



Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue

Consultation for a “Rainbow Paper” – Recommendations to help shape a cross-cutting and effective Agenda for Intercultural Dialogue for Europe

Introduction

This consultation asks eight questions on how to make intercultural dialogue happen more (page 5). It solicits answers from a broad range of civil society actors with experience of, or interest in intercultural dialogue. The collective result will be the basis for a dissemination campaign in the course of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The text below explains the background and design of this initiative and gives more detailed information on how to participate. No single definition of intercultural dialogue is given in order not to prejudice the answers, although many relevant issues are mentioned.

***Please return the completed participation form to:
rainbow@efah.org
by Wednesday 22nd August 2007 (earlier if possible)***

What will the Rainbow Paper be and what is it for?

The Rainbow Paper will be a set of recommendations on intercultural dialogue based on the interests, knowledge and experience of the participants of the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue¹. It will not be based on an exhaustive analysis of existing legislation and policy tools at the various political levels (and where these are insufficient or defective). Neither will it be based on an academic collection and analysis of intercultural practice cases. Rather, the Rainbow Paper, will be created like a patchwork quilt: a pattern is proposed, but each participant is free to choose which ‘patch’ they want to work on and which ‘colours’ they want to use.

The underlying assumption of this process, and the Platform itself, is that Intercultural Dialogue, being a multi-faceted process with many stakeholders, can only be enhanced through combined efforts and synergies between the different actors of civil society. Culture, as a dynamic societal process, is the binding link and interest

¹ This Platform was launched in November 2006 as an initiative to complement the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. 96 organisations from across Europe participate in it to date. Participation has been informal. Further participation is invited. For details please go to <http://www.efah.org/index.php?id=153&pagelang=en>
<http://www.eurocult.org/we-advocate/advocacy-actions/civil-society-platform/>

among the participants of this dialogue and of the Platform. Therefore we need to map the potential areas of interaction between us. Although we are all civil society organisations with different *raison d'être*, objectives, backgrounds and histories, each of us is keen to use the opportunity of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 to share experiences, projects and strategies in order to build a common agenda with the same long-term objective, that is: to activate citizens, increase their enthusiasm in and engagement with other cultures forging Europe today thus contributing to an improved day-to-day living together of different individuals and communities. With the Rainbow Paper we are hoping to create an inventory of possible actions and effective practices, which could be our guide.

The European Commission and the Council of Europe have both held their consultations on Intercultural Dialogue.² Both institutions have asked very broad and difficult questions about the challenges of cultural diversity, the concept of Intercultural Dialogue or the action needed at political and institutional level. The Rainbow Paper will complement these exercises by extracting recommendations from the manifold, concrete ideas of civil society actors about making Intercultural Dialogue happen on the ground.

What will we do with your contributions to the Rainbow Paper?

Your contributions will be discussed, clustered, distilled, prioritised during a **3-day retreat with professional facilitation at Cittadellarte³ in Biella (70 km from Turin, Italy) from 6-9th September 2007**. The overall aim is to identify the different sectors' joint areas of engagement or their overlapping interest areas, in other words areas where art and non-art, education, social, human rights, anti-discrimination, minority, inter-religious (...) NGOs find cross-cutting issues on which they can collectively engage in the multi-layered process which Intercultural Dialogue is. Around 30 invited people (expenses covered) will put their heads together and begin to translate your proposals into a set of recommendations. Depending on your contribution to this consultation, you could be one of the participants (see request for expression of interest on page 6).

The resulting draft Rainbow Paper will then be tested at various events across Europe in the course of the autumn, starting with the Stakeholder Forum on Culture under the Portuguese EU Presidency⁴. We want to feel the pulse of Intercultural Dialogue in various locations across Europe. You can help with this testing at your own events (see questions on page 6).

Through the exposure of the draft Rainbow Paper to a multitude of groups in different places, its recommendations will be successively refined. The tested Rainbow Paper will be disseminated and used as the basis for debate and the solicitation of action in the course of 2008.

What will we do with the Rainbow Paper?

The joint and concerted approach which underlies the *Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue* and this consultation will above all extend into political advocacy which will be coordinated and implemented by the Platform secretariat but also, and in particular, in collaboration with each participating organisation. The

² http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/events/current/dialogue2008_en.htm

http://www.coe.int/T/dg4/intercultural/default_en.asp

³ <http://www.cittadellarte.it/citta2005/eng/home/home.htm>

⁴ <http://culturalforum.pt/site/index/en>

Rainbow Paper will be the basis for the Platform's dissemination campaign in 2008: starting with the opening of the Year under the Slovenian EU Presidency, the Platform secretariat and hopefully the Platform participants will push the recommendations across policy sectors in all relevant forums, and in as many European countries as possible. The Contact Group⁵ for the Year of Intercultural Dialogue will monitor the Year's projects and events. All this will lead to further informed and revised recommendations at the end of 2008. The Rainbow Paper as well as the revised recommendations will be at the disposal of all Platform participants at any time throughout the campaign and a means of sharing information and experience will be set up in the course of the year 2008.

How we would like you to participate⁶

All Platform participants, current and future, are asked to take their experience and knowledge and embark on a journey of imagination from a list of starting points on page 5. What matters for you in making Intercultural Dialogue happen?

It could be one of the following fields of action:

- Communication, interaction and mobility;
- Education: increasing the intercultural competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes) of Europe's citizens (e.g. cognitive competence: reading vs. labelling differences/stereotyping) and of organizations (e.g. composition of boards, review panels, membership etc - governance issues);
- Mediation (between ways of life, cultural practices, artistic and other traditions);
- Arts & culture (e.g. deconstructing stereotypes and challenging assumptions);
- Integration, participation and empowerment;
- Relating to the world beyond Europe.

This list is by no means complete and you are encouraged to suggest your own keywords.

You might want to touch on one of the following themes, but you can also come up with others: the relationship between the individual and a group/community, identity and belonging, cohesion between young and old, minorities and disadvantaged groups, migration, the ambivalence of differences (cultural differences demanding understanding and respect as opposed to social and economic differences demanding change), power inequalities, history interfering with the present (e.g. colonialism, occupation, war), freedom of speech, freedom of and access to information, cultural rights, quality of life, citizenship/active shareholding, globalization, a common good, world ethos ...

Start with a reason for action and say who can take this action and how. This should ideally be backed up by a practice example.

Of course, **you are welcome to contribute more than one suggestion**. In fact, those participants who are 'multipliers' - membership organisations, for example - are invited to **carry out this consultation independently among their network and present the collected results to the Platform secretariat** (given its limited resources).

⁵ A conduit for mutual information and advice; composed of the steering group of the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue, representatives of the Social Platform and the Youth Forum, and representatives of the European Commission.

⁶ This consultation document was drawn up by the Platform coordinator in collaboration with the eight members of the Platform steering group – for their detail see Platform link above. Seven Platform participants kindly agreed to try out the consultation and gave feedback – many thanks.

Beyond that, please spread the news about this consultation as widely as possible through your newsletters and websites. Please also help in particular to obtain the participation from those deemed 'minority' (in ethnic, cultural or other terms). Your help is needed to make this process a success!

THANK YOU!

For further information you can contact the Platform coordinator:
sabine.frank@efah.org

The platform is an initiative of:



european cultural foundation

It is kindly supported by:



Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue

Consultation for a “Rainbow Paper” – Recommendations to help shape a cross-cutting and effective Agenda for Intercultural Dialogue for Europe

PARTICIPATION FORM

**Please fill in the empty boxes (no word limits) and return to:
rainbow@efah.org
by Wednesday 22nd August 2007 (earlier if possible)**

1	<p>CHALLENGE OR ISSUE AT STAKE: “Intercultural dialogue has to do with ...”</p> <p>To define Intercultural Dialogue a definition of culture would be needed beforehand. However, “culture takes diverse forms across time and space” as stated in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. The definition of culture is always in process. The AER have already underlined the problem caused by any definition of culture in its position paper on the E.C. Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world (to be adopted by the AER bureau at the end of the year). We could draw the same conclusions for any attempt to define Intercultural dialogue.</p> <p>However, Intercultural Dialogue has to do with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- better understanding and acknowledgement of each citizen’s culture- capacity to live together in harmony, cohesion, cooperation, exchanges- equal opportunities and non-discrimination <p>Intercultural dialogue should not be limited to specific cooperation projects for 2008 but should stand for a daily involvement. Throughout the coming years.</p> <p>As for the fields involved, there should not be any sectorial approach. However, a trans-sectorial priority should be advocated putting together culture and education, youth, media & New technologies through the information society, interregional and international cooperation, citizenship, sport, employment and social affairs, foreign affairs, the GATS and cultural goods and services, regional and sustainable development, immigration issues, integration & exclusion and discrimination, identity, etc.</p>
2	<p>VISION OR GENERIC DEMAND: “In an ideal world ...”</p> <p>In an ideal world cultural differences would be seen as the first richness of any individual. Discrimination and differences of treatment would not exist any longer.</p> <p>In an ideal world cultural differences would not only be tolerated passively, but would be part of a vibrant and creative cultural exchange.</p>

3	<p>SPECIFIC PROPOSAL FOR AN INITIATIVE: “A small step towards this goal would be...”</p> <p>Any project for the European year of Intercultural Dialogue should be undertaken through a bottom-up approach. Indeed, civil society and more particularly young citizens should be concerned in their everyday life. Dialogue has to come from the regions and the citizens. Moreover, a specific stress should be put on peripheral and rural regions.</p> <p>The AER highly encourages its member regions to build up projects with young people. The AER would work on promotional tools to communicate on regional best practices by young people in the field of Intercultural Dialogue. It could be based on the topic of migration between European countries as well as immigration from other parts of the world.</p>
4	<p>ACTOR OR INITIATOR: “This could be done by ...”</p> <p>Recommendations can be addressed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual organizations (NGOs, but also charities, foundations or businesses) • Collectives of organizations, i.e. umbrella organisations or subgroups of them • The different levels of government (municipal, regional, national, federal, European) <p>This could be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The AER member regions, there politicians and administrators -in collaboration with Assembly of European Regions -with the help of the AER Youth Team as representatives of the European young citizens’ voice -with the help of the AER Youth Ambassadors as vectors of dialogue in their own regions -transnational and transregional actors as it should focus on interregional and international cooperation - civil society on a local and regional level.
5	<p>ADDRESSEE OR PARTNER GROUP: “This could be done with ...”</p> <p>The partner group should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - international organisations such a s UNESCO, the Council of Europe, etc. - civil society stakeholders as civil society is to be involved in priority - young people as they will form the European citizens of the coming years
6	<p>PLACE OF INTERVENTION: “This could be done in ...”</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cities/neighbourhoods • Schools • Work places • Cultural institutions (theatres, museums, libraries, festivals, etc) • Public spaces and meeting places (squares, parks, shopping centres) • Virtual communication, intervention and meeting spaces <p>The AER is convinced of the importance of education to spread the idea of European citizenship. Thus schools should be closely involved. All the aspects of citizens’ daily life should be taken into account, especially public places.</p> <p>However, in the end it will be a mixture of places and institutions – the place where local or regional civil society is most vibrant.</p> <p>Besides, wherever the project is based, the new context of our Society of Information should always be taken into account through virtual communication.</p>

7	<p>TOOLS: <i>“This could be done with the help of ...”</i></p> <p>Communication tools should be used in priority so as to communicate, inform and promote the European year of Intercultural Dialogue and the projects undertaken in such a context. These communication tools mainly involve the New Technologies.</p> <p>The AER is especially working on communication tools to promote regional best practices in various fields. Please consult our webpage on best practices: http://www.a-e-r.org/aer-best-practices.html</p> <p>However, dialogue also mainly takes place between people who meet, talk and exchange their views. Therefore, the direct contact between people should be encouraged. New media, such as Web 2.0. could be used to build up these contacts and to maintain them.</p>
8	<p>PRACTICE EXAMPLE OR SOURCE OF INSPIRATION: <i>“This has already been shown to work ...”, This is a good idea because ...”</i></p> <p>Through three initiatives, the AER already contributes significantly to the intercultural dialogue between the youth of European regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) European Youth Ambassadors – started in 2006 at the AER Youth Summer School, this programme gathers almost 100 young activists sent by regions from all over Europe to develop and conduct projects in their home-regions on a variety of topics, among others on European questions. The Scheme created a network of young people all over Europe, who now communicate regularly about the issues that are important in their daily lives. In addition, they act as multipliers – communicating their intercultural experiences to their peers in their regions; and b) Eurodyssey –an exchange programme between young people from European regions to gain working experiences abroad for a number of months. Their intercultural competencies are supported by language classes as well as their experiences from their daily working life in their host regions.

CONSULTATION for a RAINBOW PAPER on INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

DETAILS OF PARTICIPANT

Please answer in the empty boxes.

1. Name of organisation (in full):
THE ASSEMBLY OF EUROPEAN REGIONS
2. Nature of organisation, its legal status and country of establishment:
Created in 1985, the Assembly of European Regions (AER) is the political voice of the regions and the key partner for the European and international institutions on every issue of regional competence. The AER promotes subsidiarity and regional democracy and enables the regions to form the essential link between the European Union and the citizens. It supports the diversity of the regions and translates this diversity into a strength. The AER currently has 250 member regions from 30 European countries and 12 interregional organisations. Riccardo Illy, President of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, is the AER new elected President. The AER headquarters are in Strasbourg (F).
3. Name and position of individual (surname in capitals):
Policy coordinator Secretariat Committee 3 on Culture, Education & Training, Youth, Media & Information Technology, interregional and international co-operation , Mr Martin Mühleck
4. E-mail address:
m.muehleck@a-e-r.org
5. Telephone number:
+33 (0)3 88 22 74 47
6. Would you be interested in participating in the retreat from 6-9th September? (answer without obligation to either side)
YES (although we organize an event at the same time and will not be able to come)
7. Would you/your organisation be interested in participating in events to test the Rainbow Paper?
YES
8. Do you envisage taking part in the Cultural Forum under the Portuguese EU Presidency, 26-27th September? (We have been making the case with the forum organisers for financial support to civil society participants – please indicate if your attendance would be dependant on some contribution to your costs)
Initially yes, but to high costs, therefore now only indirectly via participants from our Member Regions
9. Which other events, if any, would you propose for the testing of the Rainbow Paper (between the end of September up to mid-November 2007)?
In the European Parliament, in the Capitals of Culture (Luxembourg and Sibiu) for instance. The AER could also contribute to the distribution among its members.
10. Would you/your organization be interested in participating in campaign activities in 2008?
YES
11. Do you agree that the information you provide in this form can be passed on for the purposes of the work of the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue? (You can agree/disagree in parts by referring to the numbers of the

questions.)
YES
12. Other comments:
Based on its membership of more than 250 members, the AER owns a network of regional authorities and experienced project leaders in a majority of European countries, from in- and outside the European Union. In cooperation with the European regions, the AER would be able to support the European Commission initiative with valuable communication channels to the European regions and their experiences, projects and good practice in intercultural dialogue.