Eliot said: “Real knowledge is what goes beyond knowledge”. To paraphrase this, real dialogue is probably what goes beyond words. Dialogue is the art of conversation that goes beyond the act of talking.

An Arabic quotation states: “Always remember that man was born with one mouth – but with two ears.” Part of the essence of dialogue is listening. We did a great deal of listening yesterday, and we learned that dialogue between many people takes time.

The contributions of many speakers conveyed a sense of urgency. We are living through a time of fundamental cultural transformation. Familiar cultural and social norms are in a state of flux.

In certain parts of the world, we are facing increased conflicts. We are witnessing the far-reaching power of technological networks and online social networks that are shifting the world order for a new generation of young people.

The challenges are everywhere different – yet still everywhere the same, such as the immense challenge of climate change, the dramatic flows of migration and the state of deep poverty in many parts of the world. As we discussed these, they seemed to command us to recognise our common humanity.

We heard many times yesterday that true intercultural dialogue must be based on universal values – of human rights, democracy, the respect for “the other”, and the equality of human dignity. In the panel on “Common ground for intercultural dialogue”, we heard references to the Council of Europe’s White Paper, to UNESCO’s Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, to the Abu Dhabi Declaration on the Arab Position on Dialogue and Cultural Diversity, to the report of the High Level Group and the Madrid Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations, to the Rabat Commitment, and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration. Undoubtedly, there appears to be a great deal of common ground for intercultural dialogue.

During the session on “Cultural policies, programmes and initiatives for intercultural dialogue: new concepts on the governance of diversity”, participants reinforced the fact that intercultural dialogue was not only a tool, it was also a task – a task that requires actions. These are real actions that can help us learn more about “the other”, actions to demonstrate how diversity can be a powerful vector for sustainable economic development, actions that promote exchange between European and Arab partners, actions that cut across national, ethnic, religious and linguistic lines, and actions that can be taken in part by ministers of culture and ministries who deal legitimately with the power of creativity and art.

In the panel yesterday afternoon on cultural heritage, there was a focus by some on the notion of a “common heritage” that goes beyond the notion of “world heritage”. History is scarred by conflicts caused by the misrepresentation of history. The practice of “intercultural interpretation” is a collective challenge. We heard about how much can be done by civil society organisations and individual non-governmental partners, who are proactive mediators where governments seem unable to act. We need to find ways of allowing the positive energy and good will created here in Baku to flow beyond this conference. As one minister said, perhaps we need an intercultural pipeline.

We all know that just another conference will never replace hatred with respect. But here there seemed to be both talking and listening. There has been a high level of commitment and engagement, and a sense of the urgency and importance of the challenge. The member states of the Council of Europe, of UNESCO, ALECSO and ISESCO are all part of one world.

After this conference, I suggest there will be two options. One is to wait and do nothing – to go back to old routines, to cling tightly to what we already know and have already done. The second option is to take some action and to grow together, to seek a creative engagement with one another, to live up to the expectations with a commitment – a commitment that can go back to Strasbourg, to Tunis and to Rabat, to all of our countries.

I think I heard yesterday that the option of taking action prevailed, an agreement most wanted to follow – to find junctures of commonality, to discover a new cultural ecology that can use a synergistic power to effect change and to identify new ways of engaging in new styles of reciprocity through new actions.

Yesterday we did not quite find a way to walk on water – but we agreed on a few steps, a few commitments and a few actions that we can take together on land. Now I ask the Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan to offer her views, and I look forward to your comments in the open discussion that will follow.

## **Ms Sevda Mamedaliyeva**

*Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

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I would like to greet you once again and to express my deep gratitude to the Council of Europe, the Secretariat members and member states because of their help and support for organising this international conference. Discussions carried out in the direction of developing intercultural dialogue sounded valuable thoughts in these two days and will stimulate the development of dialogue.

Intercultural dialogue is the most important tool which is able to contribute to the solution of existing problems in the world. To secure mutual understanding and to promote respect between the different cultures is the highest duty for us. Thoughts expressed by the representatives in yesterday's sessions confirm that we have to devote our activities to real dialogue.

Work carried out as part of the activities of the Council of Europe and the states representing neighbouring regions as a result of this ministerial conference will facilitate the development of dialogue. Inspired by your valuable ideas, we all intend to hold multilateral projects in the field of dialogue.

In order to secure the durability of the Baku co-operation process we are initiating the Artists for Dialogue initiative and invite other states, international organisations and non-governmental organisations to be active in this project. Some non-governmental organisations from Azerbaijan had already expressed their intention to take part.

The purpose of the initiative is to create and develop a sustainable partnership – including adequate resources – between different organisations and institutions with a view to promoting continuous transborder dialogue and exchanges and to encourage collaboration between experts, artists and others within the field of the arts and culture.

The Artists for Dialogue initiative encourages the building of networking schemes with different levels of membership and styles of collaboration, allowing interested partners to contribute according to their own priorities.

A working group, led by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Culture and Tourism, will be created with potential partners. Further mapping of existing related programmes will be undertaken. Following a feasibility study regarding the setting-up of a fund, a detailed proposal will be drawn up concerning the practical operation of the Artists for Dialogue initiative (see Appendix II for reference information).

We will set up a special working group to organise the project and we offer to host a meeting of the working group in order to discuss the practical aspects of the conference. This meeting will be organised by the Azerbaijani side with the support of the Council of Europe.

We invite participant states of the conference to be represented within the project at the East-West International Film Festival and International Jazz Festival which is already traditionally held in Azerbaijan.

The children's choir which you heard yesterday took part in the concert programme this year in May in Strasbourg in the cathedral and at the headquarters of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the European Union. These events are an obvious example of the promotion of intercultural dialogue through children and young people. These kinds of ceremonies at a global level influence the development of intercultural dialogue in a positive way. At the same time, I would like to highlight the need to promote the "Children for Dialogue" event, the joint concert of the children's chorus of Europe and the neighbouring regions. This children's choir should consist of children representing each different nation and joint concerts can be

organised in various countries. As you know our future depends on the young generation. That is why the promotion of intercultural dialogue through children and young people will achieve dialogue more easily in the future.

I would like to express my deepest thanks once again to all the participants for making important contributions to the conference and hope the conference will be a success.

## **Ms Nancy Bakir Naguez**

*Minister of Culture, Jordan*

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I should like to thank the Minister of Culture and Tourism, my dear friend Mr Abulfas Garayev, for the invitation to this conference and also for its excellent organisation. I should also like to thank the Council of Europe for having continuously participated in this undertaking. I should also like to thank the President for opening the conference and for his speech.

We know that a human being starts his/her life without choosing his/her parents, ancestors, colour or race. A human being is born as a child whose choices are really limited and restricted. Nevertheless, they pay a very high price when our dialogues fail and when our declarations and our agreements fail because we have to be rational and human.

I believe that the Baku Conference is an important step in the cultural project of humankind and this is for a number of reasons. First of all we have this assembly of ministers of culture and also institutional cultural organisations, as well as international institutions, which play a pilot role in spreading awareness of human principles and achievements in this geo-strategical part of the world. We have to confirm these achievements and we must strengthen their sustainability, in particular at an international level.

Secondly, the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue was published a few months ago, in English and French, and yesterday the Arabic version was provided. This crowns this important achievement of humanity and also of the various fora which pertain to culture and religion. It will help us to deepen our understanding of this subject and also to co-operate based on human values.

Thirdly, we need to define the next steps to take and we also need to look at the mechanisms that are necessary in order to take advantage of these efforts, so that they lead the way to cultural dialogues and human dialogues, which guarantee respect for humankind. They should guarantee the rights of each individual, to ensure that everyone continues not only to benefit from these rights, but also to respect international law and avoid violations.

This conference has been held at a very appropriate time and before the end of the year we are going to have a national meeting in Jordan, which is going to bring together representatives of governments and intellectuals, scientists and academics, as well as institutions of civil society, to see how we can culturally develop our plans. We are part of this world and are globally oriented and the White Paper and the proceedings of this conference, in particular, will be a reference point for our future steps.

We also have other points of reference which relate, for example, to the role of youth. We are also aiming to have a Jordanian newsletter published and there is a document that has been published by the Arab League and ALECSO, which was ratified by the Riyadh summit in 1995. Lately there have also been publications as a result of the conference of Arab cultural ministers concerning the steps taken by the Arab League.

We are going to work together to avoid the clash of civilisations. We are going to build on the history of humankind, as has been said by a number of ministers who represent the Arab sector and have witnessed developments. The world has failed to solve the conflicts in this area and I would like to mention in particular the Palestinian issue.

Finally I should like to respond to Mr Terry Davis's question: "Are we ready for dialogue"? And the answer is both "yes" and "no". We are ready formally at various levels. Nevertheless, the manner in which it is demanded is not enough. I think women should participate in this effort and I should like to remind you that the longest and most successful colonial periods of our Arab world were those that did not involve women in civil society and ignored their role. Moreover, the colonialists only governed half the society and avoided dealing with the other

half. There have been some efforts to enable women to participate in civil society but this is not enough.

There is also the role of young people that should be mentioned. In fact young people do have possibilities to communicate because of modern technology and this is an important factor that needs to be taken into consideration. There is also the role of science.

We are going to have dialogue between cultures which demands participation at all levels of society. All levels – regional and international – need to have human dialogue for the benefit of all humankind. I should like to thank you all for your attention and wish you full success in your work.



## **Mr Boon Soon Teng**

*Deputy Minister of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage, Malaysia*

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Allow me to say thank you to the organisers for inviting Malaysia to participate in this conference. We understand that Malaysia is the only country from the Far East and South-East Asia that is participating, and it is indeed a great honour to be a part of this conference and to share our experiences with fellow participants.

We salute the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan for holding this valuable conference. We agree that intercultural dialogue is integral to a harmonious society especially in the borderless world of today.

We also fully understand the concern of the Council of Europe and its neighbouring regions concerning the importance of intercultural dialogue. Malaysia is a real example of a multiethnic, multicultural and multireligious country, often nicknamed Malaysia Truly Asia.

With three major races – the Malays, the Chinese and the Indians – together with at least 60 indigenous races considered as minorities, and after 51 years of glorious independence, Malaysia is constantly searching for methodologies to build up intercultural dialogue, for we are its strong proponent, as it is the basis for peace and sustainable development.

In accordance with Eastern traditions, norms and values, we in Malaysia respect each other's cultures by looking for similarities and applying a high degree of tolerance for cultural differences. On the other hand, education plays a vital role. As the future generations, the young ones are constantly moulded through their schools' curricula, especially through the learning of the subjects of language and history, as well as heritage and civic consciousness. They participate in extra-curricular activities such as being members of cultural clubs and enrol in youth camps to build up their sense of belonging to their nation.

Also in accordance with our tradition and in an effort to better understand and respect each other's cultures, we hold "open houses" for the six major festivals celebrated by the Malaysian communities. In these functions Malaysians, regardless of their race and religion, come visiting the houses of fellow Malaysians in the spirit of comradeship and without fear and prejudice.

As mentioned earlier, Malaysia is constantly looking for multifaceted methodologies that can serve as guidelines to further sustain and strengthen her harmonious faith relations. One such approach is the holding of interfaith dialogue among Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Taoists. Such dialogues are held occasionally, aimed at fostering further religious understanding among the various communities.

Our 51 years of glorious independence does not mean we are sitting on our laurels. We are still fragile and succumb to challenges, especially challenges within. Politicians themselves meddle with inter-racial relations and these are further sensationalised by the media. Such despised actions have prompted the government to contemplate the formulation of an Inter-Race Relations Act to safeguard the interests of all parties.

We are glad to witness the increasing interest in intercultural dialogue in the international community. We feel that the European community should share their experiences and expertise with other regions of the world by holding more ministerial conferences of this kind to further promote the "culture" of intercultural dialogue, the democratic management of cultural diversity, not only among policy makers but also in civil society, the media and among young people in every nation.

There should be an increased collective international effort to make intercultural dialogue a branded merchandise which symbolises the openness and inclusiveness of a nation which the national leaders take pride in owning.

Once again I thank you for giving Malaysia the opportunity to be a part of this prestigious conference. I also thank the host country, the Republic of Azerbaijan for its hospitality. We believe that Malaysia has much to learn from this conference and from other countries.

## **Mr Jan Cornelius Henneman**

*Acting Director General for Regional Policy and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
the Netherlands*

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We attach great importance to intercultural dialogue. That is also why we actively participate in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. We join the consensus on the Baku Declaration, but I would like to share some points of view from the Netherlands with you.

We believe that intercultural dialogue relates to multiple forms of identity: for example political, economic, cultural and religious. These various forms of identity should always be taken into consideration.

We see the declaration as a re-affirmation of our willingness to work together on intercultural dialogue. In the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue we have seen it confirmed that it is up to the member states, to civil society and people themselves to engage in such dialogue and that the Council of Europe's role is ideally that of facilitator and mediator in the process. We therefore welcome the participation in the conference of representatives of so many states, but also of NGOs and cultural agents.

We would furthermore like to underline the importance of art and cultural policies as a means for intercultural dialogue. Intercultural dialogue does not only contribute to overall cohesion and conflict prevention, it can also serve to enrich culture with new elements.

To conclude: we join the consensus on the declaration in the understanding that intercultural dialogue is multifaceted and that we will, as much as possible, use existing tools for this dialogue. The adoption of this declaration should not automatically lead to new institutional activities of the Council of Europe in matters of intercultural dialogue.

This being said, I wish to congratulate our hosts on the perfect organisation of the conference and thank them for their great hospitality.

## **Mr Norbert Riedl**

*Director, Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, Austria*

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Thank you very much for the initiative taken by the Republic of Azerbaijan and the tremendous good preparation by your officials and by the officials of the Council of Europe. We are really pleased and we admire all of the work you have done to prepare for such a successful conference.

I learned a lot yesterday in the discussion about how other countries handle intercultural dialogue and compared it with Austria. We are lucky in Austria that we have, since yesterday, a new government and we immediately received a new policy in the field of culture. One of the main targets is of course intercultural dialogue, the mobility of artists and especially young people.

The Austrian city of Linz, capital of upper Austria, will be the European Capital of Culture of the European Union next year, and there we prepared a really unique experience. We invited schools to promote intercultural dialogue and arts education. To our astonishment, in the first round of our plans we invited 15 schools to participate in this project. In the meantime, however, we have more than 100 in upper Austria who decided to participate without support from the government or from the ministry. They are doing it on their own. This is, I think, one of the best examples of interest in intercultural dialogue and this is true even for young students.

I fully agreed with the intervention by the Honourable Minister of Saudi Arabia, and Robert Palmer also mentioned it: we are living in a world of transition with tremendous social changes and changes in our society, too. Here we have this really big instrument: the Internet. In the future I think we also have to work out how we can use the Internet, not just the media, but especially the Internet for getting through to young people. A few weeks ago I heard a lecture by the Director of Microsoft who explained that the structure – the brain structure – and the handling of computers by the new generation is a totally different one to ours. For example, if I really want to understand my laptop, I ask my grandchild who is 12 years old and who really shows me what my laptop can do. It is a totally different way of thinking.

On the other hand, laptops or computers in general are very logical, are very objective. So we are talking about society, an information society, a society of knowledge, but what we have to go back to is the society of wisdom and here also include the human being. How can we use it? How can we link it together? How can we bring humanism into the matter, into the world, into the cold, cold world of computers? Because computers, as Robert Palmer mentioned, and I will use the old Arabic saying, have one mouth but two ears. A computer cannot smell, cannot taste the other human and here we have to get involved again so that we can teach intercultural dialogue and understanding other cultures to the young generations.

The European Union made a tremendous step on 20 November 2008 when they introduced the new Internet library – Europeana. I think here we have a combination of everything: the knowledge of all the libraries and all the museums worldwide. For example, we have the Codex Sinaiticus, which is divided into several parts. You can find some pages in Egypt, some pages in St Petersburg and you can find pages in a monastery on a Greek island. But in this virtual library you can find the 300 pages of the Codex Sinaiticus united and this is really unique. This is also the possibility of intercultural dialogue.

Concerning Austria, we are now trying through encouragement and subsidies for the mobility of artists but also through art education. I think here is a big chance to reach young people, children, and for mutual understanding. One of the main targets in Austria is also intercultural dialogue for migration. Here we have lost a little bit of time and we have to try harder.

Finally, may I close by again thanking the minister and the Council of Europe, who helped to prepare the conference. I am sure that the ministers of culture have even shown that they are sometimes the better diplomats and we can achieve more success than in the theoretical

discussions in Strasbourg. Thank you very much Minister Garayev and thank you to Azerbaijan. I think we can really start a Baku process from now on.

## **Ms Fifi Benaboud**

*Transmediterranean and Intercultural Dialogue Programme Co-ordinator,  
North-South Centre of the Council of Europe*

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The European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) is often called the Council of Europe's "window on the world". Its main area of activity is the Mediterranean. The Trans-Mediterranean Programme was launched to establish a forum for dialogue with the Maghreb and Mashrek countries in 1994, well before the Euromed process. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ministers of culture of Morocco and Jordan, who are here today, for their steadfast commitment to the centre's activities.

The North-South Centre's work is based on a so-called quadrilogue, that is to say that our statutory bodies include, and our activities involve, representatives of governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities and NGOs. This enables us to establish proper interaction between the various stakeholders to foster intercultural dialogue.

The issues dealt with by the Trans-Mediterranean Programme lie at the core of the relationship between northern and southern Mediterranean countries and between Europe and its Arab and Muslim neighbours.

The main focuses of the programme are as follows:

- promoting human rights and enhancing democratic processes, as well as supporting women in their role as forces for change in Mediterranean societies;
- migration and its social and cultural repercussions; this is a major factor in North-South relations because of its complexity and also because of the important contribution that migrants can make as vectors of dialogue;
- young people, who play a very important part in our programme, as 60% of the population of the southern Mediterranean countries are under the age of 30 and young people provide enormous potential for exchange and building a shared future together, provided that their aspirations are taken into account;
- education, which is a way of reaching out to others and fostering intercultural dialogue and a key factor in trans-Mediterranean exchanges;
- information and communication; the media play an ever increasing role and can serve as catalysts for war or peace; they also act as a vehicle for intercultural dialogue because they help to increase public awareness and recognition of others.

Through numerous multidimensional activities, the North-South Centre has established considerable expertise in co-operation and dialogue-building between the Council of Europe member states and the southern Mediterranean countries. Dialogue must be built on a foundation of solid values, with due regard for the enrichment that the diversity of societies brings. Above all, intercultural dialogue must be something more than pure rhetoric. We must invent new forms of co-operation which will help people to build their own futures and deter the South's new generations from regarding Europe as nothing but a means of escaping poverty.

Dialogue means seeing the South through something other than the prism or the distorting mirror of supposedly "rampant" illegal immigration. Dialogue means rejecting this simplistic view of outsiders, which is the prevailing if not exclusive view, particularly in some of the media. Generalisations, stereotypes and clichés stir up hostility rather than alleviating it and deflect us from pursuing the commonly accepted goal of peace and stability in the region.

Huntington's theory of the clash of civilisations has brought much grist to the mill of extremists on all sides. In my opinion what is actually happening is a clash of ignorance, which has to be countered by every means possible. Ignorance and misunderstanding create fear, fear leads

to reclusion and reclusion results in rejection. Intercultural dialogue provides us with a means of appraising, recognising and respecting cultural diversity as an asset for the future of the world.

Our societies are all increasingly multicultural, and the proper management of this growing diversity does not mean attempting to assimilate others into the prevailing majority culture but showing respect for minorities and fitting them into a framework of common legal rules and civil values. Separating and shutting away cultures and communities is a step in the wrong direction whereas mutual recognition is a step towards dialogue.

Mr Palmer quoted an Arab saying, which points out that we have one mouth and two ears. I would add another, which reminds us that we need two hands to applaud! For dialogue as well, we also need two partners – partners who make a real effort to establish genuine dialogue, which is the basis for stability and peace in the region.

This ties in with the North-South Centre's main aim, which is to implement activities that combat stereotypes and nurture mutual understanding and respect for diversity. As a mechanism of the Council of Europe to promote co-operation with the south-east Mediterranean countries, the North-South Centre is cited in the Warsaw Declaration, the Faro Platform and the White Paper. Membership is open to all Council of Europe member states, and I would like to take this opportunity to call on all those countries which have not yet done so to join, so that they can use it as a means of establishing dialogue with neighbouring regions.

I would appeal in particular to Mr Garayev, the Azerbaijani Minister of Culture and Tourism, to ensure that Azerbaijan is the first country to join the North-South Centre following the Baku Conference and the follow-up process.

I would also like to thank Mr Garayev for the outstanding quality of the conference and our warm welcome in Azerbaijan.

## **Ms Sevinj Bagirova**

*Women of Azerbaijan*

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Thank you very much for giving me the floor at this excellent conference. I would like to welcome and thank all participants and the organisers of this very important conference.

The basic theme of this conference is dialogue among civilisations. Of course any dialogue consists of words, but words have been so touched by centuries of history that people sometimes do not even understand their own words. The code included in the words and the way in which words are used are often perverted and abused and people do not always understand the words they use, like in the tower of Babel. Every time a word is used inappropriately or incorrectly it takes people away from the real meaning and there is a disinformation, a misinformation. It is also a fact that languages have been split up into so many different dialects. People do not know one another. Most people continue to concentrate on differences between themselves and their group and other groups and this undermines the existence of common roots – because we do have common roots.

We have to take into consideration the fact that there is one single civilisation of humankind on the planet and that is what is most important. I think that everyone should recognise and accept the fact that there is one single god and that that is natural; that is what we need to accept in order to discover and reveal our individuality, that is why each person is so important and the recognition of the rights of each individual must be accepted. We must, through education, through science, reveal this unity of humankind and accept the fact that everyone is a fully-fledged member of humankind.

We need to develop a protolanguage that would be common to all in order that each individual is able to contribute to the development of a single mentality. In the 1990s and at the beginning of this century the women in the Development Centre of Azerbaijan proposed the idea of setting up a United Nations centre that would work on the languages and cultures of the world and reveal their unity. Now this proposal was very warmly received by the United Nations, by UNESCO and by many countries of the world and I hope that this conference will also support this project, which would give an impetus to a common understanding of the peoples of the planet and it would truly be a gift to future generations.



## **Mr Bruce George**

*Representing the United Kingdom Parliament*

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Thank you very much for allowing me to speak. I must start with an apology. Our minister of culture sends her apologies. She has just started in the job, she is cultured and her husband is a very well-known author, so it was not that she did not wish to come but it was simply not possible for her to come.

She probably chose the least cultured member of the House of Commons and so my experience here has been quite invigorating. This has been intellectually very stimulating, so thank you very much for everything.

The absence of our minister of culture does not mean to say we have no culture. Britain is very strong in its cultural history and what it is seeking to do. But I am reminded of what Gandhi famously said when he was asked what he thought of Western civilisation. He replied that he thought it would be a very good idea. What he meant was that his culture, his history, his civilisation in India preceded British civilisation by about two millennia. We all have to approach these subjects with a degree of humility.

There are some of us who say our democracy in the UK or in England began in 1832 with the Great Reform Act. We have had almost 200 years of experience of democracy and we are still working at it; we have not yet achieved our ultimate goal. Countries who began more recently and who genuinely wish to become democratic will be exceedingly fortunate if they can achieve in a decade what has taken many other countries a century or even more. Democracy, human rights and good governance are at the centre of what we are talking about today but we have to recognise that the approaches to these subjects may vary considerably from what we may imagine or believe these issues to be and these high principles to be.

Some countries, maybe not represented here today, have not the slightest intention of ever adhering to the standards they have signed up for in the United Nations, in the European Union, in the Council of Europe or in the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Should we criticise them? Yes. Should we understand them? Yes. And we should seek to persuade them. We would not expect them to have governments that are replicas of Sweden, Belgium, the United Kingdom or most countries here. But we should assist where we are asked to assist and I believe in this meeting here today, it brings together people from different governmental and political systems and we realise that there is much that we have in common and much that we have to share.

Those of us who come from the supposedly more civilised countries with a long history of democracy should look in our mirrors and see that within our societies, in all societies, there is a much darker side. None of these dark forces are represented here but there are many people in all of our countries that view with anathema, with hostility, with anger, the kind of agenda that we are talking about: intercultural dialogue. They do not want an intellectual debate or a dialogue with those people who they regard as not being one of us, coming from a different culture, coming from a different civilisation whose presence in our countries they would deem to be highly undesirable. We must talk about this dark side of our own societies as well as those things that we must regret historically and those mistakes made by governments.

I am embarrassed by the fact that I have been speaking with pride about my country and my parliamentary constituency being multicultural. Now I am told that is not quite the right word to use. Abandon that because there is a better word. I still remain to be convinced that the alternative word or phrase is necessarily better. It is not the word we use, however, it is how we implement what we believe to be the right approach to society. It is about treating people with dignity, not just talking to them but doing things that we as mature, pluralistic societies

must do, and that is to be tolerant towards those minorities and majorities, including women, who have few rights in many countries.

We must show tolerance of majorities and minorities, whether these are racial minorities, people whose sexual orientation is still a minority or the disabled; these are the issues that are truly a part of our agenda.

We all have made progress in dealing with ethnic minorities but we are failing and failing miserably in some countries and we must do infinitely more. If we must do more, however, then the minorities have their responsibilities to us, too, in order that we can collectively achieve our goals of having more humane societies of which we can be very proud.

In my own country there are concerns, and here I must say I am speaking as an individual and not as a representative of the government. I have looked at some statistics about what might happen to us if this economic crisis proceeds dangerously, as it may well do. How will it affect our agenda to improve relations with minorities and to create more just humane tolerant societies? Demographic change is already, despite the downturn, having a visible impact on determining how we promote equalities in this new integrated egalitarian environment. Add to that the economic crisis and the problems of terrorism, and this gives not just culture ministers but every other department of state, all elements of government and society, a major task – new challenges and polarisation which can be the result of an economic downturn. The first to feel the heat are going to be women in lower paid jobs and ethnic minorities, many of them also in lower paid jobs. The fall in employment is likely to halt the advances of women in the workplace and put off the rise of women to higher levels of employment and this is something to be bitterly, bitterly regretted.

It is a pleasure being here in Azerbaijan. I chair the British Parliament Azeri Group and, in the five years I have been coming here, I have seen a metamorphosis. This is a metamorphosis not just in buildings, which is visible for all to see, but in a country that is seeking, having emerged from decades of subordination, totalitarianism and authoritarianism, to become a country that we in the EU or the Council of Europe can admire. I am delighted to have spoken after a spokesperson for civil society in Azerbaijan because I know the president has taken a personal initiative to strengthen both civil society and NGOs. The plethora of NGOs is an indication of the evolution of this country in many ways. It has been a wonderful conference and I hope now we go back home, wherever that is, and talk not just about the ringing words we heard but about where on the agenda we have to do something. That doing can be both costly and difficult but, as elected representatives, that is our obligation and the success of this conference will depend on how this document, challenging though it may be, is going to be implemented in all of our countries.

## Mr Mikhail Shvydkoy

*President's Special Envoy for Cultural Co-operation, Russia*

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Today we are talking about a very important issue, but to engage in some polemic with the previous speaker I would like to say that intercultural or inter-civilisational dialogue is something that started long before we had these concepts of democracy and human rights. It has been a very difficult road for dialogue among civilisations. It is a difficult road, it is paved with conflict and contradiction.

I represent a country where such dialogue has been underway for more than a millennium and the very history of the Russian Federation is the history of relations between Russians and Muslims, and between the Russian culture and representatives of the Tatars and the Bashkirs, who live side by side with Russians and have done so for more than a thousand years, and have managed to do so in a fairly friendly manner, at least over the last four or five hundred years. That dialogue started under very difficult circumstances and it is really part of the history of the Russian Federation and I think we need to keep that in mind.

Intercultural dialogue is difficult. We live in a difficult world and I think that yesterday's and today's debates have shown that there is a lot of good will, but we find ourselves often in an impasse. We know about the terrible events that occurred, for instance, in India just in the last week or so, and other things have happened in other parts of the world and this confronts us, the people responsible for culture, with a very difficult task. I think that this is something we can achieve with just small steps at a time. Sigmund Freud wrote a very important idea about this kind of approach to progress where you go step-by-step and culture moves forward in that way. But in a situation where the world has made gigantic strides in both negative and positive directions, Ms Bakir Naguez expressed something very positive: we are all the same, we are all members of the same humankind with a sort of protolanguage, but at the same time we are very different and I think that we need to learn to love one another *because* we are different and that is very difficult.

I have no illusions about the possibility of changing the world quickly: it is not possible, agreed Russian writer Dostoevsky. He once wrote, and Russians like to repeat this, that beauty will save the world. But in fact the world will be saved more perhaps by people who understand, who perceive beauty. Beauty is also different, however, people are different and beauty is different. The perception of beauty in Africa and in Europe is not the same. I will not talk too much about beauty or I will be accused of male chauvinism but let me just stress the fact that beauty is different and the perception of beauty is different.

Culture starts with prohibitions, with taboos. Culture is often based on taboos and that needs to be understood as well. People often like to talk about how we should fight against extremism, fight in favour of a tolerant world, and how do we do that? Then they suggest that we restrict certain freedoms. It is a difficult conflict and political practice has to understand those complexities. Because culture always starts with taboos, it automatically restricts and limits freedom. When we talk about international cultural co-operation, the role of culture in politics and so on, let us keep in mind that we are confronted with a very complex and difficult issue and progress can only be achieved through small steps.

I was in Tbilisi in September and I talked to my Georgian friends and comrades there. We talked about what needs to be done in order to create a new climate of positive relations between the Russian Federation and Georgia and we decided that we have to start with culture and religion so I met the representatives of the Georgian church. Just two days ago we opened an exhibition of a great Georgian artist and a lot of people came to the exhibition – Georgians and non-Georgians – and that was, I think, a kind of a sign of the fact that culture can contribute to changing political relations and human relations.

If we talk, for instance, about relations between the Russian Federation and Azerbaijan we also talk about a dialogue of civilisations but that sounds a bit silly because I myself feel that I have lived in Baku all my life. I feel very much at home here, but when we talk about relations between the Russian and Azerbaijani civilisations, it is a dialogue of civilisations. I have a friend here from Saudi Arabia and for a number of years now we have engaged in joint cultural projects and that is normal. But let us not pretend that we are identical, that we all live with the same principles and values. No, that is not possible, that is not true. The only thing we can make sure of is that the principles we implement, the principles we hold dear, do not step on the toes of the principles of others, which are just as important to them as our principles are to us.

I would like to thank the organisers and the participants for a remarkable conference. The Interstate Humanitarian Fund of the CIS, which I have the honour of representing here, is certainly prepared to co-operate with the Council of Europe on all issues of humanitarian co-operation. Just a few days ago we signed an agreement with UNESCO on the implementation of joint programmes and we would be pleased to engage in such co-operation with the Council of Europe on all matters pertaining to humanitarian issues. We people of culture represent, I hope, peace and not war. That is what is important.

## **Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva**

*First Lady of Azerbaijan and President of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Goodwill*

*Ambassador of UNESCO and ISESCO*

*(written contribution)*

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Establishing and developing dialogue between various civilisations and nations in the globalising world became one of the most important issues of the 21st century. Naturally, dialogue is a very important means of solving existing problems and conflicts, and it promotes mutual respect between various cultures. In this context the organisation of a conference dedicated to intercultural dialogue is a great success for both European countries and their neighbours.

Multiethnic Azerbaijan, being situated at the crossroads between East and West, made a valuable contribution to developing intercultural dialogue. I am confident that the conference organised in our country will mark a new stage of promotion of intercultural dialogue and will attract the countries of Europe and their neighbours to this process of co-operation. By participating in this conference you establish the basis of the "Baku process" that is the continuation of activities of the Council of Europe aimed at promoting intercultural dialogue. I believe that this process will lead to more practical activities and co-operation between countries and international organisations in the field of intercultural dialogue.

I fully support and consider important the implementation of the Artists for Dialogue initiative proposed by the Azerbaijani side at the conference. This project will serve to attract artists and creative persons from Europe and its neighbouring countries, and to promote intercultural dialogue.

I hope that as a result of the conference all targets will be reached that would lead to developing intercultural dialogue. I congratulate all participants on this historical and cultural event and wish them every success.



## **Appendix I**

### **List of participants**





**Conference of Ministers Responsible for Culture  
2-3 December 2008, Baku, Azerbaijan**

**List of participants**

**Host country**

**Mr Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev**, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
**Mr Abulfas M. Garayev**, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan  
**Ms Sevda Mamedaliyeva**, Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan

**Delegations**

**AUSTRIA**

**Mr Norbert Riedl**, Director, Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture

**BELARUS**

**Mr Vladimir Matveichuk**, Minister of Culture  
**Mr Boris Svetlov**, President of the Belarusian National Culture and Arts University

**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

**Mr Senad Sepic**, Deputy Minister of Culture  
**Mr Edin Veladzic**, Expert and Advisor for European Integration and International Cultural Co-operation

**BULGARIA**

**Mr Ivan Tokadjiev**, Deputy Minister of Culture  
**Ms Deiana Danailova**, Director, European Union and International Relations, Chair of the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe  
**Mr Petar Miladinov**, Head of the EU and International Organizations Unit

**CROATIA**

**Mr Božo Biškupić**, Minister of Culture  
**Ms Nina Obuljen**, State Secretary  
**Ms Jasminka Lokas-Strpić**, Director of International Cultural Cooperation  
**Mr Krešimir Partl**, Head of the Minister's Cabinet  
**Mr Gordan Bakota**, Ambassador of Croatia to Turkey & the Republic of Azerbaijan

**CYPRUS**

**Ms Eleni S. Nikita**, Director of Cultural Services

**CZECH REPUBLIC**

**Mr František Mikeš**, Vice-Minister of Culture  
**Ms Magdalena Boučková**, Ministry of Culture  
**Ms Ilona Šprcová**, *interpreter*

**DENMARK**

**Mr Arnold Christian de Fine Skibsted**, Ambassador for Human Rights  
**Mr Jens Juul Petersen**, Specialist, Danish Centre for Culture and Development

**EGYPT**

**Mr Farouk Hosni**, Minister of Culture  
**Mr Anwar Mahmoud**, Secretary to the Minister  
**Mr Hussam Saac Zaghoul Nassar**, Advisor to the Minister  
**Mr Mohamed Ghoneim**, Advisor to the Minister

**ESTONIA**

**Mr Siim Sukles**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture  
**Ms Anne-Ly Reimaa**, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture

**FINLAND**

**Mr Kimmo Aulake**, Deputy Head of Division, Directorate General for Cultural, Youth and Sports Policy, Ministry of Education and Culture

**FRANCE**

**Mr Vincent Lorenzini**, Head of Mission for Central Europe, the Orient, the Baltic States, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Council of Europe  
**Mr Gabriel Keller**, Ambassador of France in Azerbaijan  
**Mr Hugues Baltzinger**, Counsellor, Embassy of France in Azerbaijan  
**Mr Luc Aubry**, Cultural Attaché, Embassy of France in Azerbaijan  
**Mrs Bilijana Keller**, Chargé de mission, Embassy of France in Azerbaijan

**GEORGIA**

**Mr David Jalagania**, Deputy Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport  
**Mr Vazha Shatberashvili**, Chief Specialist of the Cultural Heritage Department

**GERMANY**

**Mr Werner Wnendt**, Director for Culture and Communication, Federal Foreign Office  
**Ms Christine M. Merkel**, Head of Division for Culture, Vice-Chair of the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe  
**Mr Hans-Josef Over**, Deputy Head of Mission of the German Embassy in Baku  
**Mr Peer C. Stanchina**, Ambassador, German Embassy, Azerbaijan  
**Mr Elmar Jakobs**, Advisor, Federal Foreign Office

**GREECE**

**Ms Zoé Kazazaki**, Head of the Department of International Relations, Ministry of Culture

**HOLY SEE**

**Monsignor Claudio Gugerotti**, Apostolic Nuncio in Azerbaijan  
**Rev Fr Jean-Marie Laurent Mazas**, Official of the Pontifical Council for Culture  
**Ms Jeanine Siat**, Representative of the Pontifical Council for Culture

**HUNGARY**

**Mr Ferenc Csák**, State Secretary  
**Ms Edit Székely**, Adviser  
**Mr Ivan Ronai**, Deputy Head of Department

**ISRAEL**

**Mr Arthur Lenk**, Ambassador of Israel to Azerbaijan

**ITALY**

**Mr Giuseppe Proietti**, Secretary General of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities  
**Mr Patrizio Fondi**, Diplomatic Adviser  
**Mr Gian Luigi Mascia**, Ambassador of Italy to Azerbaijan  
**Mr Giovanni Scopa**, Embassy of Italy in Azerbaijan

**JORDAN**

**Ms Nancy Bakir Naguez**, Minister of Culture  
**Mr Adel Al-Adaylah**, Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Jordan  
**Ms Rula Awad**, Director of the Cultural Exchange Directorate

**KAZAKHSTAN**

**Mr Askar Buribayev**, Deputy Minister of Culture

**KYRGYZSTAN**

**Mr Sultan Raev**, Minister of Culture and Information  
**Mr Mustafa Bashkurt**

**LITHUANIA**

**Mr Jonas Jučas**, Minister of Culture  
**Ms Jurate Baubliene**, Chief Officer, Foreign Affairs Department

**MALAYSIA**

**Mr Boon Soon Teng**, Deputy Minister of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage  
**Mr Salehuddin Md. Salleh**, Director, Department of National Culture and Arts, Sabah  
**Ms Ramlah Amir**, Senior Principal Assistant Secretary, Planning and Coordination

**MALTA**

**Mr Adrian Mamo**, Chairman, Council for Culture and the Arts

**MOLDOVA**

**Mr Artur Cozma**, Minister of Culture and Tourism  
**Mr Andrei Chistol**, Head of International Relations and European Integration Unit

**MOROCCO**

**Ms Touria Jabrane Kryatif**, Minister of Culture  
**Mr Hassan Najmi**, Head of Department, Ministry of Culture  
**Mr Mohamed Bantalhadan**, Poet

**NETHERLANDS**

**Mr Jan Cornelius Henneman**, Acting Director General for Regional Policy and Consular Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**Mr Hugo Brouwer**, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**NORWAY**

**Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen**, State Secretary of Culture  
**Ms Antoaneta Hansteen**, Advisor

**POLAND**

**Mr Bogdan Zdrojewski**, Minister of Culture and National Heritage  
**Mr Jacek Weksler**, Head of the Political Cabinet  
**Ms Hanna Jedras**, Head of Section  
**Mr Aleksander Jakimowicz**, *interpreter*

**QATAR**

**Mr Hamad Abdulaziz Al-Kavari**, Minister of Culture, Art and Heritage  
**Mr Saad Tamer Al-Humaydi**  
**Mr Musa Zeynal Al-Zeynal**  
**Mr Ahmad Abdullah Al-Suleyti**  
**Mr Ahmad Avvad Yusif**

**ROMANIA**

**Mr Virgil Stefan Nitulescu**, Secretary General, Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs  
**Mr Lucian Stefan**, Counsellor

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

**Mr Alexander Avdeyev**, Minister of Culture and Mass Communication  
**Mrs Zilya Valeyeva**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture of Tatarstan  
**Mr Mikhail Shvydkoy**, President's Special Envoy for Cultural Co-operation  
**Mr Lev Dzugaev**, Minister's Adviser  
**Mr Georgy Roshchin**, Representative of the Russian Orthodox Church

**SAUDI ARABIA**

**Mr Iyad Bin Ameen Madani**, Minister of Culture and Information  
**Mr Tofiq Abdullayev**, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Saudi Arabia  
**Mr Abdulla Saad Al Alghamdi**  
**Mr Abu Bakr Ahmad Bagader**  
**Mr Fal Mohammed Yahya Khaled**

**SENEGAL**

**Mr Dia Abdoulahi**, Consultant

**SERBIA**

**Mr Nebojsa Bradic**, Minister of Culture

**Mr Branislav Dimitrijevic**, Assistant Minister of Culture

**Ms Ivana Zecevic**, Advisor, Department for International Relations, European Integrations and Cultural Management

**SLOVAK REPUBLIC**

**Mr Jozef Augustín Lang**, Deputy Minister of Culture

**SLOVENIA**

**Mrs Sonja Kralj-Bervar**, Head of Department for European Affairs and Cultural Development

**Mr Dušan Kramberger**, Secretary, Directorate for Cultural Heritage

**Mr Borut Penko**, Secretary, Department for Promotion and International Co-operation

**SPAIN**

**Mr Fernando Gómez Riesco**, Deputy Director General for International Cultural Co-operation

**Mrs Josefina López Conejos**, Technical Counsellor for International Cultural Co-operation

**SWITZERLAND**

**Mr Alain Guidetti**, Ambassador of Switzerland to Azerbaijan

**TAJIKISTAN**

**Mr Mirzoshohruh Asrori**, Minister of Culture

**Mr Mirzobadal Badalov**, Head of Publication, Printing Industry and Press Board

**"THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA"**

**Mr Dragan Nedeljkovikj**, Deputy Minister of Culture

**Mr Boris Josifovski**, Counsellor

**Ms Jovanka Gjorgjeska**, Counsellor for Cultural Policies and Cultural Development

**TURKEY**

**Mr Ertuğrul Günay**, Minister of Culture and Tourism

**Mr Kemal Fahır Genç**, Deputy Undersecretary

**Mr Mesut Özbek**, Head of Foreign Relations and EU Coordination Department

**Mr İrfan Sezer**, *Security*

**UKRAINE**

**Mr Tymofii Kokhan**, Deputy Minister of Culture

**UNITED KINGDOM**

**Mr Bruce George**, Member of Parliament

**UNITED STATES**

**Ms Alina L. Romanowski**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Professional and Cultural Exchanges in the Department of State

**UZBEKISTAN**

**Mr Ismatulla Irgashev**, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan

**Mr Bahadır Umarov**, Counsellor of the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan

## **International organisations and institutions**

### **ARAB LEAGUE EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZATION (ALECSO)**

**Mr Mongi Bousnina**, Director General

### **BRITISH COUNCIL**

**Ms Rosemary Arnott**, Director of Turkey and Black Sea Region

### **EUROMED PLATFORM**

**Ms Gerarda Ventura**, Vice-President

### **EUROPA NOSTRA**

**Ms Irina Subotić**, Council Member and Serbia President, Europa Nostra and Europa Nostra Serbia

### **EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

**Mr Alan Waddams**, Head of European Commission Office in Baku

### **RESEARCH CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE (IRCICA)**

**Mr Halit Eren**, Director

### **ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (ISESCO)**

**Mr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri**, Director General

**Mr Ahmed Saïd Ould Bah**, Head of the Cabinet of the Director General

**Mr Najib Rhiati**, Director of Culture and Communication

**Mr Mohamed Riffi**, Division of Protocol and Public Relations

**Mr Abdelilah Banarafa**, Specialist

### **ISLAMIC CONFERENCE YOUTH FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION (ICYF-DC)**

**Mr Elshad Iskandarov**, Secretary General

**Mr Ali Sarikaya**, President

**Mr Alpay Ahmadov**, Regional Director

**Ms Sevinj Iskandarova**, Regional Office, Baku

**Mr Elmaddin Mehdiyev**, Assistant to Secretary General

### **TURKSOY**

**Mr Dussanbay Kasseinov**, Director General

### **UN ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS**

**Mr Marc Scheuer**, Director of the Secretariat of the UN Alliance of Civilizations

### **UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)**

**Ms Katérina Stenou**, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue

## Special guests

**Ms Sevinj Bagirova**, Women of Azerbaijan

**Mr Gilberto Gribaudo**, Network Director, Euronews

**Mr Rustam Ibrahimbekov**, Oscar laureate

**Mr Michael Nobel**, Chairman of the Nobel Charitable Trust

**Mr Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini**, Chairman, ISESCO Council for Education and Culture in the West; Vice-President, COREIS. Islamic Religious Community of Italy

**Mr Mikhail Qusman**, Deputy Director General of ITAR-Tass News Agency, Azerbaijan

**Mr Olzhas Suleimenov**, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to UNESCO

**Mr Krzysztof Zanussi**, Film director, Poland

## Experts

**Mr Robin Wilson**

**Ms Danielle Cliche-Torkler**

**Mr Carsten Paludan-Müller**

## Council of Europe

### Committee of Ministers

**Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme**, Director General, Cultural Policy and Industry, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers

### Parliamentary Assembly

**Mr Rafael Huseynov**, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Committee on Culture, Science and Education

### Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

**Mr Farid Mukhametshin**, Vice-Chair of the Congress Committee on Culture and Education, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe<sup>38</sup>

### Council of Europe Secretariat

**Right Honourable Terry Davis**, Secretary General

**Mr Patrick Penninckx**, Special Adviser

**Ms Veronika Kotek**, Special Representative of the Secretary General to Azerbaijan

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38. Accompanying Mr Farid Mukhametshin:

Mr Mikhail Stolyarov, Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative of the Republic of Tatarstan to the President of the Russian Federation

Mr Oleg Gavrilov, Advisor to the President of the Republic of Tatarstan Parliament on international issues

Mr Marat Khasanov, Assistant to the President of the Republic of Tatarstan Parliament on international issues

Mr Dmitry Vtorov, TV presenter of the Tatarstan regional TV channel

Mr Eduard Mukhametyanov, Expert of the Mass Media Department under the President of the Republic of Tatarstan Parliament.

*Directorate General IV – Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport*

**Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni**, Director General of DG IV and Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe

**Mr Robert Palmer**, Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage  
**Mr Daniel Thérond**, Deputy Director  
**Ms Kathrin Merkle**, Head of Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue Division  
**Ms Irena Guidikova**, Head of Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue Division  
**Mr Gianluca Silvestrini**, Head of Technical Assistance Division  
**Ms Marie-Pierre Fronteau**, Secretariat Assistant  
**Ms Sarah Humble**, Secretariat Assistant  
**Ms Myriam Petit**, Secretariat Assistant  
**Ms Janis Symons**, Secretariat Assistant

*Directorate of Legal Advice and International Law*

**Mr Daniele Cangemi**, Legal Advice Division

*Directorate of Communication*

**Mr Ulvi Akhundlu**, Press Officer

**European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre),  
Lisbon**

**Ms Fifi Benaboud**, Transmediterranean and Intercultural Dialogue Programme  
Co-ordinator

**Interpreters**

**Mr Jan Krotki**  
**Mrs Jeanine Charobim-Decerle**  
**Mrs Anne-Marie Arbaji-Sfeir**  
**Mrs Irène Markowicz**  
**Mrs Mehriban Van de Griendt**  
**Mr Matin Akhundlu**  
**Mr Salim Ghostne**  
**Mrs Chirine Haidar Ahmad**  
**Mr Seymour Balammadov**  
**Mr Nikolay Zaytsev**

**CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURE:  
SELECTED BIOGRAPHIES**

**AZERBAIJAN**

**Mr Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan**

Born in 1961 Mr Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev received a PhD in history in 1985. From 1985 to 1990, he lectured at the Moscow State University of International Relations. From 1994 to 2003, he was the Vice-President of the State Oil Company of the Republic of Azerbaijan (SOCAR). Since 1997, Mr Aliyev has been the President of the National Olympic Committee of Azerbaijan. For his great contribution to the development of sports and the Olympic movement he was awarded the highest order of the International Olympic Committee and "Grand Cordon" Order of Merit of the International Military Sport Council. He is also the author of many research works on geopolitical aspects of oil strategy of sovereign Azerbaijan. In 2003, Mr Aliyev was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. In April 2004, he was awarded a medal and a diploma as honorary member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe for active participation in Assembly events and commitment to European values. In 2008, Mr Aliyev was elected for a second term as the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

**Mr Abulfas M. Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism**

Born in 1956

Mr Abulfas M. Garayev studied at the University of Foreign Languages and Pedagogy, Baku, Azerbaijan from 1973 to 1978. He went to the Academy of Social Sciences in Moscow from 1989 to 1992. Mr Garayev has been Minister of Culture and Tourism since 31 January 2006. Previously, he was Minister of Youth, Sport and Tourism from 2001 to 2006. From 1993 to 1994, he worked as the Director General of the "Improtexs Commers" company and as a lecturer at the University of Politology and State Administration, Department of Culture in 1992 and 1993. He also published various articles on the "Cultural aspects of Azerbaijani Diaspora from 1918 to 1930".



## **BELARUS**

### **Mr Vladimir Matveichuk, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1950

Mr Vladimir Matveichuk completed studies in education, sociology and administration. His background (1968 to 2004) comprised professional (pedagogical) activity, managing positions in local governments and industry. After heading the National TV and Radio Company from 2004 to 2005, he was appointed Minister of Culture on 22 December 2005.

## **BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

### **Mr Senad Šepić, Deputy Minister of Culture**

Born in 1977

Mr Senad Šepić earned a BA degree from the Department of History at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Sarajevo in 2003. In 2002, he attended The Media Plan High College of Journalism, where he studied journalism and communication. At the moment, he is pursuing graduate studies in the History of State and Law at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Sarajevo. During the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002 and 2006, he was elected to the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Mr Šepić is the President of the Association of SDA Youth, and a member of the SDA Presidency in the second mandate.

## **BULGARIA**

### **Mr Ivan Danev Tokadjiev, Deputy Minister of Culture**

Born in 1952

Mr Ivan Danev Tokadjiev graduated from the National Academy of Fine Arts (Sofia) in 1978. From 1978 to 1986, he worked as a production designer for the Bulgarian National Television (Regional TV Centre – Rousse). He was Head Artist and Designer of the Rousse Municipality for eight years beginning in 1986. He has been a Municipal Counsellor and a Deputy Chairman of the Rousse Municipal Council. In 1995, Mr Tokadjiev became Executive Director of Bulgarian National Television, and from 1996 to 1997 he took up the post of Director General of National Television. He was Executive Director of M-SAT Television for the period 2001-2005.

## **CROATIA**

### **Mr sc. Božo Biškupić, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1938

Minister of Culture of the Republic of Croatia in the third mandate, Mr Božo Biškupić earned his Master's degree in Museology after completing studies in the Faculty of Law at the University of Zagreb. Mr Biškupić became a member of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) in 1990, and has held several prominent positions within the party (Secretary for International Relations, member of the HDZ Presidency and member of HDZ National Council). His professional career includes the foundation of the Biškupić Collection in 1964. He has published and edited more than a hundred literary and fine arts bibliophile editions of domestic and foreign authors. Mr Biškupić is the recipient of numerous national and international awards, such as the most important Croatian award in the field of culture – the Annual Vladimir Nazor Award – received in 1993, and UNESCO's medal for promoting the ideals of the organisation in 2006.

### **Ms Nina Obuljen, State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture**

Ms Nina Obuljen, State Secretary at the Croatian Ministry of Culture, graduated both from the Academy of Music and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Zagreb. Until her appointment as Assistant Minister of Culture in 2006, she worked as a research fellow at the Institute for International Relations in Zagreb, Croatia. Ms Obuljen is the author of several articles in the field of cultural policy focusing in particular on the issues of the EU integration, transformations of cultural policies and cultural diversity. In July 2004, Ms Obuljen was

awarded the European Cultural Policy Research Award for her research on the impact of the EU enlargement on cultural policies. Ms Obuljen has been the chairperson of the Cultural Council for International Relations and European Integration. She was head of the Croatian delegation for the negotiations on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and today represents Croatia in the Intergovernmental Committee.

## **CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **JUDr František Mikeš, Vice-Minister of Culture**

Mr František Mikeš graduated from the Law Faculty of Charles University, Prague. He, then took courses at the Teacher Training Faculty in České Budějovice. He also attended postgraduate courses on the topic of legislation at the Law Faculty of Charles University, Prague and postgraduate courses on regional development and European funds at the University of Economics, Prague. Until 1989, he held various positions at the Jihočeské papírny paper mills. His last position was Deputy Head Teacher of a Vocational Training School. In 1990, he took up the post of Deputy Head of the District Office in Český Krumlov, becoming Head of Office in 1993. Following the abolition of district offices, he became involved in local politics and in 2002, he was elected Mayor of Český Krumlov. He did not run in the 2006 elections.

## **EGYPT**

### **Mr Farouk Hosni, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1938

Mr Farouk Abd-El-Aziz Hosni is an Egyptian artist. Since 1987, he has been the Minister of Culture of Egypt. He is the longest-serving Cabinet member of the Mubarak era. Before this position he worked as the Director of the Egyptian Academy in Rome.

## **ESTONIA**

### **Mr Siim Sukles, Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture**

Born in 1972

From 1994 to 2000, Mr Siim Sukles went to Veritas University where he received a Bachelor of Law degree. Since 2002, he has been studying for an MBA at Tartu University. From 1997 to 2000, he was the Managing Director for the Estonian Olympic Committee. In 2001 and 2002, he worked as a Deputy Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture. Since 2002, he has been Secretary General of the Ministry of Culture.

## **GEORGIA**

### **Mr David Jalagania, Deputy Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport**

Born in 1963

Mr David Jalagania earned a PhD from the Georgian Technical University. From 1998 to 2000, he worked as a Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Trade and Foreign Economic Relations of Georgia. From 2006 to 2008, he held the position of Director of the Department of EU Integration within the Georgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 2008, he has been the Deputy Minister of Culture, Monuments Protection and Sport of Georgia.

## **HUNGARY**

### **Mr Ferenc Csák, Senior State Secretary of Ministry of Education and Culture**

Born in 1974

Mr Ferenc Csák completed PhD studies on the "Effects of the Enlargement of the European Union on the Regional Development of Eastern European Countries. A Path to the Regions" at the Faculty of Political Science, University of Regensburg between 2002 and 2006. From 2005 to 2006, he was Prime Minister's envoy, co-ordinator of the EU Region West/Western Pannonia co-operation. Since 2006, he has been working within the Prime Minister's Office as the Political State Secretary for European and Development Affairs, and within the Ministry of

Education and Culture as the Governmental Coordinator for the Pécs 2010 European Capital of Culture Program.

## **JORDAN**

### **Ms Nancy Bakir Naguez, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1952

Ms Nancy Bakir Naguez did her postgraduate studies in administrative and educational development at Boston University and in 1975 earned a diploma in languages from the USSR. Ms Bakir Naguez headed the scholarship department at the Civil Service Bureau, and was Secretary General of the Higher Education Council. She served as Adviser to the Secretary General of the Higher Council for Science and Technology (HCST), and later became HCST Assistant Secretary General.

## **LITHUANIA**

### **Mr Jonas Jučas, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1952

Mr Jonas Jučas studied at the Kaunas Polytechnic Institute (presently Kaunas University of Technology) from 1970 to 1972. In 1982, he graduated from the Lithuanian Conservatoire of State. In 1991, he founded and worked as the Art Director of the International Jazz Festivals "Kaunas Jazz". He worked as the Head of the Division of Culture of Kaunas City Municipal Administration between 1996 and 1998. From 2000 to 2004, Mr Jučas was a Member of the Seimas, Chairman of the Subcommittee of the Committee of Education, Science and Culture and Chairman of the Interparliamentary Group with Japan and member of the Baltic Assembly. He was awarded the medal of the Baltic Assembly for works and activity (2004). He received the letter of appreciation from the Chairman of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania (2003, 2005).

## **MALAYSIA**

### **The Honourable Mr Boon Soon Teng, Deputy Minister of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage**

Born in 1941

The Honourable Mr Boon Soon Teng was appointed as Malaysia's Deputy Minister of Unity, Culture, Arts and Heritage in March 2008. He is now in his second term as a Member of Parliament for the parliamentary constituency of Tebrau in the state of Johor, his home state. Before his interest in politics he was a teacher in various secondary schools and at a teacher training college. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree (Honours) in 1976 from the Science University of Malaysia, majoring in Social Science and Economics. Mr Teng is very active in social work, holding high-level positions within the Malaysian Chinese Association, a political party of which he has been an affiliate since 1972.

## **MOLDOVA**

### **Mr Artur Cozma, Minister of Culture and Tourism**

Born in 1967

Mr Artur Cozma graduated from the State University of "M.V. Lomonosov" in Moscow, Department of History. He followed post-graduate studies from 1991 to 1993 at the National School of Political and Administrative Studies in Bucharest. From 1993 to 1995, he was the First Secretary of the UN Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova, and from 1995 to 1998 the First Secretary of the Embassy of the Republic of Moldova in Romania. From 1999 to 2000, he acted as an Adviser on Special Missions and Protocol of the President of the Republic of Moldova. In the period 2000 to 2001, his career continued as Head of the General Department of the State Diplomatic Protocol Service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Upon the confidence vote of the Parliament, and by Decree of the President of the Republic of Moldova, of 19 April 2005, he was named Minister of Culture and Tourism.

## **NORWAY**

### **Mr Halvard Ingebrigtsen, State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs**

Born in 1970

Having served as the Acting State Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs since October 2006, Mr Ingebrigtsen was appointed to the office of State Secretary on 1 June 2007. From 2003 to 2005, he was Political Adviser to the Labour Party's parliamentary group. Mr Ingebrigtsen graduated from the BI Norwegian School of Management. He has held both the positions of Office Manager (1996-1998) and Secretary General (1998-2002) of the *AUF*, the youth league of the Norwegian Labour Party. As State Secretary of the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs, Mr Ingebrigtsen's portfolio includes the arts/culture, the Church of Norway, sports and the ministry's fiscal budget co-ordination.

## **POLAND**

### **Mr Bogdan Zdrojewski, Minister of Culture and National Heritage**

Born in 1957

Mr Bogdan Zdrojewski graduated in philosophy (1983) and cultural studies (1985) from Wroclaw University. The first Mayor of Wroclaw after the fall of communism, he held this position for eleven years from 5 June 1990. He gained great popularity among Wroclaw residents during the great flood in 1997, when he personally managed and supervised the rescue action. From 2006 to 2007, he was chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Civic Platform. He was appointed Minister of Culture and National Heritage on 16 November 2007. He received the "Sancti Silvestri" order from Pope John Paul II in 1998, Federal Cross I Class (Das Verdienstkreuz 1 Klasse), the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany in 2001, and the Golden Cross of Merit from the President of Poland in 2002. In 1997, Bogdan Zdrojewski was the first laureate of the Andrzej Baczkowski Award for an "exemplary public service officer during daily work and crisis". He won the prestigious Leader of Europe award in 1998 and has received several awards for his publications concerning local government activities.

## **RUSSIAN FEDERATION**

### **Mr Alexander Alexeyevich Avdeyev, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1946

Mr Avdeyev graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MID) of the Soviet Union in 1968. From 1977 to 1985, Mr Avdeyev served as First and Second Secretary in the Embassy of the Soviet Union in France. In December 1991, he became deputy to the Minister of External Relations of the Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze. On 12 May 2008, Mr Avdeyev was appointed Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation. Moreover, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev has expanded the functions of the Ministry of Culture by assigning it the service of supervising the observance of legislation related to the protection of cultural artifacts and the Archival Agency, as well as the activities of the former Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography.

## **SERBIA**

### **Mr Nebojša Bradić, Minister of Culture**

Born in 1956

Mr Nebojša Bradić is a theatre director. He graduated from the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade with the staging of Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House". During his postgraduate studies, he attended the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade. He designated the outlines of repertory characteristic of contemporary European theatres, which is referred to as Atelje 212 Theatre, a spirit of modern management that would be evident not only in this theatre, but also in the theatrical life of the capital city. Since 2000, he has been the general and artistic director of the Belgrade Drama Theatre, and since July 2008 he has held the position of the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Serbia. He has directed approximately seventy performances in many Serbian theatres, as well as Bosnian, Greek and Croatian theatres. He is the founder of

the Belgrade Dance Festival, as well as a professor of acting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade.

#### **“THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA”**

##### **Mr Dragan Nedeljkovik, Deputy Minister of Culture**

Born in 1964

Mr Dragan Nedeljkovik graduated from the University of Agriculture in Skopje which is part of the University “St. Cyril and Metodij” in 1990. From 2003 to 2006, he worked as the Director of the office for the development and improvement of the education of ethnic communities within the Ministry of Education and Science.

#### **TURKEY**

##### **Mr Ertuğrul Günay, Minister of Culture and Tourism**

Born in 1948

Mr Ertuğrul Günay graduated from the Faculty of Law of Istanbul in 1969. He worked as a lawyer in Ordu in the 1970s. He held the post of CHP provincial chairman in Ordu between 1974 and 1977. Mr Günay represented Ordu as deputy in the Parliament between 1977 and 1980. He was SHP provincial chairman in Ankara between 1986 and 1987 and Deputy Secretary General between 1990 and 1991. Mr Günay held the position of Secretary General from 1992 until 1994. He has led many civil movements, such as the Initiative of Humanity for Bosnia, the Eastern Conference, and the New Politics Initiative. He is the author of two published books: *Bosnia Chronicles* and *Opposite Politics*. His articles and interviews regarding law and politics have been published in various newspapers, periodicals and magazines.

#### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**

##### **ALECSO**

##### **Professor Dr Mongi Bousnina, Director General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation**

Born in Tunis

Dr Mongi Bousnina graduated from the Higher School of Teacher Training in Paris Saint-Cloud, France, and the Political Sciences Institute, in Paris. He holds a Doctorat d'Etat degree in Literature and Human Sciences from the Sorbonne University, Paris. He has assumed several high-level responsibilities, including those of Minister of State for Education, Minister of Culture, Ambassador to Morocco and to France, World Bank expert, United Nations expert, UNESCO expert, and League of Arab States expert. Dr. Bousnina has participated in several conferences and symposia, in Tunisia and abroad, on issues related to education, culture, youth, information and human development, and has published a number of articles and books related to the state of education, culture and science in Arab countries, and on the issue of civilisational dialogue and cultural diversity.

##### **ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS**

##### **Mr Marc Scheuer, Director of the Secretariat of the Alliance of Civilizations**

Mr Marc Scheuer is the Director of the Secretariat of the Alliance of Civilizations, a political initiative under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary General. The Alliance of Civilizations aims to improve understanding and co-operation across cultures and religions and helps counter the forces that fuel polarisation and extremism. Most of his previous activity has been with the Council of Europe, where he notably was Director of Political Advice and Co-operation, and most recently, Director of the Office of the Human Rights Commissioner.

## **ISESCO**

### **Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Director General of ISESCO**

Born in 1950

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri holds an MA in Applied Linguistics (1977) and a PhD in Curriculum Studies (1982), University of Oregon, United States. From 1985 to 1991, he worked as the Deputy Director General for Culture, ISESCO, and was unanimously elected Director General of the organisation in November 1991 for three years. He was re-elected up until December 2003. He is the Executive Director of *Islam Today*, an Islamic academic journal published in Arabic, English and French; and *Al Jamia*, a journal published by the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World. He is the author of numerous educational and cultural monographs and research papers, as well as numerous articles published in leading magazines.

## **UNESCO**

### **Ms Katérina Stenou, Director of the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue at UNESCO**

Ms. Katérina Stenou holds a PhD (defended at La Sorbonne, Université Paris VI in 1990) dedicated to the schooling and cultural behaviour of the young Greek immigrant population in Belgium. She was in charge of the co-ordination of consultations on the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted in 2001 as well as on the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, adopted in 2005. She is Coordinator of the Task Force on Dialogue among Cultures at UNESCO and Focal Point for the Alliance of Civilizations. As a member of various research institutes devoted to cultural pluralism, intercultural relations and the links between diversity, dialogue and development, Ms Stenou participates regularly in symposia, conferences and round tables dealing with these topics. Her publications are dedicated to issues concerning the formulation of policies to respond to the challenges of today's multicultural societies.

## **SPECIAL GUESTS**

### **Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva Arif gizi, First Lady of Azerbaijan**

Born in Baku

In 1988, Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva graduated with an honorary diploma from the First Moscow State Medical Institute named after M. Sechenov. Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva heads the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, founded to study the rich legacy of the leader of Azerbaijan, as well as to suggest national statehood ideas to new generations. Due to her determined efforts to protect and develop Azerbaijan's oral folk literature and musical heritage, Mrs Mehriban Aliyeva was awarded the title of Goodwill Ambassador of UNESCO on 13 August 2004. On 24 November 2006, she was awarded the title of Goodwill Ambassador of ISESCO for her large scale and selfless activity in different spheres, including the dialogue among civilisations, attention to children in need, support to improve their living conditions, education and other works carried out in the Islamic world.

### **Mr Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini, Vice-President and Imam of the COREIS (Comunità Religiosa Islamica) and President of the Higher Council of ISESCO for Education and Culture in the West**

Born in 1965

Mr Yahya Sergio Yahe Pallavicini was made a member of the National Committee for Intercultural Education of the Ministry for Education, Universities and Research in 1997. ISESCO appointed him to the board of governors of the Higher Council for Education in the West and the EIC (European Islamic Conference), the first Islamic NGO recognised by the European Union, and conferred on him the function of ambassador for relations with the Vatican and then made him responsible for international relations. At present he is Vice-President of the COREIS. (Comunità Religiosa Islamica) Italiana, on behalf of which he has met the King of Morocco, Hassan II, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, and the Libyan Head of State, Muammar al-Gaddafi, as well as the ministers of religious affairs of various Middle Eastern and South-East Asian countries.

### **Mr Olzhas Suleimenov, Poet, Politician, and Kazakhstani Ambassador to UNESCO**

Born in 1936

Mr Olzhas Suleimenov graduated from the Geological Sciences Department of the Kazakh State University in 1959. Between 1962 and 1971, he worked at *Kazakhskaya Pravda*. He became the First Secretary of the Committee of the Kazakhstan's Writers Union in 1983. His most influential work *AZ-i-IA* (1975) drew wide-scale criticism from the literary elite in Russia. Mr Suleimenov again became a worldwide name in 1989, when he led the establishment of the international environmental movement Nevada-Semipalatinsk in Kazakhstan. After independence, Mr Suleimenov established the Peoples' Congress party in 1991 and served as the speaker of Parliament until 1994. He was then appointed as Kazakhstan's ambassador to Rome. Currently, he serves as Kazakhstani ambassador to UNESCO.

## COUNCIL OF EUROPE BODIES

### COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS

#### **Mr Guillermo Corral Van Damme, representing the Spanish Chair of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe**

Born in 1971

Mr Corral Van Damme holds a degree in Law from the University of Valladolid, where he was first in his year and has been a member of the Diplomatic Corps since July 1997. He has been stationed at the Spanish diplomatic representations in Turkey, for Political and Consular Affairs; in Tanzania, as Head of Business *ad interim* and subsequently as Deputy Chief of Mission. He has also worked at the Office of the Permanent Representation of Spain to the European Union (REPER), as the Spanish representative in the Council groups in charge of relations with the European Union, the United States, Asia and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). He has also subsequently held the posts of Director of International and Institutional Relations at Casa Sefarad-Israel and is an advisory member for international affairs in the Ministry of Culture.

### PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

#### **Mr Rafael Huseynov, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Mr Huseynov is a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe within the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Since 2006, he has been a Representative member of the Assembly. Mr Huseynov also holds a position as a Member of Parliament in several committees such as the Committee on Culture, Science and Education, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights and the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs.

### CONGRESS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

#### **Mr Farid Mukhametshin, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe**

Born in 1947

Mr Farid Mukhametshin is a Tatarstan diplomat and the former Prime Minister of Tatarstan. He has been the Chair of the State Council of the Tatarstan Republic since 27 May 1998.

### COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT

#### **Right Honourable Terry Davis, Secretary General**

As Secretary General of the Council of Europe, the Right Honourable Terry Davis is a major political figure in Europe. His election to this position by parliamentarians from 45 member states in 2004 marked the culmination of 28 years in parliament. As a leading member of the United Kingdom delegations to the Council of Europe and Western European Union assemblies from 1993 to 2004 he worked to protect human rights, extend democracy and promote the rule of law. He was appointed to Her Majesty's Privy Council in 1999 in recognition of his services to the Council of Europe.

#### **Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport**

Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni is the Council of Europe's Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport. Since 2005, Ms Battaini-Dragoni has been the Council of Europe's Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue. In this capacity, she has been responsible for the preparation of the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, adopted on 7 May 2008 at ministerial level, the first document of its kind at international level. Ms Battaini-Dragoni is a frequently invited guest speaker at World Bank, UN, OECD, OSCE and EU meetings.



**Mr Robert Palmer, Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage**

Mr Robert Palmer is the Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage at the Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg, France. The Council of Europe's Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage manages more than 50 different work programmes including the monitoring of cultural and heritage policies, capacity building projects and training seminars, and activities linked to cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and major exhibitions. Mr Palmer has worked in the cultural sector for more than twenty years and, prior to joining the Council of Europe in 2006 was an adviser to several cities and regions on cultural development and regeneration, cultural tourism, festivals and arts policies. He has been very involved in European Capitals of Culture and was the Director of two – Glasgow (1990) and Brussels (2000). Robert Palmer is a Board member of various arts institutions and international festivals, the Chair of European arts juries and is regularly asked to speak at international cultural conferences and workshops. He has been given various awards in recognition of his work.



**Appendix II**  
**Reference documents**



## **Baku Declaration**



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Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture  
(Baku, 2-3 December 2008)  
“Intercultural dialogue as a basis for peace and sustainable development in Europe  
and its neighbouring regions”

Baku Declaration for the Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue

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**Firmly based on:**

- the European Convention on Human Rights and other Council of Europe instruments, as well as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action;
- the Declaration and Action Plan of the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe encouraging intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, based on universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society;

**and guided by:**

- the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (May 2008); and
- the global agenda on the Dialogue among Civilisations adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (November 2001),

**We, the participants of the Baku Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture:**

- affirm cultural diversity between and within countries as a common heritage of humankind;
- agree to contribute to sustainable economic, social and personal development, favourable to cultural creativity;
- promote a sustained process of intercultural dialogue, which is essential for international co-operation, with a view to promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law;
- reaffirm the important role of cultural policies at national, regional and local level and their contribution to promoting intercultural dialogue;
- promote intercultural dialogue, including its religious dimension, as a process that requires a coherent interplay between different policy sectors and the full participation of the different stakeholders – including public authorities, the media and civil society.

**We are ready to promote intercultural dialogue as a meaningful practice by:**

- sharing a political vision based on universal, indivisible and interdependent human rights, democracy and the rule of law, in particular through culture and cultural heritage, inside European societies and between Europe and its neighbouring regions;
- seeking to implement the action elements of the Baku Conference at a national level and
- proposing modalities for mainstreaming and follow-up action in this respect as set out in the appendix to this Declaration.

**We, the participants of the Baku Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture:**

- consider that the Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture held in Baku has offered an excellent opportunity to enhance cultural co-operation between Europe and its neighbouring regions; and

- thank the Government of Azerbaijan for hosting this event in a spirit of open dialogue and exchange and with generous hospitality and excellent organisation.

*Appendix to the Declaration*

**Action elements for mainstreaming intercultural dialogue on the basis of the Baku Declaration**

**The ministers responsible for culture, partner organisations and other bodies participating in this conference:**

**A. *agree to strengthen the co-operation process launched in Baku, in the framework of the White Paper, with a view to:***

- wide dissemination of relevant texts such as the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue as tools for further work on intercultural dialogue including with states and partners beyond the Council of Europe’s member states;
- organising joint expert meetings and specific activities in the framework of co-operation agreements between the Council of Europe and the different stakeholders present at the conference in order to continue the reflections started in Baku to develop initiatives and possible joint projects in culture and the arts, which contribute to the promotion of dialogue, peace and sustainable development (see also B below);
- encouraging the signature, ratification and subsequent implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, as well as the Council of Europe’s heritage and landscape conventions;<sup>39</sup>
- further strengthening the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the European Union in order to mutually support the respective policies on intercultural dialogue;
- further strengthening the co-operation between the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE);
- providing support for the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of the United Nations in order to enhance a culture of openness and tolerance built on a shared commitment to universal human rights;
- welcoming the UN Alliance of Civilizations to the “Faro Open Platform” of inter-institutional co-operation for intercultural dialogue between the Council of Europe and UNESCO (Faro, 2005), the request by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) to join the platform, and the possible future accession of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures (ALF);
- considering the prospect of promoting intercultural dialogue on the basis of the Council of Europe’s standards and values through specific activities with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO);

**B. *agree to develop or further strengthen common practical initiatives in the follow-up to the conference, building on already agreed transborder co-operation projects such as:***

- activities developed in the framework of the Kyiv Initiative and the South-East Regional Programme<sup>40</sup> – which provide platforms for plurilateral co-operation, with a view to fostering intercultural dialogue, contributing to the promotion of social and

39. Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (ETS No. 121); European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Revised) (ETS No. 143); European Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176); Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199).

40. The Kyiv Initiative Regional Programme includes Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine; see also <http://www.coe.int/kyiv>. The Regional Programme for Cultural and Natural Heritage in South-East Europe includes nine stakeholders from the region; see also [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/SEE/default_en.asp).



economic development and social cohesion – and the possible launch of similar inter-regional projects;

- exchanges between different networks and groups of local and regional authorities relating to the democratic management of cultural diversity at local level, and to consider extending the Intercultural Cities project<sup>41</sup> to cities from Europe's neighbouring regions with the support of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and other relevant bodies;
- the further development of the Compendium cultural policy information system and the HEREIN cultural heritage information system and the possible access of non-member states of the Council of Europe to these systems;<sup>42</sup>
- cultural initiatives to reinforce the support for existing instruments which assist the mobility of artists, exchanges of works of art and ideas, practically managed in the framework of the Faro Platform, such as the initiative Artists for Dialogue launched by the Government of Azerbaijan;
- further support or development of intercultural competences to facilitate access to works of art and artistic expressions from different cultures;
- adoption of sustainable policies, wherever possible, aimed at heritage rehabilitation and local regeneration in national development strategies as well as heritage education activities;

**C. agree that in the implementation of the above action elements, appropriate steps will be taken at national level and in the context of the following existing Council of Europe co-operation structures and other initiatives:**

- the Steering Committee for Culture (CDCULT) and the Steering Committee for Cultural Heritage and Landscape (CDPATEP);
- specialised structures such as:
  - the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) of the Council of Europe;
  - the European youth centres of the Council of Europe;
  - the European Resource Centre on Education for Intercultural Understanding, Human Rights and Democratic Citizenship (Wergeland Centre);
  - the European Cultural Centre of Delphi;
  - and the European Institute of Cultural Routes;
  - the annual Council of Europe exchanges on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, an innovative initiative to improve understanding, reduce tensions and increase mutual respect within and between societies.

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41. The Intercultural Cities project comprises 12 European cities; see also <http://www.coe.int/interculturalcities>.

42. The Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe, an information system comprising 42 Council of Europe member states, is available at <http://www.culturalpolicies.net>; the European Heritage Network (HEREIN) information system comprises 31 Council of Europe member states and is available at <http://www.european-heritage.net>.



## **Artists for Dialogue initiative**



[www.mct.gov.az](http://www.mct.gov.az)  
[www.coe.int/artistsfordialogue](http://www.coe.int/artistsfordialogue)

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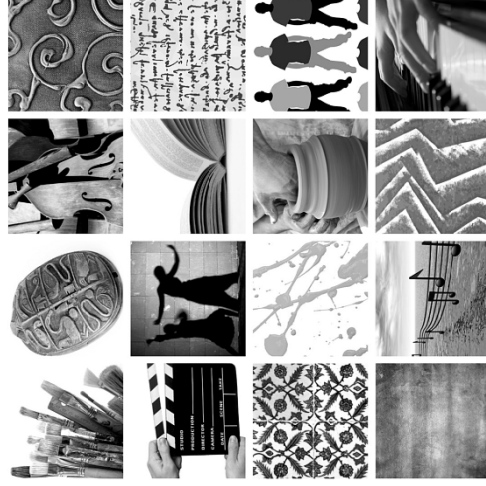
CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR CULTURE

Photos: Shutterstock - Graphic design: Isabelle Carats - November 2008

"Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. Cultural creativity offers significant potential for enhancing the respect of otherness. The arts (...) naturally cross borders and connect and speak directly to people's emotions. Creative citizens, engaged in cultural activity, produce new spaces and potential for dialogue".

*Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, May 2008*

# Artists for Dialogue



**BAKU**  
2/3 December 2008



## AIM OF THE PROPOSED INITIATIVE

"Artists for Dialogue" intends to promote exchanges and joint work between artists representing different cultures, focusing in particular on fostering cultural collaboration between Europe and its neighbouring regions.

The definition of an artist is wide-ranging within the terms of this initiative to include a broad spectrum of individuals and groups who are actively engaged in creative activities relating to the visual arts, performing arts (music, theatre, dance), literary arts and all forms of audio-visual and media creation.

Projects which are supported within "Artists for Dialogue" must aim to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, and to increase co-operation and participation across borders.



## PARTNERS

The "Artists for Dialogue" initiative encourages the building of networking-schemes with different levels of membership and styles of collaboration, allowing interested partners to contribute according to their own priorities.

"Artists for Dialogue" may be developed as a fund and be related to existing co-operation frameworks (such as the Faro Open Platform that currently includes as members the Council of Europe and UNESCO; the co-operation memorandum between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and the co-ordinated activity programme between the Council of Europe and ALECSO). Specific activities are intended to be developed in co-operation with ISESCO. Individual governments through their Ministries of Culture, private foundations and business sponsors will be invited as key partners in "Artists for Dialogue". NGOs, specialist networks and artistic associations will be encouraged to collaborate and share their wisdom.



# Artists for Dialogue

## ACTIONS

"Artists for Dialogue" will be implemented with respect for the principle that artists should enjoy the freedom to create, and will focus on certain priority actions:

- > Emphasis will be given to independent projects that empower individual or groups of artists who specifically wish to foster in collaboration and contribute to joint creative working processes;
- > Attention will be given to artistic projects which help combat discrimination and increase the understanding of the creative expressions of minorities and the creative diversity of society;
- > Initiatives can be included that promote the diversity of cultural expressions within institutional structures and events (such as ministries, cultural centres, museums, galleries and festivals);
- > Particular focus will be put on activities that involve or have a significant impact on children and young people.



## NEXT STEPS

The Conference of Ministers responsible for Culture may take note of the initiative "Artists for Dialogue" in Baku as a practical follow-up to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe. Its full implementation will depend on the dedication to the task and resources made available by interested partners.

A working group, led by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Culture and Tourism, might be created with potential partners. Further mapping of existing related programmes will be undertaken. Following a feasibility study on the setting-up of a fund, a detailed proposal will be prepared concerning the practical operation of "Artists for Dialogue". As a first step, a pilot fund may be created to test projects and approaches.

A project action plan will be released by the Azerbaijani Ministry of Culture and Tourism, reflecting the outcome of explorations and meetings between interested partners.



## **Faro Declaration**





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## 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention (Faro, 27-28 October 2005) – Closing Conference

Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue

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We, the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs of the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, meeting in Faro on 27 and 28 October 2005:

On the basis of the Declaration and Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), at which our Heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to the common values and principles rooted in Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage and expressed their firm belief that education and culture are keys to ensuring the promotion of these values in our societies,

Convinced that the Council of Europe, on the basis of the universal human rights reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the European Convention on Human Rights, has an essential part to play in the systematic development of intercultural dialogue as advocated at the Summit, with a view to both building Europe without dividing lines and promoting dialogue and co-operation with neighbouring regions and the rest of the world,

Drawing on the discussion of the future of cultural co-operation held as part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention, especially the guidelines set out in the Wroclaw Declaration on Fifty Years of Cultural Co-operation, adopted on 9 December 2004, and the conclusions of the colloquy on "European culture: identity and diversity" (Strasbourg, 8-9 September 2005),

Also bearing in mind the conclusions of the conferences of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs on their new role and responsibilities in initiating intercultural dialogue (Opatija, 21-22 October 2003), of European Education Ministers on "Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy" (Athens, 11-12 November 2003) and of European Ministers responsible for Youth on "Human dignity and social cohesion: youth policy responses to violence" (Budapest, 23-24 September 2005), as well as the Kiev initiative resulting from the 5th Ministerial Colloquy of the STAGE Project "Culture and Cultural Policies for Development" (15-16 September 2005),

Aware of our role, within each of our countries and in the dialogue between Europe and the rest of the world, in giving appropriate responses to the major challenges of our multicultural societies,

Wishing, together with senior representatives of the Council of Europe's main partner organisations at international and regional level, to:

- i. assert the political **vision** on which we wish the Council of Europe to base its strategy for developing intercultural dialogue both inside European societies and between Europe and the rest of the world;
- ii. define the **lines of action** on which this strategy should be implemented between the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, through intergovernmental co-operation, and within European societies, using the different facets of the Council of Europe's work and its networks and field contacts;
- iii. extend, as far as possible, implementation of the strategy beyond Europe and set up **instruments** for that purpose;

Adopt this declaration as the basis for our future action in favour of intercultural dialogue and submit it to the 115th Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 16-17 November 2005)

so that it may be implemented by the member states and the appropriate Council of Europe bodies.

## **Part 1: Vision**

We reaffirm our vision based on the principles of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We reject the idea of a clash of civilisations and firmly believe that, on the contrary, increased commitment to cultural cooperation – in the broad sense of the term – and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term, including with respect to the threat of terrorism. We will work towards a true and open dialogue among cultures on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.

We undertake to pursue our efforts in favour of European identity and unity on the basis of shared fundamental values, respect for and valorisation of our common heritage and cultural diversity. At the same time, we will remain open and co-operate with neighbouring regions and the rest of the world.

We are committed in particular to promoting a model of democratic culture, underpinning the law and institutions and actively involving civil society and citizens, and to ensuring that diversity is a source of mutual enrichment, by promoting political, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Access to and participation in cultural life for all – in the sense of the European Cultural Convention – are essential conditions to achieve this aim.

We are also determined to build supportive societies and strengthen cohesion in social, educational and cultural terms. We shall endeavour in particular to create the right conditions for the emergence and development of sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

We forcefully condemn all forms of intolerance and discrimination, especially on the grounds of sex, ethnic origin or religion.

We emphasise that in order to translate this vision into reality, it is essential to strengthen co-operation between the competent international and regional organisations and with civil society – particularly young people – in Europe and beyond. We are committed in particular to intensifying co-operation with the European Union as well as with the OSCE and the United Nations. We underline in this respect the importance of the “Alliance of civilisations” initiative adopted by the United Nations and of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions adopted by UNESCO on 20 October 2005, and we support the European Commission’s proposal to declare 2008 “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”.

## **Part 2: Action**

We shall systematically encourage intercultural dialogue on the basis of universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for the other, of preventing conflicts and of ensuring an integrated and cohesive society.

We stress the importance of closely involving civil society in this dialogue, in which both men and women shall be able to participate on an equal footing. We support the active involvement of parliaments and local and regional authorities in the member states, as well as the role of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to develop contacts and promote best practices in this area.

We undertake to contribute to the swift and effective implementation in the States Parties to the Cultural Convention of the decisions taken at the Warsaw Summit, in particular:

- enhancing all opportunities for the training of educators in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history, intercultural education;
- developing intergovernmental co-operation on democracy and good governance at all levels, and promoting freedom of expression and information and media freedom as a core element of these;
- supporting the Council of Europe’s work on history teaching.

- further developing the Council of Europe’s work on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications and its contribution to the Bologna Process, aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010.

As Ministers of Culture, we shall work more particularly on developing strategies to manage and promote cultural diversity while ensuring the cohesion of our societies.

We shall also endeavour to see that the political will shown at the Summit to engage in a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions – the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia – translates into action, particularly by:

- initiating a process to develop intercultural dialogue through concerted action between the competent international and regional organisations, with the active involvement of the member states concerned and civil society;
- developing human rights, democratic citizenship and civil participation education programmes, as well as intercultural exchanges at secondary school and youth level, both within Europe and with neighbouring countries;
- beginning work on the shared past of Europe and its neighbouring regions, based on the conviction that dialogue between cultures is also fostered by a common understanding of history;
- launching cultural and audiovisual heritage co-operation programmes.

To give an operational basis to this twofold commitment, we shall capitalise on the achievements of 50 years of cultural co-operation, focusing on the following lines of action:

- respect for, and access to cultural rights and the right to education, in order to fight exclusion and build equitable societies, paying particular attention to all vulnerable groups;
- setting up inter-sectoral public policies encouraging cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, as well as language learning and access to information technologies as a means of promoting intercultural exchanges at world level;
- developing the knowledge of history, cultures, arts and religions, and highlighting elements illustrating both the historical and the contemporary influence of cultures and civilisations on each other, as well as cultural cross-fertilisation;
- devising and applying principles and methods for management of the heritage and use of cultural resources as factors for human development and sustainable development;
- supporting cultural and artistic activities and exchanges and recognising the role of artists and creators– as vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding, and introducing incentives to facilitate everyone’s access to and participation in these activities.

### **Part 3: Instruments**

To implement this strategy, we shall build on the standard-setting *aquis* of the Council of Europe in the cultural cooperation and human rights fields, and use the instruments put at our disposal by the Organisation, particularly:

- the European Cultural Convention, as the framework for intergovernmental co-operation between all countries in Europe, as well as the steering committees and mechanisms set up under the Convention. In this respect, we stress the importance of Eurimages – the Council of Europe Fund for the Co-production, Distribution and Exhibition of European Cinematographic Works and we note with interest the opening for signature of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society at Faro;
- the Human Rights Commissioner, whose mandate includes the promotion of education in, awareness of and respect for human rights, as embodied in the Council of Europe human rights’ instruments;

- the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the youth campaign for diversity, human rights and participation, to run from 2006 in the spirit of the “All different, all equal” campaign of 1995, as well as the Euro-Mediterranean activities carried out as part of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union in the youth field;
- the North-South Centre, whose role in promoting intercultural dialogue was recognised by the Warsaw Summit, together with its mission of fostering European awareness of intercultural and development issues. In this connection, we invite states that do not yet take part in the Centre’s activities to consider doing so.

Furthermore, to provide the Council of Europe with the new resources required to implement this strategy, we advocate:

- the launch of a Council of Europe “White paper on integrated policies for the management of cultural diversity through intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention”;
- the setting up of new instruments for intercultural dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions. In this respect, we welcome the first steps in this direction which are:
  - i. the signature of a co-operation memorandum between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures;
  - ii. the setting-up of a co-ordinated activity programme between the Council of Europe and ALECSO in the areas of education, culture, cultural and natural heritage, youth and sport;
  - iii. the creation of a platform for intercultural dialogue and co-operation between the Council of Europe and UNESCO, open to other international or regional partners.

# **Faro Platform**



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**Declaration of Intent on the setting up of an open platform of  
inter-institutional co-operation for intercultural dialogue**  
(“Faro Platform”)

---

The Secretary General and the Director General of the:

- Council of Europe,
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

(hereinafter called “the Organisations”),

meeting on 27-28 October 2005 in Faro (Portugal) at the occasion of the Closing Conference of European Ministers of Culture in the framework of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention,

convinced that intercultural dialogue must be based on universally shared principles of human rights, mutual respect and democratic citizenship to achieve sustainable peace,

agree to sign this Declaration of Intent aiming to set up the “Open Platform of inter-institutional co-operation for intercultural dialogue” (hereinafter called “the Faro Platform”).

### **1. Context**

The purpose of the Faro Platform is the promotion of concrete and steady co-operation between the Organisations in the area of intercultural dialogue, given that a series of initiatives have already highlighted the common willingness to increase the effectiveness of sustainable action through inter-institutional synergy.

The Organisations share the political aim of promoting intercultural dialogue based on universal values, universality and indivisibility of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

### **2. Principles of co-operation**

The work of the Faro Platform shall be based on the principles of complementarity, reciprocity and work-sharing, focusing on the main axis of intercultural dialogue.

Under no circumstances can activities of the Faro Platform conflict with other legal obligations, declarations of intent and other types of commitment of the Organisations.

The implementation of specific joint projects shall be subject to approval by the governing bodies of each of the participating Organisations.

The Faro Platform is open to co-operation, as appropriate, with other institutions active in the Euro-Mediterranean and other regions. Other international or regional partners may join the Faro Platform upon request to, and agreement by, the Organisations.

### **3. Objectives**

The overall objectives of the Faro Platform are to:

- exchange information on the activities undertaken by the Organisations in the areas of intercultural dialogue;
- promote the synergy between the programmes of activities of the Organisations;
- agree and implement programmes and activities jointly run by the Organisations;

- include civil society as an essential actor in the intercultural dialogue;
- monitor the advancement of the dialogue between civilisations and cultures;
- agree, where appropriate, on joint practical procedures and means in the implementation of these programmes and activities.

The Organisations will use their communication tools to provide information on the work of the Faro Platform.

#### **4. Areas of co-operation**

The Faro Platform will undertake programmes and activities in the following areas:

- education, youth and sport;
- culture, in its dual role of heritage and creativity;
- communication, information and media.

#### **5. Working mechanisms**

The Faro Platform shall work through a Coordinating Committee, composed of one senior representative of each Organisation. Decisions are taken by consensus. The Coordinating Committee meets at least annually.

Meetings of the Coordinating Committee are prepared by one of the Organisations, which also acts as a clearinghouse for information between meetings. The task of the clearinghouse rotates among the Organisations on an annual basis by mutual agreement.

#### **6. Financial aspects**

The Faro Platform has no financial resources of its own. The costs of meetings of the Coordinating Committee are borne by each Organisation for their own representatives.

Joint programmes and initiatives are financed by the ordinary budgets of the Organisations and from other sources (grants and voluntary contributions).

#### **7. Final provisions**

The present Declaration of Intent aims to set up the Open Platform of inter-institutional co-operation for intercultural dialogue.

The terms of this Declaration of Intent shall be reviewed before the end of 2007.

#### **Faro (Portugal), 27 October 2005**

For the Council of Europe:  
The Secretary General

For UNESCO:  
The Director of the Division of  
Cultural Policies and Intercultural  
Dialogue

Mr Terry Davis

Ms Katérina Stenou



**White Paper  
on Intercultural Dialogue**



# **White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue**

“Living together  
as equals in dignity”

Launched by the Council of Europe  
ministers for foreign affairs  
at their 118th Ministerial Session

(Strasbourg, 7 May 2008)

French edition:

*Livre blanc sur le dialogue interculturel "Vivre ensemble dans l'égalité"*

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## List of abbreviations

<b>ALECSO</b>	Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization
<b>CERD</b>	United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
<b>ECRI</b>	European Commission against Racism and Intolerance
<b>FRA</b>	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>(I)NGO</b>	(International) Non-governmental organisation
<b>IRCICA</b>	Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture
<b>ISESCO</b>	Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>ODIHR</b>	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>UEFA</b>	Union of European Football Associations
<b>Venice Commission</b>	European Commission for Democracy through Law







## Foreword

### **Dialogue – a key to Europe’s future**

Managing Europe’s increasing cultural diversity – rooted in the history of our continent and enhanced by globalisation – in a democratic manner has become a priority in recent years. How shall we respond to diversity? What is our vision of the society of the future? Is it a society of segregated communities, marked at best by the coexistence of majorities and minorities with differentiated rights and responsibilities, loosely bound together by mutual ignorance and stereotypes? Or is it a vibrant and open society without discrimination, benefiting us all, marked by the inclusion of all residents in full respect of their human rights? The Council of Europe believes that respect for, and promotion of, cultural diversity on the basis of the values on which the Organisation is built are essential conditions for the development of societies based on solidarity.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue presented here, emphatically argues in the name of the governments of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe that our common future depends on our ability to safeguard and develop human rights, as enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights, democracy and the rule of law and to promote mutual understanding. It reasons that the intercultural approach offers a forward-looking model for managing cultural diversity. It proposes a conception based on individual human dignity (embracing our common humanity and common destiny). If there is a European identity to be realised, it will be based on shared fundamental values, respect for common heritage and cultural diversity as well as respect for the equal dignity of every individual.

Intercultural dialogue has an important role to play in this regard. It allows us to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divides. It enables us to move forward together, to deal with our different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values.

Intercultural dialogue can only thrive if certain preconditions are met. To advance intercultural dialogue, the White Paper argues,

the democratic governance of cultural diversity should be adapted in many aspects; democratic citizenship and participation should be strengthened; intercultural competences should be taught and learned; spaces for intercultural dialogue should be created and widened; and intercultural dialogue should be taken to the international level.

The White Paper is built on the solid foundations of the Council of Europe *acquis*. It takes account of the rich material from consultations with many stakeholders – including partners from regions outside Europe – held in 2007. In that sense, it is in many ways a product of the democratic deliberation which is at the heart of intercultural dialogue itself.

The White Paper responds to an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help appreciate diversity while sustaining social cohesion. It seeks to provide a conceptual framework and a guide for policy makers and practitioners. However, intercultural dialogue cannot be prescribed by law. It must retain its character as an open invitation to implement the underlying principles set out in this document, to apply flexibly the various recommendations presented here, and to contribute to the ongoing debate about the future organisation of society.

The Council of Europe is deeply convinced that it is our common responsibility to achieve a society where we can live together as equals in dignity.



## Preface

We live together in an age of increasing cultural diversity. Massive exchange of technology and information and increasing migration of people are changing our way of life and challenging the coherence of societies. If we are to live together as equals in dignity and continued peace, we must address issues such as democratic governance of diversity, citizenship and participation for all members of society, the acquisition of intercultural competences and the creation of spaces where cultures can meet. That is why intercultural dialogue has become a key element of the work of the Council of Europe.

The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue will serve as a reference document for action at national, regional and local levels, spelling out values and principles, together with proposals for action, all firmly rooted in the achievements and standards of the Council of Europe. I believe it is a document which is of relevance beyond our continent, being echoed in other world regions and most notably in the context of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations initiative.

Dialogue between nations, cultures and peoples has been the engine of the Council of Europe for over 60 years. We are now encountering new challenges and developing new forms of co-operation on our continent and must therefore ensure that our Organisation is better equipped to succeed. However, dialogue will remain at the heart of our work and I am confident that you will find this document an effective tool in your important efforts to promote intercultural dialogue.

*Thorbjørn Jagland*  
*Secretary General of the Council of Europe*



## Introduction

### 1.1. The Council of Europe and intercultural dialogue

Promoting intercultural dialogue contributes to the core objective of the Council of Europe, namely preserving and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The 1st Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (1993), which affirmed that cultural diversity characterised Europe's rich heritage and that tolerance was the guarantee of an open society, led to the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), the establishment of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the launching of the European Youth Campaign against racism, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and intolerance ("All Different – All Equal").

The 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (2005) identified intercultural dialogue (including its religious dimension) as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. This was fleshed out in the "Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's strategy for developing intercultural dialogue", adopted by the ministers of culture later that year, which suggested preparing a White Paper on intercultural dialogue.

### 1.2. The White Paper process

The Committee of Ministers, meeting in May 2006, specified that the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue would identify how to promote intensified intercultural dialogue within and between societies in Europe and dialogue between Europe and its neighbours. It should also provide guidance on analytical and methodological tools and standards. The White Paper is addressed to policy makers and administrators, to educators and the media, and to civil-society organisations, including migrant and religious communities, youth organisations and the social partners.

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, members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, as well as other bodies of the Council of Europe including ECRI, the European Committee of Social Rights, the High-level Task Force on Social Cohesion and the Commissioner for Human Rights. Questionnaires were sent to all member states, members of the Parliamentary Assembly and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, to representatives of religious communities, migrant communities and cultural and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Council of Europe Secretariat organised (or co-organised) events with non-governmental organisations of migrants, women, young people, journalists and media organisations as well as international institutions. Initial drafts were submitted to selected stakeholders for scrutiny in “feedback meetings”<sup>1</sup> and to an informal Regional Conference of Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs.<sup>2</sup>

This process indicated considerable interest, and the Council of Europe is greatly indebted to all those who contributed so generously to the debate. The consultation revealed a confidence that the Council of Europe, because of its normative foundation and its wealth of experience, was well placed to take a timely initiative, and it generated a vast repertoire of suggestions on the content of the White Paper itself.

What follows is built on the solid foundations of the Council of Europe *acquis*, notably the European Convention on Human Rights and other fundamental standards. It takes into account 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.

The huge volume of documents associated with the White Paper process is available on the Council of Europe website and in accompanying publications. This includes analyses of the responses by the member states, by non-governmental organisations and religious communities to the questionnaire on intercultural dialogue as well as monographs on intercultural dialogue under different aspects (education, media) and *vis-à-vis* 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. Strasbourg, Stockholm and Moscow (September-October 2007).

2. Belgrade, 8-9 November 2007.

### 1.3. The major concerns

One of the recurrent themes of the consultation was that **old approaches to the management of cultural diversity were no longer adequate** to 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 inadequate. On the other hand, there did not seem to be a desire to return to an older emphasis on assimilation. Achieving inclusive societies needed a new approach, and intercultural dialogue was the route to follow.

There was, however, a notable lack of clarity as to what that phrase might mean. The consultation document 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.**

Respondents to the questionnaires and participants in consultation events nevertheless were united in stating that **universal principles**, as upheld by the Council of Europe, **offered a moral compass.** They provided the framework for a culture of tolerance, and made clear its limits – notably vis-à-vis any form of discrimination or acts of intolerance. Cultural traditions, whether they be “majority” or “minority” traditions, could not trump principles and standards of the European Convention on Human Rights and of other Council of Europe instruments concerning civil and political, social, economic and cultural rights.

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. Indeed, equality was a recurrent theme: **the challenge of living together in a diverse society could only be met if we can live together as equals in dignity.** This concern was strongly articulated by governments, NGOs in general and migrant associations alike.

It emerged that **no sphere should be exempt** from engaging in 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 actor – whether NGOs, religious communities, the social partners or political parties – is implicated, as indeed are individuals. And every level of governance – from local to regional

to national to international – is drawn into the democratic management of cultural diversity.

Finally, and most concretely, the consultation highlighted the **vast amount of accumulated good practice**. What is needed is for this to be distilled and then disseminated, so that reticence can be overcome and positive experiences replicated. For, if there is one overall lesson of the consultation, it is that the need for intercultural dialogue is going to be relevant for many years to come.

#### 1.4. Key terms

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, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect (see Chapter 3). It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world.
- *Multiculturalism* (like assimilationism) is understood as a specific policy approach (see Chapter 3), whereas the terms “cultural diversity” and “multiculturality” denote the empirical fact that different cultures exist and may interact within a given space and social organisation.
- *Social cohesion*, as understood by the Council of Europe, 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 of minority or majority background who 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, migrant and religious communities, cultural and media organisations, journalists and social partners.
- *Public authorities* include the national government and political and administrative bodies at the central, regional and local levels. The term also covers town councils or other local authority bodies, as well as natural or legal persons under private



law who perform public functions or exercise administrative authority.

- *Integration* (social integration, inclusion) is understood as a two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life. It encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies. It requires the protection of the weak, as well as the right to differ, to create and to innovate.<sup>3</sup> Effective integration policies are needed to allow immigrants to participate fully in the life of the host country. Immigrants should, like everybody else, abide by the laws and respect the basic values of European societies and their cultural heritage. Strategies for integration must necessarily cover all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects. They should respect immigrants' dignity and distinct identity and take them into account when elaborating policies.
- *Positive action measures* compensating for disadvantages arising from a person's racial or ethnic origin, gender or other protected characteristics seek to promote full and effective equality as well as the equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights.

There is no internationally agreed legal definition of the notion of "minority". In the context of this White Paper this term is understood as designating persons, including migrants, belonging to groups smaller in numbers than the rest of the population and characterised by their identity, in particular their ethnicity, culture, religion or their language.

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3. Programme of Action adopted by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995.



**2.1. Pluralism, tolerance and intercultural dialogue**

Cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon. The European canvas is marked by the sediments of intra-continental migrations, the redrawing of borders and the impact of colonialism and multinational empires. Over recent centuries, societies based on the principles of political pluralism and tolerance have enabled us to live with diversity without creating unacceptable risks for social cohesion.

In recent decades, cultural diversification has gained momentum. Europe has attracted migrants in search of a better life and asylum seekers from across the world. Globalisation has compressed space and time on a scale that is unprecedented. The revolutions in telecommunications and the media – particularly through the emergence of new communications services like the Internet – have rendered national cultural systems increasingly porous. The development of transport and tourism has brought more people than ever into face-to-face contact, engendering more and more opportunities for intercultural dialogue.

In this situation, pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness are more important than ever.<sup>4</sup> The European Court of Human Rights has recognised that pluralism is 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”.<sup>5</sup>

However, pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness may not be sufficient: a pro-active, structured and widely shared effort in managing cultural diversity is needed. Intercultural dialogue is a

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4. On the importance of pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness in democratic societies, see for instance *Handyside v. the United Kingdom*, judgment of 7 December 1976, Series A No. 24, paragraph 49.

5. *Gorzellik and Others v. Poland* [GC], No. 44158/98, 17 February 2004.

major tool to achieve this aim, without which it will be difficult to safeguard the freedom and well-being of everyone living on our continent.

## **2.2. Equality of human dignity**

Diversity does not only contribute to cultural vitality but can also enhance social and economic performance. 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 nation states have set up ever more complete and transnational human rights protections, available to everyone, not just national citizens. This corpus of human rights recognises the dignity of every human being, over and above the entitlements enjoyed by individuals as citizens of a particular state.

This corpus of human rights acknowledges our common humanity and 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 common humanity and solidarity would make mutual recognition and social inclusion impossible. If there is a common identity, then, to be realised, it is an ethos of respect for the equal dignity of every individual and hospitality towards the wider world. Intrinsic to such an ethos is dialogue and interaction with others.

## **2.3. Standards and tools: the achievements of the Council of Europe over five decades<sup>6</sup>**

The robust European consensus on values is demonstrated by the various instruments of the Council of Europe: the conventions and agreements engaging all or some of the member states, as well as recommendations, declarations and opinions.

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. Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights (2000) contained a

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6. See the appendix – table on state of ratification of key conventional instruments.

general prohibition of discrimination. 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 Declaration on the Equality of Women and Men (1988) of the Committee of Ministers stated that sex-related discrimination in any field constitutes an impediment to the recognition, enjoyment and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms. 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 European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1989) highlighted the importance of broadcasting for the development of culture and the free formation of opinions. The Council of Europe 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). The European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980), 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) addressed issues of participation in public life at local level, as has the work of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, notably its Stuttgart Declaration on the integration of "foreigners" (2003). The Council of Europe/UNESCO Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (1997) prohibited taking into account external factors such as the convictions, beliefs and status of the applicant when recognising qualifications.

Prior to the Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's strategy for developing intercultural dialogue (2005), intercultural dialogue itself became a theme for ministers responsible for culture in the Opatija Declaration (2003), while their educational counterparts tackled intercultural education in the Athens Declaration (2003). The European ministers responsible for youth accorded priority to human rights education, global solidarity, conflict transformation and inter-religious co-operation 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 inter-religious dialogue.<sup>7</sup> The Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe launched the development of strategies to manage and promote cultural diversity while ensuring the cohesion of societies and encouraged intercultural dialogue including its religious dimension.

The Council of Europe also acts as an intergovernmental organisation and has an influence in the wider world through monitoring mechanisms, action programmes, policy advocacy and co-operation with its international partners. An important vehicle is the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), which monitors racism and all forms of related intolerance and discrimination in member states, elaborates general policy recommendations and works with civil society to raise awareness. ECRI is in regular contact with the Secretariat of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) of the European Union. 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. The European Commission for Democracy through Law ("Venice Commission"), the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters, has played a leading role in the adoption of constitutions that conform to the standards of Europe's constitutional heritage and has expressed itself frequently on the rights of minorities. The European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (also known as the North-South Centre) has developed into an important place of dialogue between cultures and a bridge between Europe and its neighbouring regions.

#### **2.4. The risks of non-dialogue**

The risks of non-dialogue need to be fully appreciated. Not to engage in dialogue makes it easy to develop a stereotypical perception of the other, build up a climate of mutual suspicion, tension and anxiety, use minorities as scapegoats, and generally foster intolerance and discrimination. The breakdown of dialogue within and between societies can provide, in certain cases, a climate conducive to the emergence, and the exploitation by some, of extremism and indeed terrorism. Intercultural dialogue, including on the international plane, is indispensable between neighbours.

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7. References to selected recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly can be found in the appendix.

Shutting the door on a diverse environment can offer only an illusory security. A retreat into the apparently reassuring comforts of an exclusive community may lead to a stifling conformism. The absence of dialogue deprives everyone of the benefit of new cultural openings, necessary for personal and social development in a globalised world. Segregated and mutually exclusive communities provide a climate that is often hostile to individual autonomy and the unimpeded exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

An absence of dialogue does not take account of the lessons of Europe's cultural and political heritage. European history has been peaceful and productive whenever a real determination prevailed to speak to our neighbour and to co-operate across dividing lines. It has all too often led to human catastrophe whenever there was a lack of openness towards the other. Only dialogue allows people to live in unity in diversity.





**3.1. The notion of intercultural dialogue**

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, on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. 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 contributes to political, social, cultural and economic integration and the cohesion of culturally diverse societies. It fosters equality, human dignity and a sense of common purpose. It aims to develop a deeper understanding of diverse world views and practices, to increase co-operation and participation (or the freedom to make choices), to allow personal growth and transformation, and to promote tolerance and respect for the other.

Intercultural dialogue may serve several purposes, within the over-riding objective to promote full respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. It is an essential feature of inclusive societies, which leave no one marginalised or defined as outsiders. It is a powerful instrument of mediation and reconciliation: through critical and constructive engagement across cultural fault lines, it addresses real concerns about social fragmentation and insecurity while fostering integration and social cohesion. Freedom of choice, freedom of expression, equality, tolerance and mutual respect for human dignity are among the guiding principles in this context. Successful intercultural dialogue requires many of the attitudes fostered by a democratic culture – including open-mindedness, willingness to engage in dialogue and allow others to express their point, a capacity to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and a recognition of the well-founded arguments of others. It contributes to strengthening democratic stability and to the fight against prejudice and stereotypes in public life and political discourse, and to facilitating coalition-building across

diverse cultural and religious communities, and can thereby help to prevent or de-escalate conflicts – including in situations of post conflict and “frozen conflicts”.

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 take part in 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 practical implementation of the values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law may very well be reached.

### **3.2. Identity-building in a multicultural environment**

Individual human dignity is at the foundation of society. The individual, however, is not as such 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.

Freedom to choose one’s own culture is fundamental; it is a central aspect of human rights. Simultaneously or at various stages in their lives, everyone may adopt different cultural affiliations. Whilst every individual, to a certain extent, is a product of his or her heritage and social background, in contemporary modern democracies everyone can enrich his or her own identity by integrating different cultural affiliations. No one should be confined against their will within a particular group, community, thought-system or world view, but should be free to renounce past choices and make new ones – as long as they are consistent with the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Mutual openness and sharing are twin aspects of multiple cultural affiliation. Both are rules of coexistence applying to individuals and groups, who are free to practise their cultures, subject only to respect for others.

Intercultural dialogue is therefore important in managing multiple cultural affiliations in a multicultural environment. It is a mechanism to constantly achieve a new identity balance, responding to new openings and experiences and adding new layers to identity without relinquishing one’s roots. Intercultural dialogue helps us to avoid the pitfalls of identity policies and to remain open to the challenges of modern societies.

### 3.3. Prior 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 state boundary should assimilate to its predominant ethos, into which successive generations were socialised – via, *inter alia*, national, sometimes nationalistic, rituals. However, over the last centuries Europe has also seen other more positive experiences, for instance during certain periods of the history of central and eastern Europe, which helps us to understand how different cultures and religions could peacefully coexist in mutual tolerance and respect.

In what became the western part of a divided post-war Europe, the experience of immigration was associated with 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, schematic conception of society set in opposition of majority and minority, differing only in endorsing separation of the minority from the majority rather than assimilation 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: they are a source of strength and point to the possibility of common ground.

Whilst driven by benign intentions, multiculturalism is now seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals – and, in particular, women – within minority communities, perceived as if these were single collective actors. The cultural diversity of contemporary societies has to be acknowledged as an empirical fact. However, a recurrent theme of the consultation was that multiculturalism was a policy with which respondents no longer felt at ease.

Neither of these models, assimilation or multiculturalism, is applied singularly and wholly in any state. Elements of them combine with aspects of the emerging interculturalist paradigm, which incorporates the best of both. It takes from assimilation the focus on the individual; it takes from multiculturalism the recognition of cultural diversity. And it adds the new element,

critical to integration and social cohesion, of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values.

### **3.4. The conditions of intercultural dialogue**

#### *3.4.1. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law*

The universal values upheld by the Council of Europe are a condition for intercultural dialogue. 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. These values, and in particular respect for freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms, guarantee non-domination and are thus essential to ensure that dialogue is governed by the force of argument rather than the argument of force.

Since competing human rights may be advanced, a fair balance must be struck when faced with intercultural issues. The case law of the European Court of Human Rights and the practice of monitoring bodies such as ECRI or the Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities indicate how such balance can be achieved in practice.

Ethnic, cultural, religious or linguistic affiliations or traditions cannot be invoked to prevent individuals from exercising their human rights or from responsible participation in society. This principle applies especially to the right not to suffer from 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 or belief. Human rights abuses, such as forced marriages, "honour crimes" or genital mutilations<sup>8</sup> can never be justified whatever the cultural context. Equally, the rules of a – real or imagined – "dominant culture" cannot be used to justify discrimination, hate speech or any form of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, ethnic origin or other identity.

Democracy is the foundation of our political system, and citizens are valued also as political actors and not only as social beings, contributors to or beneficiaries of the well-being of the nation. Democracy thrives because it helps individuals identify with the society of which they are members and because it provides for legitimate decision-making and exercise of power. The growth of the Council of Europe over the past two decades is a potent witness to the force of democracy. Critical and constructive dialogue, itself a profoundly democratic standard, has to recognise other democratic principles such as pluralism, inclusiveness and

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8. On female genital mutilation, see *Collins and Akaziebie v. Sweden*, No. 23944/05 decision of 8 March 2007.

equality. It is important that dialogue acknowledges the spirit of democratic culture and its essential elements: mutual respect among participants and the readiness of everyone to seek and accept a common ground.

The fundamental standards of the rule of law in democratic societies are necessary elements of the framework within which intercultural dialogue can flourish. They ensure a clear separation of powers, legal certainty and equality of all before the law. They stop public authorities taking arbitrary and discriminatory decisions, and ensure that individuals whose rights are violated can seek redress from the courts.

#### *3.4.2. Equal dignity and mutual respect*

Intercultural dialogue entails a reflexive disposition, in which one can see oneself from the perspective of others. On the foundation of the values of the Council of Europe, this requires a democratic architecture characterised by the respect of the individual as a human being, 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. 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 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 and mutual respect are important building blocks of intercultural dialogue and essential to remove the barriers to its realisation. Where progress towards equality is lacking, social tensions may manifest themselves in the cultural arena, even if the root causes lie elsewhere, and cultural identities themselves may be used to stigmatise.

#### *3.4.3. Gender equality*

Equality between women and men is a core issue in changing societies, as the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men (2003) emphasised. It is a crucial element of democracy. Gender equality is an integral part of human rights and sex-based discrimination is an impediment to the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms. Respect for women's human rights is a non-negotiable foundation of any discussion of cultural diversity.

The fight against gender inequality should not give rise to insidious stereotyping, however. 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 and as if everything related to minorities and adherents to particular religions was problematic. Common gender experiences can overlap communal divides precisely because no community has a monopoly of gender equality or inequality.

Gender equality injects a positive dimension into intercultural dialogue. The complexity of individual identity allows solidarities 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 shared experiences.

The Council of Europe’s Revised Strategy for 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.

#### *3.4.4. Combating the barriers that prevent intercultural dialogue*

There are many barriers to intercultural dialogue. Some of these are the result of the difficulty in communicating in several languages. But others concerning power and politics: discrimination, poverty and exploitation – experiences which often bear particularly heavily on persons belonging to disadvantaged and marginalised groups – are structural barriers to dialogue. In many European societies one also finds groups and political organisations preaching hatred of “the other”, “the foreigner” or certain religious identities. Racism, xenophobia, intolerance and all other forms of discrimination refuse the very idea of dialogue and represent a standing affront to it.

### **3.5. The religious dimension**

Part of Europe’s rich cultural heritage is a range of religious, as well as secular, conceptions of the purpose of life. Christianity, Judaism and Islam, with their inner range of interpretations, have deeply influenced our continent. Yet conflicts where faith has provided a communal marker have been a feature of Europe’s old and recent past.

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is one of the foundations of democratic society and is protected by Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This freedom is one of the most vital elements referring to the identity of believers and

their conception of life, as it is also for atheists, agnostics, sceptics and the unconcerned. While guaranteeing this freedom, Article 9 does allow that the manifestations of expression of this freedom can be restricted under defined conditions. The issue of religious symbols in the public sphere, particularly in education, has been addressed by the European Court of Human Rights.<sup>9</sup> Because of the relative lack of consensus on matters of religion across the member states, the Court has tended to give to states a large – though not unlimited – “margin of appreciation” (i.e. discretion) in this arena.

There are considerable overlaps between the Council of Europe’s agenda and the concerns of religious communities: human rights, democratic citizenship, the promotion of values, peace, dialogue, education and solidarity. And there was consensus during the consultation that it was the responsibility of the religious communities themselves, through inter-religious dialogue, to contribute to an increased understanding between different cultures.

The important role of religious communities with regard to dialogue means that efforts should be undertaken in this field between religious communities and public authorities. The Council of Europe is already committed to this end through various initiatives of the Parliamentary Assembly and the seminars of the Commissioner for Human Rights, who since 2000 has brought together representatives of religious communities with the aim of associating them with the human rights agenda of the Council of Europe. Religious practice is part of contemporary human life, and it therefore cannot and should not be outside the sphere of interest of public authorities, although the state must preserve its role as the neutral and impartial organiser of the exercise of various religions, faiths and beliefs.<sup>10</sup> The Volga Forum Declaration (2006)<sup>11</sup> 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. The San Marino Declaration (2007)<sup>12</sup> on the religious dimension

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9. See for instance *Kurtulmuş v. Turkey*, No. 65500/01, decision of 24 January 2006; *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey*, No. 44774/98 judgment of 10 November 2005 (Grand Chamber); *Dahlab v. Switzerland*, decision of 15 February 2001.

10. See for instance *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey [GC]*, No. 44774/98, judgment of 10 November 2005, paragraph 107.

11. Final document of the International Conference “Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Co-operation” (Volga Forum), Nizhniy Novgorod/Russian Federation, 7-9 September 2006 (available at [www.coe.int/dialogue](http://www.coe.int/dialogue)).

12. 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](http://www.coe.int/dialogue)).

of intercultural dialogue affirmed that religions could elevate and enhance dialogue. It identified the context as a shared ambition to protect individual human dignity by the promotion of human rights, including equality between women and men, to strengthen social cohesion and to foster mutual understanding and respect. In the San Marino Declaration, the religious and civil-society representatives present 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 whilst defending the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, the rights and duties of all citizens, and the respective autonomy of state and religions. They considered that 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 for the rights of non-believers. Those holding non-religious world views 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.

On 8 April 2008, the Council of Europe organised, on an experimental basis, an exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue on the theme “Teaching religious and convictional facts. A tool for acquiring knowledge about religions and beliefs in education; a contribution to education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural dialogue.” Member and observer states of the Council of Europe as well as the Organisation’s institutional partners, the European Commission, representatives of the religions traditionally present in Europe and of other beliefs, representatives of international and national NGOs, experts and representatives of the media participated in the “exchange”. An innovative and experimental event, its main aim was to promote and strengthen the Council of Europe’s fundamental values – respect for human rights, promotion of democracy and the rule of law – thus contributing to fostering within European society mutual respect and awareness, tolerance and understanding. The exercise associated representatives of religions and other actors of civil society, including representatives of other beliefs, with this objective, by involving them in open, transparent dialogue on a theme rooted in those values. The purpose was not to engage in theological debate, or to become the framework of an interconfessional dialogue.

Apart from the dialogue between public authorities and religious communities, which should be encouraged, there is also a need for dialogue between religious communities themselves (inter-religious dialogue). The Council of Europe has frequently recognised inter-religious dialogue, which is not directly within its remit,



as a part of intercultural dialogue and encouraged religious communities to engage actively in promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law in a multicultural Europe. Inter-religious dialogue can also contribute to a stronger consensus within society regarding the solutions to social problems. Furthermore, the Council of Europe sees the need for a dialogue within religious communities and philosophical convictions (intrareligious and intra-convictional dialogue), not least in order to allow public authorities to communicate with authorised representatives of religions and beliefs seeking recognition under national law.



## 4

## Five policy approaches to the promotion of intercultural dialogue

There are five distinct yet interrelated dimensions to the promotion of intercultural dialogue, which involve the full range of stakeholders. It depends on the democratic governance of cultural diversity. It requires participation and democratic citizenship. It demands the acquisition of intercultural competences. It needs open spaces for dialogue. Finally, it must be taken to an international scale. Initiatives in these five dimensions have been tried and tested.<sup>13</sup>

### 4.1. Democratic governance of cultural diversity

#### 4.1.1. A political culture valuing diversity

The cornerstones of a political culture valuing diversity are the common values of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, pluralism, tolerance, non-discrimination and mutual respect.

A culture of diversity can only develop if democracy reconciles majority rule and the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Imposing the will of the majority on the minority without ensuring an effective protection of rights for all is incompatible with the principles of the common European constitutional heritage. A European society committed to combining unity and diversity cannot be a “winner takes all” society, but must suffuse the political arena with values of equality and mutual respect. Democracy does not simply mean that the views of a majority must always prevail: a balance must be achieved which ensures the fair and proper treatment of persons belonging to minorities and avoids any abuse of a dominant position.<sup>14</sup>

13. The collection of examples of good practice proposed during the consultations will be published on the Internet at [www.coe.int/dialogue](http://www.coe.int/dialogue).

14. See *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey [GC]*, No. 44774/98, judgment of 10 November 2005, paragraph 108. See also Article 6 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which obliges the contracting parties to “encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic,

Developing a political culture supportive of cultural pluralism is a demanding task. It entails an education system which generates capacities for critical thinking and innovation, and spaces in which people are allowed to participate and to express themselves. Law enforcement officials, politicians, teachers and other professional groups, as well as civil-society leaders should be trained to operate in culturally diverse communities. Culture must be dynamic and characterised by experiment. The media are called upon to circulate objective information and fresh thinking, and to challenge stereotypes. There must be a multiplicity of initiatives and committed stakeholders, particularly involving a robust civil society.

#### *4.1.2. Human rights and fundamental freedoms*

Human rights provide an essential framework for the practice of intercultural dialogue. Among the most relevant provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights are the rights to freedom of thought and expression, to freedom of religion, to free assembly and association, to privacy and family life. The rights in the Convention must be enjoyed without discrimination in any form. In addition, Protocol No. 12 to the Convention provides for a general prohibition of discrimination. The rights portfolio also includes, besides civil and political rights, the socio-economic rights arising from the European Social Charter, which addresses many of the issues which can bear particularly heavily on persons belonging to disadvantaged groups (access to employment, education, social protection, health and housing),<sup>15</sup> and the cultural rights identified in various charters and conventions, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966).

Freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 10, paragraph 1, of the European Convention on Human Rights, is a sine qua non of participation in intercultural dialogue. The exercise of this freedom, which comes with duties and responsibilities, may be limited in certain specific conditions defined in Article 10, paragraph 2, of the European Convention on Human Rights. "Hate speech" has been an increasing concern of the European Court of Human Rights in recent years, and in its jurisprudence the Court has drawn the

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cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media".

15. 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. See European Social Charter. European Committee of Social Rights: Conclusions XVIII-1, Volume 1, Council of Europe, Strasbourg 2006, pp. 59, 102, 212, 261, 293.

boundary, case by case, beyond which the right to freedom of expression is forfeited.

Some expressions are so gratuitously offensive, defamatory or insulting 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 threats. Inciting hatred based on intolerance is not compatible with respect for fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention and the Court’s jurisprudence.

The European Court of Human Rights has, however, set a high bar against restrictions on free expression, indicating that even expressions that “offend, shock or disturb” should be protected.<sup>16</sup> This means, for example, a certain licence to criticise another’s religion (as a system of ideas which they can choose to embrace). The Court takes into account the impact and context of the expressions made, in particular whether they contribute to a pluralistic public debate on matters of general interest.

As for the media, the basic principle is the defence of freedom of expression even if there is, however, a recognition of the special duties and responsibilities of journalists who must be free to express their opinions – including value judgments – on matters of public concern, but who are also responsible for the collection and dissemination of objective information. There is a need to foster the awareness of media professionals of the necessity for intercultural dialogue and co-operation across ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic boundaries with a view to promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding, bearing in mind their role in informing the public.

#### 4.1.3. *From equality of opportunity to equal enjoyment of rights*

The “European social model”, referred to in the Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, seeks to secure a profound equality of life chances. Those who most need their rights to be 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, for example, that states parties undertake that migrant workers and their families residing legally on their territory should be entitled to treatment no

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16. *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, judgment of 7 December 1976, Series A No. 24, paragraph 49.

less favourable than that accorded to their 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, stemming from discrimination, experienced by members of disadvantaged groups. In the public sphere, state authorities must strictly respect the prohibition of discrimination, an expression of neutrality in cultural and religious matters. Yet, formal equality is not always sufficient and promoting effective equality could, in some cases, necessitate adoption of specific measures that are coherent with the principle of non-discrimination. In certain circumstances, the absence of differential treatment to correct an inequality may, without reasonable and objective justification, amount to discrimination.<sup>17</sup>

It may be necessary to take, within certain limits, practical measures to accommodate for diversity.<sup>18</sup> Such accommodation measures should not infringe the rights of others or result in disproportionate organisational difficulties or excessive costs.

#### **4.2. Democratic citizenship and participation**

Citizenship, in the widest sense, is a right and indeed a responsibility to participate in the cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs<sup>19</sup> 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 fellow citizens and 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, which in turn cements social cohesion.

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17. *D.H. and others v. the Czech Republic*, No. 57325/00, judgment of 13 November 2007 (Grand Chamber): “The Court has also accepted that a general policy or measure that has disproportionately prejudicial effects on a particular group may be considered discriminatory notwithstanding that it is not specifically aimed at that group... and that discrimination potentially contrary to the Convention may result from a de facto situation” (paragraph 175).

18. See Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), Article 4 paragraphs 2 and 3, as well as the accompanying paragraphs in the explanatory report. *D.H. and others v. the Czech Republic*, judgment of 13 November 2007 (Grand Chamber). The European Committee of Social Rights has argued that “human difference in a democratic society should not only be viewed positively but should be responded to with discernment in order to ensure real and effective equality” (*Autism France v. France*, Complaint No. 13/2002, decision on the merits, 4 November 2003, paragraph 52).

19. See Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), Article 15.

Active participation by all residents in the life of the local community contributes to its prosperity, and enhances integration. A right for foreigners legally resident in the municipality or region to participate in local and regional elections is a vehicle to promote participation.

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 integration.

The Committee of Ministers has expressed its concern at growing levels of political and civic disengagement and lack of confidence in democratic institutions, and an increasing threat of racism and xenophobia. Yet there have been mixed trends in Europe. Strong levels of social trust and engagement in civil-society organisations, observed in some member states, have been linked to a system of democratic governance, with impartial public authority buttressed by the rule of law, which promotes participation. 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.

A crucially important role is played in this regard by local and regional authorities. The Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level urges that such participation be enhanced. Care is needed 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 and particularly to involve young people.

#### **4.3. Learning and teaching intercultural competences**

The competences necessary for intercultural dialogue are not automatically acquired: they need to be learned, practised and maintained throughout life. Public authorities, education professionals, civil-society organisations, religious communities, the media and all other providers of education – working in all institutional contexts and at all levels – can play a crucial role here in the pursuit of the aims and core values upheld by the Council of Europe and in furthering intercultural dialogue. Inter-institutional co-operation is crucial, in particular with the EU, UNESCO, Arab

League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and other partners working in this field.

#### 4.3.1. *Key competence areas: democratic citizenship, language, history*

Education for democratic citizenship is fundamental to a free, tolerant, just, open and inclusive society, to social cohesion, mutual understanding, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue and solidarity, as well as equality between women and men. It embraces any formal, non-formal or informal educational activity, including vocational training, the family and communities of reference, enabling an individual to act as an active and responsible citizen respectful of others. Education for democratic citizenship involves, *inter alia*, civic, history, political and human-rights education, education on the global context of societies and on cultural heritage. It encourages multidisciplinary approaches and combines the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes – particularly the capacity for reflection and the self-critical disposition necessary for life in culturally diverse societies.

Language is often a barrier to conducting intercultural conversations. The interculturalist approach recognises the value of the languages used by members of minority communities, but 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 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. Language learning helps learners to avoid stereotyping individuals, to develop curiosity and openness to otherness and to discover other cultures. Language learning helps them to see that interaction with individuals with different social identities and cultures is an enriching experience.

The Committee of Ministers' recommendation on history teaching in 21st-century Europe (2001)<sup>20</sup> 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 open debate based on multiperspectivity, especially on controversial and sensitive issues. History teaching is instrumental in preventing recurrence or denial of the Holocaust,

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20. Recommendation Rec(2001)15.



genocides and other crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and the massive violations of human rights, in overcoming the wounds of the past and in promoting the fundamental values to which the Council of Europe is particularly committed; it is a decisive factor in reconciliation, recognition, understanding and mutual trust between peoples. History teaching in a democratic Europe should occupy a vital place in the training of responsible and active citizens and in the developing of respect for all kinds of differences, based on an understanding of national identity and on principles of tolerance. History teaching must not be an instrument of ideological manipulation, of propaganda or used for the promotion of intolerant and ultra-nationalistic, xenophobic, racist or anti-Semitic ideas. Historical research and history as it is taught in schools cannot in any way, with any intention, be compatible with the fundamental values and statutes of the Council of Europe if it allows or promotes misuses of history. History teaching must encompass the elimination of prejudice and stereotypes, through the highlighting in history syllabuses of positive mutual influences between different countries, religions and schools of thought over the period of Europe's historical development, as well as critical study of misuses of history, whether these stem from denials of historical facts, falsification, omission, ignorance or re-appropriation to ideological ends.

#### 4.3.2. *Primary and secondary education*

In a multicultural Europe, education is not only a means of preparing for the labour market, supporting personal development and providing a broad knowledge base; schools are also important fora for the preparation of young people for life as active citizens. They are responsible for guiding and supporting young people in acquiring the tools and developing attitudes necessary for life in society in all its aspects or with strategies for acquiring them, and enable them to understand and acquire the values that underpin democratic life, introducing respect for human rights as the foundation for managing diversity and stimulating openness to other cultures. Within the formal curriculum, the intercultural dimension straddles all subjects. History, language education and the teaching of religious and convictional facts are perhaps among the most relevant.<sup>21</sup> Education as to religious and convictional facts

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21. 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."

in an intercultural context makes available knowledge about all the world religions and beliefs and their history, and enables the individual to understand religions and beliefs and avoid prejudice. This approach has been taken by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights and ECRI.<sup>22</sup> In 2007, the European ministers of education underlined the importance of measures to improve understanding between cultural and/or religious communities through school education, on the basis of shared principles of ethics and democratic citizenship; regardless of the religious education system that prevails, tuition should take account of religious and convictional diversity.<sup>23</sup>

#### 4.3.3. *Higher education and research*

Higher education institutions play an important role in fostering intercultural dialogue, through their education programmes, as actors in broader society and as sites where intercultural dialogue is put into practice. As the Steering Committee on Higher Education and Research suggests, the university is ideally defined precisely by its universality – its commitment to open-mindedness and openness to the world, founded on enlightenment values. The university thus has great potential to engender “intercultural intellectuals” who can play an active role in the public sphere.

This needs to be assisted by scholarly research on intercultural learning, to address the aspects of “learning to live together” and cultural diversity in all teaching activities.

#### 4.3.4. *Non-formal and informal learning*

Non-formal learning outside schools and universities, particularly in youth work and all forms of voluntary and civic services, plays an equally prominent role. The Council of Europe has encouraged member states to promote non-formal education and to encourage young people’s commitment and contribution to the values underpinning intercultural dialogue.

Youth and sport organisations, together with religious communities, are particularly well placed to advance intercultural dialogue in a non-formal education context. Youth groups and community

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22. Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1720 on education and religion (2005); *Kjeldsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, Nos. 5095/71; 5920/72; 5926/72, 7 December 1976, paragraph 53; *Folgerø and Others v. Norway* [GC], No. 15472/02, 29 June 2007, paragraph 84; ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 10 on combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education, 2007, paragraph II.2.b.

23. Final Declaration of the 22nd session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, Istanbul, Turkey, 4-5 May 2007 (“Building a more humane and inclusive Europe: role of education policies”).

centres, alongside the family, school and workplace, can be pillars of social cohesion. Through the wide variety of their programmes, the open and voluntary nature of their activities and the commitment of their members, these organisations are often more successful than others in actively involving persons from a minority background and offering opportunities for dialogue. Active civil-society and non-governmental organisations are an indispensable element of pluralist democracy, promoting active participation in public affairs and responsible democratic citizenship based on human rights and equality between women and men. Therefore migrant organisations could be enabled and funded to develop voluntary services for persons from a minority background, in particular young people, to improve their chances on the job market as well as in society.

Informal learning is also promoted through the media and new communication services, which offer ample opportunities for contact with other cultural practices.

#### 4.3.5. *The role of educators*

Educators at all levels play an essential role in fostering intercultural dialogue and in preparing future generations for dialogue. Through their commitment and by practising with their pupils and students what they teach, educators serve as important role models.

Teacher-training curricula need to teach educational strategies and working methods to prepare teachers to manage the new situations arising from diversity, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalisation and to resolve conflicts peacefully, as well as to foster a global approach to institutional life on the basis of democracy and human rights and create a community of students, taking account of individual unspoken assumptions, school atmosphere and informal aspects of education.

Teacher training institutions also need to develop quality assurance instruments inspired by education for democratic citizenship, taking account of the intercultural dimension, and develop indicators and tools for self-evaluation and self-focused development for educational establishments. They need to strengthen intercultural education and management of diversity within in-service training.

The aim of the European Resource Centre on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Intercultural Education<sup>24</sup> in Oslo is to promote understanding and increase mutual knowledge in order

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24. The European Resource Centre on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Intercultural Education in Oslo is now known as the Wergeland Centre, Oslo.

to build trust and prevent conflicts through teacher training, in co-operation with the Council of Europe.

#### *4.3.6. The family environment*

Parents and the wider family environment play important roles in preparing young people for living in a culturally diverse society. As role models for their children, they need to be involved fully in changing mentalities and perceptions. Adult and family education programmes addressing the issue of cultural diversity can assist the family in fulfilling this role.

### **4.4. Spaces for intercultural dialogue**

It is essential to engender spaces for dialogue that are open to all. Successful intercultural governance, at any level, is largely a matter of cultivating such spaces: physical spaces like streets, markets and shops, houses, kindergartens, schools and universities, cultural and social centres, youth clubs, churches, synagogues and mosques, company meeting rooms and workplaces, museums, libraries and other leisure facilities, or virtual spaces like the media.

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 existence, open-minded places can bring diverse sections of society together and breed a sense of tolerance. It is critically important that migrant populations do not find themselves, as so often, concentrated on soulless and stigmatised housing estates, excluded and alienated from city life.

Cultural activities can provide knowledge of diverse cultural expressions and so contribute to tolerance, mutual understanding and respect. Cultural creativity offers significant 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 potential for dialogue.

Museums and heritage sites have the potential to challenge, in the name of common humanity, selective narratives reflecting the historical dominance of members of one or other ethnic or national community, 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. Europe's historical transborder and continental routes, today rediscovered with the help of the Council of Europe as the network of "cultural routes", influenced the history of cultural relations and for centuries supported intercultural exchange; they provide access to Europe's multicultural heritage and illustrate the ability to live together peacefully in diversity.

Kindergartens, schools, youth clubs and youth activities in general are key sites for intercultural learning and dialogue. For this to be true, children and young people should be given the opportunity to meet and engage with their peers from diverse backgrounds, with a view to communicate and to develop joint activities. The more integrated these sites are, the more effective they are in terms of intercultural learning.

The media present critical spaces for indirect dialogue. They express society's cultural diversity, they put cultures into context and can provide platforms for diverse perspectives with which their readers, viewers or listeners may not come into contact day to day. To do so, they should ensure that their own workforces are diverse and trained to engage with diversity. The new communication services allow members of otherwise passive media audiences to participate in mediated intercultural dialogue, particularly via social networking sites, web-based forums and "wiki" collaborations.

A bewildering array of identity role models are offered by the global media. 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 diversity democratically is delicate work: it should not heavily handedly put dialogue in a straitjacket and should prevent it from being used to incite hate or intolerance.

Sport is an important potential arena for intercultural dialogue, which connects it directly to everyday life. Football in particular, as a global game, has been the subject of many anti-racist initiatives in recent years, supported in a European context by UEFA (Union of European Football Associations), which has identified a ten-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.

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. 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 members of minority groups, 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 damaging effects of labour-market segmentation, which racist organisations may exploit.

The daily life of public services, non-governmental organisations and religious communities offers many occasions for intercultural dialogue, as against mere encounters. 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 trained so that such encounters become productive engagements. In health, for instance, maternity and mental health may be particularly sensitive. The recruitment of members of minority groups from different ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic backgrounds 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. Town twinning schemes are excellent opportunities for promoting expertise in this area.

#### **4.5. Intercultural dialogue in international relations**

Europe's commitment to multilateralism based on international law and the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law should inspire intercultural dialogue on an international scale. Applying these principles to intercultural dialogue in the international sphere is an important task in facilitating mutual understanding. The European consensus on this task has been strengthened by the conclusions reached by the 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 2005) and elaborated in later documents.

The current geopolitical situation is sometimes described as one of mutually exclusive civilisations, vying for relative economic and political advantages at each other's cost. The concept of intercultural dialogue can help overcome the sterile juxtapositions and stereotypes that may flow from such a world view because it emphasises that in a global environment, marked by migration, growing interdependence and easy access to international media and new communication services like the Internet, cultural identities are increasingly complex, they overlap and contain elements from many different sources. Imbuing international relations with the spirit of intercultural dialogue responds productively to this new condition. Intercultural dialogue can thus

contribute to conflict prevention and conflict solution, and support reconciliation and the rebuilding of social trust.

The Council of Europe remains open to co-operation with Europe's neighbouring regions and the rest of the world. The Organisation, which is strongly committed to ensure co-ordination and complementarity of its action with that of other international institutions, notably at European level, has the task of contributing to intercultural dialogue at an international level. In international action, in particular on the European scene, it is an important contributor to intercultural dialogue. Its "added value", which it puts at the disposal of other international institutions, member states, civil society and all the other stakeholders, consists primarily of its rich expertise in terms of standards and monitoring mechanisms in human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe can also contribute its expertise on the challenges posed by cultural diversity in the social, educational, health and cultural spheres. The Organisation reaches out, continuously and in a structured way, to key stakeholder groups like the members of national parliaments, local and regional authorities and civil-society organisations in the 47 member states. Finally, it can contribute via institutions like the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (the North-South Centre, Lisbon), the European Centre for Modern Languages (Graz), the two European Youth Centres (Strasbourg and Budapest), as well as through co-operation with the European Resource Centre on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Intercultural Education (Oslo) and the European Cultural Centre of Delphi.

The Council of Europe acknowledges the importance of initiatives taken by other international actors and values its partnerships with institutions, such as the European Union, the OSCE and UNESCO, as well as ALECSO and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures. The Council of Europe contributes to the Alliance of Civilizations launched by the United Nations Secretary General and sponsored by Spain and Turkey, and is considering concluding a Memorandum of Understanding with the Alliance of Civilizations in order to strengthen their relations of co-operation.<sup>25</sup> It is also exploring ways to promote intercultural dialogue in the framework of the Council of Europe's *acquis* in the fields of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in exchanges with other actors such as the Islamic Educational, Scientific and

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25. On 15 January 2008, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the High Representative of the United Nations for the Alliance of Civilizations signed a Letter of Intent pertaining to future co-operation and the development of a Memorandum of Understanding.

Cultural Organisation (IYESCO) and the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA).

An organisation such as the Council of Europe can also use the affinities and co-operation schemes that some of its member states have with particular parts of the globe. Transfrontier links, traditionally supported by the Council of Europe, have an important intercultural dimension.

Internationally organised non-state actors like non-governmental organisations, foundations or religious communities 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 create 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 complexity and contextual character of identity and can be pioneers of intercultural dialogue.



## 5

## Recommendations and policy orientations for future action: the shared responsibility of the core actors

Strengthening intercultural dialogue in order to promote our common values of respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and thus fostering greater European unity, is the shared responsibility of all stakeholders. The active involvement of all in the five policy areas identified in the preceding chapter will allow everyone to benefit from our rich cultural heritage and present-day environment. Based on its conception of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, based also on its long-standing experience, the Council of Europe can formulate the following general recommendations and guidelines, and develop policy orientations for its future action.

### 5.1. Democratic governance of cultural diversity

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

**Intercultural dialogue needs a neutral institutional and legal framework at national and local level, guaranteeing the human rights standards of the Council of Europe and based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law.** There should in particular be clear legislation and policies 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 any other status, such as, *inter alia*, sexual orientation in accordance with the Court's case law,<sup>26</sup> or age or physical or mental disability in accordance with the explanatory report of Protocol No. 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights.<sup>27</sup> ECRI has provided guidance in respect of national legislation to combat racism and racial

26. See in particular the judgments *Smith and Grady v. United Kingdom*, Nos. 33985/96 and 33986/96 – 29 September 1999, paragraph 90; *S.L. v. Austria*, No. 45330/99 – 9 January 2003, paragraph 37; *Karner v. Austria*, No. 40016/98 – 24 July 2003, paragraph 37.

27. See explanatory report to Protocol No. 12 of the European Convention on Human Rights, paragraph 20.

discrimination.<sup>28</sup> Relations between religion and the state should be organised in a way to ensure that everyone has equal rights and responsibilities regardless of his or her thought, conscience or religion so that, in practice, freedom of conscience and religion is fully respected.

**An inner coherence between the different policies that promote, or risk obstructing, intercultural dialogue should 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. Drawing up and implementing a “National Action Plan”, based on international human rights standards including those of the Council of Europe and reflecting the recommendations of this White Paper, can effectively contribute to the vision of an integrated society safeguarding the diversity of its members and set down objectives which can be translated into programmes and which are open to public monitoring. The Council of Europe is ready to assist the development of such national action plans and the evaluation of their implementation. Political leadership at the highest level is essential for success. Civil society, including minority and migrant associations, can play an important role. In order to promote integration, consultative bodies could be formed that involve representatives of the various partners concerned. National action plans should be inclusive of both recent migrants and long-standing minority groups.

The Council of Europe could commission a follow-up initiative which could involve both research and conferences, to explore the wider concept of an intercultural approach to managing cultural diversity of which intercultural dialogue is a significant component. In particular this work could explore the linkages/synergy between an intercultural approach to managing diversity and integration policy. This could be followed up with a series of actions across the Council of Europe area to promote the concept of an intercultural approach to managing cultural diversity, including integration.

**Public authorities should be sensitive to the expectations of a culturally diverse population and ensure that the provision of public services respects the legitimate claims, and is able to reply to the wishes, of all groups in society.** This requirement, flowing from the principles of non-discrimination and equality, is particularly important in policing, health, youth, education, culture and heritage, housing, social support, access to justice and the labour market. Involvement of representatives of people belonging to

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28. ECRI General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, 2002.

minority and disadvantaged groups during the formulation of service-delivery policies and the preparation of decisions on the allocation of resources, as well as recruitment of individuals from these groups to the service workforce, are important steps.

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

Public displays of racism, xenophobia or any other form of intolerance<sup>29</sup> must be rejected and condemned, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, irrespective of whether they originate with bearers of public office or in civil society. Every form of stigmatisation of persons belonging to minority and disadvantaged groups in public discourse needs to be ruled out. The media can make a positive contribution to the fight against intolerance, especially where they foster a culture of understanding between members of different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious communities. 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, mutual understanding and respect.

States should have robust legislation to outlaw “hate speech” and racist, xenophobic, homophobic, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and anti-Gypsy or other expressions, where this incites hatred or violence. Members of the criminal justice system should be well trained to implement and uphold such legislation. Independent national anti-discrimination bodies or similar structures should also be in place, to scrutinise the effectiveness of such legislation, conduct the relevant training and support victims of racist expression.

A particular responsibility falls on the shoulders of political leaders. Their stances influence public views on intercultural issues, potentially tempering or exacerbating tensions. ECRI has addressed these dangers and their translation into practice and formulated a number of practical measures that can be taken to counter the

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29. The 3rd Summit of the Council of Europe in 2005 strongly condemned “all forms of intolerance and discrimination, in particular those based on sex, race and religion, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia”. The Committee of Ministers has also frequently recognised that Roma/Gypsies and Travellers have been experiencing widespread discrimination in all areas of life. Furthermore, ECRI recommended that the law should penalise “the public denial, trivialisation, justification or condoning, with a racist aim, of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes” when committed intentionally (General Policy Recommendation No. 7 on national legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination, 2002). ECRI further underlined the need to combat prejudice suffered by Muslim communities and to impose appropriate sanctions in cases of discrimination on grounds of religion (General Policy Recommendation No. 5 on combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims).

use of racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic political discourse.<sup>30</sup> Municipal leaders can do much by the exercise of civic leadership to ensure intercommunal peace. ECRI also recommends that public financing be denied to political parties that promote racism, particularly through “hate speech”.

**Public authorities are encouraged to take, where necessary, adequate positive action in support of the access of persons belonging to disadvantaged or under-represented groups to positions of responsibility within professional life, associations, politics and local and regional authorities, paying due regard to required professional competences.** The principle that, in certain circumstances, adequate measures to promote full and effective equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those belonging to the majority could be necessary, should be recognised by all member states, with the explicit proviso that such measures should not be considered as discrimination. The specific conditions of persons belonging to national minorities should be duly taken into account when such measures are taken.<sup>31</sup>

#### **Facilitating 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 Council of Europe will act to disseminate its legal standards and guidelines in new, attractive forms to target groups such as public authorities and decision makers, leaders of civil-society organisations and the media, and the young generation. This will include material for wide circulation on the respect of human rights in a culturally diverse 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 on Human Rights.

The Steering Committee for Human Rights will pursue a range of issues concerning respect for human rights in a culturally diverse society, which may lead to the adoption of a Council of Europe policy text. It will also follow developments in the field of cultural rights.

#### **The Council of Europe as a regular forum for intercultural dialogue**

Through its programme of activities, the Council of Europe continues to contribute its expertise in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law to the debate between member states, civil society and other stakeholders on intercultural dialogue, thus preparing action at international, national and local level.

More generally, there needs to be more dialogue about intercultural dialogue, if the roles of the Council of Europe outlined in this document are to be properly fulfilled. The Council of Europe's programme of activities offers numerous possibilities for a sustained and intensified dialogue. Examples have been set by ministerial conferences, parliamentary debates, training seminars with youth organisations and expert colloquies such as the previous

30. “Declaration on the use of racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse” (March 2005).

31. Article 4 paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

“intercultural fora” organised by the Council of Europe,<sup>32</sup> which have provided important insights – many feeding into this White Paper. Ways will be sought to organise further intercultural fora in the future.

Another example is the planned conference with government experts and 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 freedom of speech and of religion.

A new anti-discrimination campaign, building upon the “All Different – All Equal” youth campaigns but targeting the wider public, addresses all forms of discrimination and racism particularly anti-Semitism, Islamophobia and anti-Gypsy. In the field of cultural policies, the Council of Europe will develop its systems for sharing information on cultural policies and standards and the documentation of examples of good practice, to encourage cultural policies facilitating access and encouraging participation by all. The “Compendium of cultural policies and trends in Europe” will continue to be updated and developed.<sup>33</sup> The Council of Europe will co-operate with other European and international institutions in gathering and analysing data, and making available information on intercultural dialogue in member states.

#### **A Europe-wide campaign against discrimination**

The Council of Europe, together with media professionals and journalism training institutions, is launching a campaign against discrimination in 2008, bringing into focus the role of the media in multicultural Europe.

## **5.2. Democratic citizenship and participation**

**Public authorities and all social forces are encouraged to develop the necessary framework of dialogue through educational initiatives and practical arrangements involving majorities and minorities.** Democracy depends on the active involvement of the individual in public affairs. Exclusion of anyone from the life of the community cannot be justified and would indeed constitute a serious obstacle to intercultural dialogue.

Sustainable forms of dialogue – for example, the consultative bodies to represent foreign residents vis-à-vis public authorities and “local integration committees” as advocated by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe<sup>34</sup> – can make significant contributions.

32. Sarajevo in 2003, Troina in 2004 and Bucharest in 2006.

33. 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](http://www.culturalpolicies.net).

34. Sonia Gsir, Marco Martiniello, *Local Consultative Bodies for Foreign Residents: A Handbook* (Strasbourg: Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, 2004).

**No undue restriction must be placed on the exercise of human rights, including by non-citizens.** 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. This consideration has been particularly emphasised by the Venice Commission.<sup>35</sup>

**Public authorities should encourage active participation in public life at local level by all those legally resident in their jurisdiction, including possibly the right to vote in local and regional elections on the basis of principles provided for by the Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level.** In so far 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 in line with the principles enshrined in the European Convention on Nationality.

**Public authorities should support effectively the work of civil-society organisations promoting participation and democratic citizenship, particularly those representing or working with youth and with people belonging to minorities, including migrants.** Democratic citizenship and participation is frequently exercised through civil-society organisations. These should be enabled to play their particularly important role in culturally diverse societies, be it as service providers attending to the needs of people belonging to a specific group, as advocates of diversity and the rights of people belonging to minorities, or as vehicles of social integration and cohesion. In the arena of intercultural dialogue, representatives of specific minority 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 should be actively 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 to strengthen civic involvement and a culture of democratic participation.** Good practice here is a municipal integration or “foreigners” council, offering a mechanism for people belonging to minorities and for migrants to engage with the local political

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35. Venice Commission, Report on non-citizens and minority rights, CDL-AD(2007)001, ad paragraph 144.

leadership. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe has provided detailed guidance on this.

The Council of Europe is committed to strengthening democratic citizenship and participation through many of its programmes, among them “Intercultural Cities”; a capacity-building and policy-development field programme. Participating cities will work towards intercultural strategies for the management of diversity as a resource. The programme will be developed in co-operation with a range of intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

Cultural diversity in urban areas will be a further priority theme. Successful cities 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.

### 5.3. Learning and teaching intercultural competences

**The learning and teaching of intercultural competence is essential for democratic culture and social cohesion.** Providing a quality education for all, aimed at inclusion, promotes active involvement and civic commitment and prevents 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 – as well as the media, social and cultural partners and religious communities engaged in non-formal or informal education.

Public authorities, civil-society organisations and other education providers should make the development of intercultural dialogue and inclusive education an important element at all levels. **Intercultural competences should be a part of citizenship and human rights education. Competent public authorities and education institutions should make full use of descriptors of key competences for intercultural communication in designing and implementing curricula and study programmes at all levels of education, including teacher training and adult education programmes.** Complementary tools should be developed to encourage students to exercise independent critical faculties, including critical reflection 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

#### 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.

in-service training of teachers. School and family-based exchanges should be made a regular feature of the secondary curriculum.

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

**Educational establishments and all other stakeholders engaged in educational activities are invited to ensure that the learning and teaching of history follows the recommendations of the Committee of Ministers on history teaching and focuses not only on the history of one’s own country, but includes learning the history of other countries and cultures, as well as how others have looked at our own society (multiperspectivity), at the same time being attentive to the respect of the fundamental values of the Council of Europe and including the dimension of human rights education.<sup>36</sup>**

Knowledge of the past is essential to understand society as it is today and to prevent a repeat of history’s tragic events. In this respect, competent public authorities and education institutions are strongly encouraged to prepare and observe an annual “Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the Prevention of Crimes against Humanity”, on a date chosen in the light of each country’s history. Such an event can draw on the Council of Europe’s project on “Teaching remembrance – Education for prevention of crimes against humanity”, which was designed to help school pupils to find out about and understand the events that darkened European and world history and to recognise the uniqueness of the Holocaust as the first deliberate attempt to exterminate a people on a global scale; to raise awareness of all of the genocides and

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36. Recommendation (2001)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on history teaching in twenty-first century Europe underlines, *inter alia*, that “History teaching must not be an instrument of ideological manipulation, of propaganda or used for the promotion of intolerant and ultra-nationalistic, xenophobic, racist or anti-Semitic ideas. Historical research and history as it is taught in schools cannot in any way, with any intention, be compatible with the fundamental values and statutes of the Council of Europe if it allows or promotes misuses of history, namely through:

- falsification or creation of false evidence, doctored statistics, faked images, etc.;
- fixation on one event to justify or conceal another;
- distortion of the past for the purposes of propaganda;
- an excessively nationalistic version of the past which may create the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy;
- abuse of the historical record;
- denial of historical fact;
- omission of historical fact.” (Appendix, Section 2 on the “misuse of history”).



crimes against humanity that marked the 20th century; to educate pupils about how to prevent crimes against humanity; and to foster understanding, tolerance and friendship between nations, ethnic groups and religious communities, while remaining faithful to the Council of Europe's fundamental principles.

**An appreciation of our diverse cultural background should include knowledge and understanding of the major world religions and non-religious convictions and their role in society.**

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.

Appreciation of different expressions of creativity, including artefacts, symbols, texts, objects, dress and food should be incorporated into learning about one another. Music, art and dance can be powerful tools for intercultural education.

Competent public authorities are also invited to take into account the effects of regulations and policies – such as visa requirements or work and residence permits for academic staff, students, artists and performers – on educational and cultural exchanges. Appropriately designed regulations and policies can greatly support intercultural dialogue.

The Council of Europe itself is strongly committed to the transmission of intercultural competences through education. 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" at all levels. The Organisation will work to make the promotion of democratic culture and intercultural dialogue a component of the European Higher Education Area after 2010. The European 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.

The Council of Europe will continue to develop instruments to strengthen intercultural dialogue through approaches to history teaching based on objectivity, critical analysis and multiperspectivity, mutual respect and tolerance and the core values of the Council of Europe. It will support every effort in the educational sphere to prevent recurrence or denial of the Holocaust, genocides and other crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and massive violations of human rights and of the fundamental values to which the Council of Europe is particularly committed. Council of Europe will also continue and consider extending the project

**The Council of Europe aims to remain the reference institution on the teaching and learning of intercultural competences and will continue to give importance to these themes**

In co-operation with competent public authorities, education providers and experts, the Council of Europe will continue its innovative work on the definition, development, dissemination and transmission of intercultural competences, and undertake related initiatives in the field of language policies.

“Teaching remembrance – Education for prevention of crimes against humanity”. 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. It will also 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 and convictional 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 work on media literacy.

These activities will be complemented by initiatives in the areas of cultural and heritage policies, aimed at broadening intercultural understanding and providing wider access to the cultural heritage which has an important role to play in intercultural dialogue. In this respect, accent will be put on knowledge and respect of cultural heritage of the other, through appropriate programmes, as a source of diversity and cultural enrichment.

#### **5.4. 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.

**Public authorities and all social actors are invited to develop intercultural dialogue in the spaces of everyday life and in the framework of the respect of fundamental freedoms.** There are an unlimited number of possibilities for creating such spaces.

Public authorities are responsible for organising civic life and urban space in such a way that opportunities for dialogue based on

**The current project “The image of the Other in history teaching” will be continued and developed**

The Council of Europe will continue the project and consider broadening its scope particularly through co-operation with UNESCO, ALECSO and IRCICA.

freedom of expression and the principles of democracy 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, such as parks, civic squares, airports and train stations. 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 civic sense of place and an intercultural commitment.

**Civil-society organisations in particular, including religious communities, are invited to provide the organisational framework for intercultural and inter-religious 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.

**Journalism, promoted in a responsible manner through codes of ethics as advanced by the media industry itself and a culture-sensitive training of journalists, can help provide fora for intercultural dialogue.** In order to reflect societies’ diverse composition in their internal structure, media organisations are invited to adopt a voluntary policy, underpinned by appropriate training schemes, of promoting members of disadvantaged groups and under-represented minorities at all levels of production and management, paying due regard to required professional competences.

The Council of Europe sees this as an important realisation of freedom of expression and as the responsibility not only of public broadcasters. All media should examine how they can promote minority voices, intercultural dialogue and mutual respect.

**Public authorities and non-state actors are encouraged to promote culture, the arts and heritage, which provide particularly important spaces for dialogue.** The cultural heritage, “classical” cultural activities, “cultural routes”, contemporary art forms, popular and street culture, the culture transmitted by the media and the Internet naturally cross borders and connect cultures. Art and culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, and 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.

Through the “2008 Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue” organised on 8 April 2008 on an experimental basis, the Council of Europe has given representatives of religious communities and of other actors of civil society, as well as the experts present, an opportunity for an in-depth discussion of the principles

#### **Council of Europe Media Award for Intercultural Dialogue**

The Council of Europe intends, through an annual award, to recognise media which have made an outstanding contribution to conflict prevention or resolution, understanding and dialogue. It also intends to set up a web-based information network on the contribution of the media to intercultural dialogue.

governing education policy in teaching religious and convictional facts, as well as the practical details of organising such teaching. The exchange also helped identify issues, approaches and ideas which the participants can apply in their own fields of activity, as well as a number of recommendations for the Council of Europe's targeted activities. Any further possible follow-up action to the "2008 Exchange" will be discussed within the framework of the assessment of the exercise to be undertaken in the course of 2008.

The Council of Europe will pursue flagship initiatives vis-à-vis the media. Apart from a media award for contributions to intercultural dialogue, the Organisation – following consultations with other international institutions and in co-operation with appropriate partners – intends to build up an informal, mainly web-based network of relevant professionals and organisations, dealing with the rights, responsibilities and working conditions of journalists in times of crisis.

#### **5.5. Intercultural dialogue in international relations**

##### **Local and regional authorities should consider engaging in co-operation with partner institutions in other parts of Europe.**

Action at this level is an essential component of good neighbourliness between states and therefore an excellent frame for the development of intercultural relations. Local and regional authorities can organise regular and institutionalised consultations with the territorial communities or 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 training, including language training, for those involved locally in such co-operation.

**Civil-society organisations and education providers can contribute to intercultural dialogue in Europe and internationally, for example through participation in European non-governmental structures, cross-border partnerships and exchange schemes, particularly for young people.** It is the responsibility of international institutions like the Council of Europe to support civil society and education providers in this task.

The media are encouraged to develop arrangements for sharing and co-producing – at the regional, national or European level – programme material which has proven its value in mobilising public opinion against intolerance and improving community relations.

The Council of Europe will promote and expand co-operation with other organisations active in intercultural dialogue, including UNESCO and the Alliance of Civilizations initiative, the OSCE, the

EU and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, as well as other regional organisations, such as the League of Arab States and its educational, cultural and scientific organisation, ALECSO, representing a region with many ties to Europe and a distinct cultural tradition. The Council of Europe will also promote intercultural dialogue on the basis of its standards and values when co-operating in the context of specific projects with institutions such as ISESCO and IRCICA. 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.

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 with UNESCO in 2005 to promote inter-institutional co-operation in intercultural dialogue.

Other priority activities in this context include the following:

- The EU designated 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and the experimental “2008 Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue” constitute two important Council of Europe contributions to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.<sup>37</sup> The Council of Europe is making specific contributions to the programme of activities and to a dynamic debate about long-term policy perspectives, also through other activities, such as through the 2008 Anti-Discrimination Campaign, the “Intercultural Cities” project, the publication of case law of the European Court of Human Rights on intercultural dialogue issues and the European Resource Centre on education for democratic citizenship and intercultural education (Oslo).
- The Council of Europe recognises the contribution of the North-South Centre and its essential role. It brings together not only governments but also parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and civil society. Its programme priorities are global education, youth, human rights, democratic governance and intercultural dialogue. The centre adds an important dimension to the international efforts aimed at the promotion of intercultural learning, understanding and political dialogue within and between the different continents.

#### **Enlarging and invigorating the “Faro Open Platform”**

The Council of Europe will, in consultation with UNESCO, develop the potential of the “Faro Open Platform” for the international co-ordination of action on intercultural dialogue.

<sup>37</sup> These initiatives also come as two concrete examples for the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded between the European Union and the Council of Europe, in the field of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.

- “Artists for Dialogue” is the title of a new cultural and heritage programme that will be launched in 2008 to enhance intercultural dialogue among artists and cultural actors, taking in the Mediterranean region.
- The Venice Commission will continue its co-operation with constitutional courts and equivalent bodies in Africa, Asia and the Americas as well as with Arab countries. It provides a good example of intercultural dialogue based on practical action and the principles of the constitutional heritage.
- The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe is set to continue its work with partners in the Mediterranean region, particularly in the framework of Israel–Palestine collaboration and co-operation with Arab cities on issues such as good governance at local level and questions related to migration.

This White Paper seeks to set a clear course for intercultural dialogue, but it cannot provide a detailed road map. It is one step on a longer road. Its conclusions and recommendations need to be monitored, and adapted if necessary, in dialogue with the other stakeholders. The guidelines and practical orientations defined here should be appropriately followed up and evaluated.

The Council of Europe invites all other stakeholders to continue what has sometimes been described as the “White Paper process”, which has brought the Council of Europe into contact with countless partners, ranging from international institutions to grass-roots activists. All our partners are encouraged to continue advising the Organisation on the course to follow, to suggest programmes and projects, and to alert us to developments that may place intercultural dialogue at risk.

Intercultural dialogue is critical to the construction of a new social and cultural model for a fast-changing Europe, allowing everyone living within our culturally diverse societies to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms. This emerging model is a work in progress and a work of many hands. It involves wide responsibilities for public authorities at all levels, for civil-society associations and all other stakeholders.

The Council of Europe presents this White Paper as a contribution to an international discussion steadily gaining momentum. The task of living together amid growing cultural diversity while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms has become one of the major demands of our times and is set to remain relevant for many years to come.

Strasbourg, June 2008





## Appendix

### Selected conventions, declarations, recommendations and other reference texts of the Council of Europe relevant to intercultural dialogue<sup>38</sup>

#### Selected European conventions

Convention (Date of opening of the treaty; status of ratifications, accessions and signatures as of April 2008))	Ratifications/ accessions	Signatures not fol- lowed by ratifications
Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (also known as the European Convention on Human Rights) (1950) – ETS No. 5	47	0
European Cultural Convention (1954) – ETS No. 18	49	0
European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (1977) – ETS No. 93	11	4
European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (1980) – ETS No. 106	36	2
European Charter of Local Self-Government (1985) – ETS No. 122	43	1
European Convention on Transfrontier Television (1989) – ETS No. 132	32	7
European Code of Social Security (Revised) (1990) – ETS No. 139	0	14
Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level (1992) – ETS No. 144	8	5
European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992) – ETS No. 148	23	10
Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995) – ETS No. 157	39	4
European Social Charter (1961) – ETS No. 35 – and European Social Charter (1996) revised – ETS No. 163	39	8
Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (1997) – ETS No. 165	47	4
European Convention on Nationality (1997) – ETS No. 166	16	11
European Convention on the Promotion of a Transnational Long-Term Voluntary Service for Young People (2000) – ETS No. 175	1	8
Convention on Cybercrime (2001) – ETS No. 185	22	22
Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (2005) – CETS No. 196	11	31
Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (2005) – CETS No. 199	3	10

38. Declarations, recommendations and resolutions adopted after 1980 are listed in chronological order. All texts are accessible on the website of the Council of Europe at [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int).

### **Declarations of Summits, Ministerial Conferences and the Committee of Ministers**

“Declaration regarding intolerance – A threat to democracy”, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May 1981

“Declaration on the equality of women and men”, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 16 November 1988

“Declaration on the multicultural society and European cultural identity”, adopted by the European ministers responsible for cultural affairs at their 6th conference, Palermo, Italy, April 1990

“Vienna Declaration”, adopted at the First Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, Vienna, Austria, October 1993

“Final Declaration” and “Action Plan” of the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, France, November 1997

Resolution No.1 on the European Language Portfolio adopted at the 19th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, Kristiansand, Norway, 22-24 June 1997

“Budapest Declaration” (“For a greater Europe without dividing lines”), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 May 1999

Resolution No. 2 on the European Language Portfolio adopted at the 20th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, Cracow, Poland, 15-17 October 2000

“Declaration on cultural diversity”, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2000

“Helsinki Declaration”, adopted by the 7th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs, Helsinki, Finland, September 2002

“Declaration on intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention”, adopted by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, Opatija, Croatia, October 2003

Resolution Res(2003)7 on the youth policy of the Council of Europe, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 29 October 2003

“Declaration on intercultural education in the new European context”, adopted by the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education, Athens, Greece, November 2003

Resolution on “The roles of women and men in conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict democratic processes – a gender perspective” adopted by the 5th European Ministerial Conference

on Equality between Women and Men, Skopje, “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”, 22-23 January 2003

Revised Strategy for Social Cohesion, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 March 2004

“Wrocław Declaration”, adopted by the European ministers responsible for culture, education, youth and sport, Wrocław, Poland, December 2004

“Warsaw Declaration” and “Action Plan”, adopted by the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe, Warsaw, Poland, May 2005

Final Declaration adopted by the European ministers responsible for youth on “Human dignity and social cohesion: youth policy responses to violence”, Budapest, Hungary, September 2005

“Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe’s strategy for developing intercultural dialogue”, adopted by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for cultural affairs, Faro, Portugal, October 2005

Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of the 1000th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies, “One Europe – Our Europe”, Belgrade, Serbia, June 2007

Final Declaration of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education on “Building a more humane and inclusive Europe: role of education policies”, Istanbul, Turkey, 4-5 May 2007

“Valencia Declaration”, adopted by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, Valencia, Spain, October 2007

Informal Regional Conference of Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs on “The Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue and the White Paper of the Council of Europe”, Belgrade, Serbia, November 2007

“Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at Local Level”, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in March 2008

### **Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers**

Recommendation No. R (81) 18 concerning participation at municipal level

Recommendation No. R (82) 9 on European Schools Day

Recommendation No. R (82) 18 concerning modern languages

Recommendation No. R (83) 1 on stateless nomads and nomads of undetermined nationality

Recommendation No. R (84) 7 on the maintenance of migrants' cultural links with their countries of origin and leisure facilities

Recommendation No. R (84) 9 on second-generation migrants

Recommendation No. R (84) 13 concerning the situation of foreign students

Recommendation No. R (84) 17 on equality between women and men in the media

Recommendation No. R (84) 18 on the training of teachers in education for intercultural understanding, notably in a context of migration

Recommendation No. R (84) 21 on the acquisition by refugees of the nationality of the host country

Recommendation No. R (85) 2 on legal protection against sex discrimination

Recommendation No. R (85) 7 on teaching and learning about human rights in schools

Recommendation No. R (85) 21 on mobility of academic staff

Recommendation No. R (86) 8 on the exercise in the state of residence by nationals of other member states of the right to vote in the elections of the state of origin

Recommendation No. R (86) 17 on concerted cultural action abroad

Recommendation No. R (88) 6 on social reactions to juvenile delinquency among young people coming from migrant families

Recommendation No. R (88) 14 on migrants' housing

Recommendation No. R (90) 4 on the elimination of sexism from language

Recommendation No. R (90) 22 on the protection of the mental health of certain vulnerable groups in society

Recommendation No. R (92) 10 on the implementation of rights of persons belonging to national minorities

Recommendation No. R (92) 11 on social and vocational integration of young people

Recommendation No. R (92) 12 on community relations

Recommendation No. R (92) 19 on video games with a racist content

Recommendation No. R (95) 7 on the brain drain in the sectors of higher education and research

Recommendation No. R (95) 8 on academic mobility

Recommendation No. R (97) 3 on youth participation and the future of civil society

Recommendation No. R (97) 7 on local public services and the rights of their users

Recommendation No. R (97) 20 on “hate speech”

Recommendation No. R (97) 21 on the media and the promotion of a culture of tolerance

Recommendation No. R (98) 3 on access to higher education

Recommendation No. R (98) 6 concerning modern languages

Recommendation No. R (99) 1 on measures to promote media pluralism

Recommendation No. R (99) 2 on secondary education

Recommendation No. R (99) 9 on the role of sport in furthering social cohesion

Recommendation No. R (2000) 1 on fostering transfrontier co-operation between territorial communities or authorities in the cultural field

Recommendation No. R (2000)4 on the education of Roma/Gypsy children in Europe

Recommendation No. R (2000)5 on the development of structures for citizen and patient participation in the decision-making process affecting health care

Recommendation Rec(2001)6 on the prevention of racism, xenophobia and racial intolerance in sport

Recommendation Rec(2001)10 on the European Code of Police Ethics

Recommendation Rec(2001)15 on history teaching in twenty-first-century Europe

Recommendation Rec(2001)17 on improving the economic and employment situation of Roma/Gypsies and Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2001)19 on the participation of citizens in local public life

Recommendation Rec(2002)4 on the legal status of persons admitted for family reunification

Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence

Recommendation Rec(2002)12 on education for democratic citizenship

Recommendation Rec(2003)2 on neighbourhood services in disadvantaged urban areas

Recommendation Rec(2003)3 on balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision making

Recommendation Rec(2003)6 on improving physical education and sport for children and young people in all European countries

Recommendation Rec(2003)8 on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people

Recommendation Rec(2003)9 on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting

Recommendation Rec(2004)2 on the access of non-nationals to employment in the public sector

Recommendation Rec(2004)4 on the European Convention on Human Rights in university education and professional training

Recommendation Rec(2004)13 on the participation of young people in local and regional life

Recommendation Rec(2004)14 on the movement and encampment of Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2005)2 on good practices in and reducing obstacles to transfrontier and interterritorial co-operation between territorial communities or authorities

Recommendation Rec(2005)3 on teaching neighbouring languages in border regions

Recommendation Rec(2005)4 on improving the housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2005)8 on the principles of good governance in sport

Recommendation Rec(2006)1 on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development

Recommendation Rec(2006)2 on the European Prison Rules

Recommendation Rec(2006)3 on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

Recommendation Rec(2006)5 on the Council of Europe Action Plan to promote the rights and full participation of people with disabilities in society: improving the quality of life of people with disabilities in Europe 2006-2015

Recommendation Rec(2006)9 on the admission, rights and obligations of migrant students and co-operation with countries of origin

Recommendation Rec(2006)10 on better access to health care for Roma and Travellers in Europe

Recommendation Rec(2006)12 on empowering children in the new information and communications environment

Recommendation Rec(2006)14 on citizenship and participation of young people in public life

Recommendation Rec(2006)17 on hospitals in transition: a new balance between institutional and community care

Recommendation Rec(2006)18 on health services in a multicultural society

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)2 on media pluralism and diversity of media content

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)3 on the remit of public service media in the information society

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)4 on local and regional public services

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 on the public responsibility for higher education and research

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)7 on good administration

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)9 on life projects for unaccompanied migrant minors

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)10 on co-development and migrants working for development in their countries of origin

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)11 on promoting freedom of expression and information in the new information and communications environment

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education

Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)17 on gender equality standards and mechanisms

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)4 on strengthening the integration of children of migrants and of immigrant background

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)5 on policies for Roma and/or Travellers in Europe

Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)6 on measures to promote the respect for freedom of expression and information with regard to Internet filters

European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2003, revised)

**Recommendations and resolutions  
of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe**

Resolution 807 (1983) on European co-operation in education

Resolution 885 (1987) on the Jewish contribution to European culture

Recommendation 1093 (1989) on education of migrants' children

Recommendation 1111 (1989) on the European dimension of education

Recommendation 1162 (1991) on the contribution of the Islamic civilisation to European culture

Recommendation 1178 (1992) on sects and new religious movements

Recommendation 1202 (1993) on religious tolerance in a democratic society

Recommendation 1281 (1995) on gender equality in education

Recommendation 1283 (1996) on history and the learning of history in Europe

Recommendation 1291 (1996) on Yiddish culture

Recommendation 1353 (1998) on access of minorities to higher education

Recommendation 1383 (1998) on linguistic diversification

Recommendation 1396 (1999) on religion and democracy

Recommendation 1412 (1999) on illegal activities of sects

Recommendation 1539 (2001) on the European Year of Languages

Resolution 1278 (2002) on Russia's law on religion

Resolution 1309 (2002) on freedom of religion and religious minorities in France

Recommendation 1556 (2002) on religion and change in central and eastern Europe

Recommendation 1598 (2003) on the protection of sign languages in the member states of the Council of Europe



Recommendation 1620 (2003) on Council of Europe contribution to the higher education area

Recommendation 1652 (2004) on education of refugees and internally displaced persons

Recommendation 1687 (2004) on combating terrorism through culture

Recommendation 1688 (2004) on diaspora cultures

Resolution 1437 on migration and integration: a challenge and an opportunity for Europe (2005)

Resolution 1464 (2005) on women and religion in Europe

Recommendation 1693 (2005) on the Parliamentary Assembly's contribution to the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe

Recommendation 1720 (2005) on education and religion

Resolution 1510 (2006) on freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs

Recommendation 1753 (2006) on external relations of the Council of Europe

Recommendation 1762 (2006) on academic freedom and university autonomy

Resolution 1563 (2007) on combating anti-Semitism in Europe

Recommendation 1804 (2007) on state, religion, secularity and human rights

Recommendation 1805 (2007) on blasphemy, religious insults and hate speech against persons on grounds of their religion

Resolution 1605 (2008) and Recommendation 1831 (2008) on European Muslim communities confronted with extremism

### **Recommendations, resolutions and declarations of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities**

Resolution 236 on a new municipal policy for multicultural integration in Europe and the Frankfurt Declaration (1992)

Recommendation 128 on the revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life (2003)

Final Declaration on "Foreigners' integration and participation in European cities", Stuttgart/Germany, 15-16 September 2003

Recommendation 165 on the fight against trafficking in human beings and their sexual exploitation: the role of cities and regions (2005)

Recommendation 170 on intercultural and inter-faith dialogue: initiatives and responsibilities of local authorities (2005)

Recommendation 173 on regional media and transfrontier co-operation (2005)

Recommendation 177 on cultural identity in peripheral urban areas: the role of local and regional authorities (2005)

Recommendation 194 (2006) on effective access to social rights for immigrants: the role of local and regional authorities (2006)

Recommendation 197 on urban security in Europe (2006)

Recommendation 207 on the development of social cohesion indicators – the concerted local and regional approach (2007)

Recommendation 209 on intergenerational co-operation and participatory democracy (2007)

Recommendation 211 on freedom of assembly and expression for lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered persons (2007)

Recommendation 221 on the institutional framework of inter-municipal co-operation (2007)

Recommendation 222 on language education in regional or minority languages (2007)

Resolution 250 on integration through sport (2008)

**Recommendations and declarations  
of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance  
(ECRI)**

General Policy Recommendation No. 1: Combating racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance (1996)

General Policy Recommendation No. 2: Specialised bodies to combat racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance at national level (1997)

General Policy Recommendation No. 3: Combating racism and intolerance against Roma/Gypsies (1998)

General Policy Recommendation No. 4: National surveys on the experience and perception of discrimination and racism from the point of view of potential victims (1998)

General Policy Recommendation No. 5: Combating intolerance and discrimination against Muslims (2000)

General Policy Recommendation No. 6: Combating the dissemination of racist, xenophobic and antisemitic material via the Internet (2000)

General Policy Recommendation No. 7: National legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination (2002)

General Policy Recommendation No. 8: Combating racism while fighting terrorism (2004)

General Policy Recommendation No. 9: The fight against antisemitism (2004)

General Policy Recommendation No.10: Combating racism and racial discrimination in and through school education (2007)

General Policy Recommendation No.11: Combating racism and racial discrimination in policing (2007)

General Policy Recommendation No. 12: Combating racism and racial discrimination in the field of sport

Declaration on the use of racist, antisemitic and xenophobic elements in political discourse (2005)

