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"[1] and to an informal Regional Conference of Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs.[2]

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.

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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.[3] 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.

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2 Embracing cultural diversity

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 multi-national 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.[4] 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".[5]

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. *Gorzelik 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[6]

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.[7] 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.