



**tous différents**  
**tous égaux**  
**herkes farklı**  
**herkes eşit**  
**all different**  
**all equal**



DJS/EYCB/Camp/IRD/2007/3

Budapest, 29 January 2007

Symposium

# Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in Youth Work

Istanbul, Turkey, 27-31 March 2007

**Presentation**  
**Call for applications**

## **Campaigning for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation**

The “all different-all equal” European youth campaign was one of the main proposals of the youth organisations’ “Youth Summit” that preceded the Council of Europe’s Summit in Warsaw in May 2005. The campaign became part of the action plan adopted by the official Summit of heads of state and government in Warsaw. The action plan states “... *To promote diversity, inclusion and participation in society, we decide to launch a Europe-wide youth campaign, in the spirit of the “European Youth Campaign against racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance” (1995).*

The action plan considers also other Council of Europe measures which can be related to the campaign such as the intensification of the “the fight against racism, discrimination and every form of intolerance, as well as attempts to vindicate Nazism”.

The European Youth Campaign “all different–all equal”, run by the Council of Europe and its member states in 1995 was a milestone in reinforcing the fight against racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance. Now, from June 2006 to September 2007, the Council of Europe, with the support of the European Union and other partners, is running a new campaign on the themes of Diversity, Human Rights and Participation, based upon the slogan “all different –all equal”. Looking at the realities of racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, discrimination and all forms of intolerance today, the new Campaign must go further than the 1995 experience and must fully reflect the concerns of all citizens, but particularly those of young people. Thus, the Campaign represents the summum of the issues and principles of the Council of Europe’s youth policy, namely accession and inclusion, solidarity and social cohesion.

The campaign is based on national campaign committees, whose responsibility is to mobilize the partners concerned and organise the programme of the campaign in each member state. The European activities aim at exploring common issues, exchanging practices and challenges and coordinating action between the various national and European partners of the campaign.

## **Intercultural and interreligious dialogue**

The richness of European society lies in its cultural diversity expressed also by the number of religious, ethnic and cultural groups and communities present across the continent. Whether national, religious, ethnic, social or cultural, minorities are an important asset for a future intercultural Europe. The immigration flows resulting from globalisation and increased interdependence are likely to further increase this multiculturalism.

The campaign is anchored within the framework of indivisible, inalienable and universal human rights. While religious and cultural diversity has various meanings in different social and cultural contexts, it affects us all through social belonging, identity, distribution of power and wealth.

However, diversity is not always accompanied by social cohesion and co-operation, pre-condition for equality in dignity and equality in access to rights and social opportunities. Situations of discrimination remain problematic to many societies, sometimes being expressed in violent forms, from hate speech to armed conflict. Young people, especially those from minority groups and those living in highly multicultural environments, can be found among the victims and among the perpetrators; they are, in any case, important vectors in promoting social change at this end.

It is often argued cultural difference and religious difference are the “real” problems or factors for discrimination, exclusion and hatred or whether they are simply the new clothes for deeper and older forms of racism and domination. The ignorance that is often attributed to be at the root of different forms of xenophobias would probably mean that religious discrimination is less based on religion as such than on xenophobia and that religion adds to it. Similarly, social

scientists and human rights activists have often denounced the inherent racist ideologies behind the over-emphasis of culture and cultural difference as a justification for segregation and, ultimately, exclusion.

The resurgence of spirituality and religion among young people in Europe is often portrayed as a characteristic of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even though this perception is also countered by the decline of religious practice in most European countries. This would seem to confirm suggestions that the religious and spiritual factor are noticed and referred to in the context of identity and citizenship building rather than the strict religious one.

Regardless of one's opinion on these issues, one can not ignore that religion does play a major role in the shaping of mutual perceptions in today's Europe and that these perceptions influence and are influenced by what is happening in the rest of the world – the consequences of the terrorism attacks since 11 September 2001 and the consequences of the “war on terror” are probably the most striking examples. The rise of Islamophobia in most European societies is among the most grave consequence of this and an example of the combination of religious, ethnic, cultural and political phobias, often identified with religion only (in this case Islam). The unfortunate examples of this nature abound and they are not restricted to Islamophobia: the resurgence of Antisemitism and the intolerance towards Christians in non-Christian societies would indicate that the phenomenon is widespread and cuts across different cultures, religions and civilisations.

Another consequence and indicator of the growing intolerance on these matters is the question of secularism, which is at the heart of many democracies in Europe (especially of the separation between the role of the state and “church”), which is either put into question or accused of being intolerant towards religion.

The consequences of this on young people are hard; but they affect in reality the whole of our societies, for they undermine the very values of human rights, democracy and tolerance upon which they should be based upon.

*“Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.”* This fundamental human right, proclaimed and protected by the Universal Declaration and by the European Convention on Human Rights provides, together with the other human rights, the framework under which interreligious and intercultural dialogue can be held. Human rights, however, require the commitment of all, young people included to uphold them.

In this context, the role of intercultural dialogue appears as an essential approach to counter and overcome mutual prejudices and the self-fulfilling prophecy of the “war of civilisations”. If the purpose of intercultural dialogue is “to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging”, it is clear that it can only work if it involves everyone, young people included, and that it is not reduced to “culture” but encompasses all the social manifestations and expressions of “culture” including religion.

Within the Council of Europe's mission to promote human rights and intercultural dialogue, the Directorate of Youth and Sport has a particularly important role that goes beyond the campaign and is often not restricted to young people. The expertise it developed in the fields of intercultural learning and human rights education, together with the networks and partnerships it established across and beyond Europe, give it a particular responsibility to pursue and deepen the work in this field and to support young people to do the same.

## **The role of the symposium**

Culture and religion are factors for social cohesion; they are also components of democracy and human rights. Both culture and religion are also identified as a source of phobias and the object of hate, discrimination, exclusion. The agenda of Diversity in the campaign is vast and can not be dissociated from the two other dimensions: Diversity is to be understood in a Human Rights framework (*Diversity with Equality in dignity and rights*) and in relation to Participation (*Participation as a way to promote the values of Diversity*).

The programme of the European campaign is based upon a series of major events - mostly symposia - whose main purposes are to deepen the three thematic dimensions of the campaign and to define a common European agenda around those issues. The symposium on the practice of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in youth work addresses all those involved or concerned by the European Youth Campaign, in particular those working closer with minorities and with religious groups. It should result in a better and broader understanding of the issues and relevance of culture and religion in young people's lives and in enhancing the role of youth work and youth projects, especially those based on non-formal education.

In this respect, the symposium will also seek links with other initiatives in the Council of Europe, especially the process of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, the Youth Programme on Human Rights and Intercultural Dialogue and the Euro-Mediterranean activities in the framework of the Partnership on Youth between the Council of Europe and the European Commission as well as other global initiatives such as "Youth for the Alliance of Civilizations" proposed by the Islamic Conference Youth Forum in cooperation with the Council of Europe and other international stake-holders.

The symposium will also benefit from the experience of the European Commission, one major partner of the "all different – all equal" European youth campaign, and its results should also contribute to the European Union's Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008.

Holding the symposium in Turkey is more than just symbolic. Turkey, a founding member of the Council of Europe, is a secular republic with predominantly Muslim population. It is also a multicultural and multi-religious society with an important historical role in bridging cultures, religions and civilisations. Holding the symposium in Turkey will hopefully help to take into account this experience in the symposium. It also corresponds to the approach of de-centralising the activities of the campaign and, in this particular case, of supporting the campaign in Turkey.

## **Aims of the symposium**

The main aim of the symposium is to exchange practices of interreligious dialogue by young people, their organisations and local, national and international authorities and to propose ways through which interreligious and intercultural dialogue can be further sustained through and as a result of the "all different-all equal" campaign and other relevant initiatives.

## **Objectives**

- To exchange practices, methodologies and approaches of youth work on intercultural and inter-religious dialogue;
- To identify follow-up projects and priorities in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue with young people;

- To identify concrete steps to be taken within the campaign to improve intercultural and interreligious youth work;
- To discuss and formulate key principles and guidelines for intercultural and interreligious dialogue in youth work and youth policy;
- To address and identify the main issues and challenges faced by young people in a Europe marked by religious and cultural diversity;
- To support the “all different-all equal” youth campaign in Turkey;
- To value, acknowledge and learn from the experiences of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in Turkey;
- To deepen the understanding and relevance of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in relation to Human Rights, Participation and Diversity.
- To strengthen existing and lay ground for widening the prospects of cooperation between the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe and the OIC Youth Forum in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

### **Organisers of the symposium**

The symposium is organised by the Council of Europe within the programme of the “all different-all equal” European youth campaign for Diversity, Human Rights and Participation, with the support of the European Commission and in cooperation with the Prime Ministry of the Turkish Republic – Directorate General of Youth and Sports . The Directorate General of Youth and Sports of Turkey is the responsible body for developing and implementing the “all different – all equal” campaign in Turkey. This symposium is an expression of the importance for the Directorate General of Youth and Sports to contribute to the “all different – all equal” European Youth Campaign at international level.

The Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation is an international umbrella youth organisation affiliated to the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and coordinating youth activities in the OIC countries. The Forum is committed to cooperating with youth NGOs and other inter-governmental, governmental and non-governmental entities from different countries of the world to serve the idea of dialogue of civilizations and tolerance among them. The Forum is a co-partner in the organisation of the symposium. The involvement of the ICYF-DC in the organization of the symposium provides an ample opportunity for the outreach of the campaign to youth of the OIC domain.

The Turkish National Campaign Committee is also a co-partner in the symposium.

### **Expected outcomes and results**

One of the main functions of the symposium will be to address issues related to the Intercultural Dialogue and the youth work and educational responses required in and beyond the “all different-all equal” campaign.

Besides this, the symposium should also:

- Produce a statement affirming the key values, principles and purpose of intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue (according to the participants), provisionally named “Istanbul Youth Declaration”;
- Result in a set of guidelines for the (good) practice of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue in youth work;
- Be an opportunity to develop contacts and partnership between participants and organisations represented.

## Programme and methodology

The programme will seek to reflect and achieve the objectives outlined above, while considering also:

- The need to give visibility to discrimination issues and how they affect young people today;
- Concrete and diverse examples of youth work practice in addressing discrimination and dealing with challenges posed to diversity on a regular basis;
- The possibility to take advantage of the cultural and religious patrimony of Istanbul;
- The need to address general matters, while deepening specific issues and concerns.

The programme will, therefore, rely heavily on the experiences of the participants, to be shared and discussed in thematic working groups. Plenary sessions will serve to communicate results and feed-back from the groups, as well as to present guest speakers' reflections and proposals, especially on culture and on religion.

The opening and the closing sessions will be attended by Turkish and European personalities from the institutions co-operating in this event.

The programme should be creative – an experience in diversity of cultures and religions!

The Preparatory Group is committed to make all the possible necessary arrangements participants may need for their religious practice during the symposium in as far as possible.

## Draft Programme outline

### Tuesday 27 March

Arrival and registration of the participants

### Wednesday 28 March

- 10:00 Opening of the symposium
- 11:30 Keynote speech on Religious and Cultural Diversity in Turkey
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Keynote speech on Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue in Europe
- 16:00 Working groups on common issues, challenges and expectations related to the symposium
- 19:00 Dinner
- 21:00 Cultural programme

### Thursday 29 March

- 09:15 Feed-back from the groups of the previous day
- 10:00 Keynote speech on the role of religion and spirituality among young people
- 11:30 Thematic working groups, with a focus on:
  1. *The role of local authorities in working on interreligious and intercultural dialogue*
  2. *The consequences of terrorism on interreligious and intercultural dialogue*
  3. *Religion, culture and gender*
  4. *Secularism and atheism*
  5. *Islamophobia*
  6. *Antisemitism*
  7. *Christian phobia and other forms of religious discrimination*
  8. *The Alliance of Civilisations Initiative*
  9. *Religion and Human Rights (and human rights education)*
  10. *The role of and working with the media*
  11. *Racism and discrimination*
  12. *Faith-based youth work*
  13. *Education for interreligious and intercultural dialogue*

- 14. *Migration*
- 15. *The impact of globalisation*
- 16. *Identity and culture*
- 17. *Armed conflict and intercultural youth work for conflict transformation*
- 18. *Defining intercultural dialogue and intercultural learning*

NB: The Preparatory Group envisages a maximum of 12 thematic groups. The final choice of themes will be made on the preferences and experiences of the participants (see also the application form).

- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Thematic working groups continued
- 19:00 Dinner
- Free evening

#### **Friday, 30 March**

- 09:15 Presentation of projects and initiatives for interreligious and intercultural dialogue
  - The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe
  - The European Year for Intercultural Dialogue
  - The Alliance of Civilisations youth initiative
- 11:00 Thematic working group continued
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 Thematic working group continued
- 19:00 Dinner
- 21:00 Cultural evening

#### **Saturday, 31 March**

- 10:00 Presentation of the Istanbul Youth Declaration
- 10:30 Presentation of the conclusions of the thematic working groups
- 11:00 Evaluation of the symposium
- 11:30 Conclusions by the general rapporteur of the symposium
- 12:00 Closing session
- 13:00 End of the programme
- 14:00 Departure of participants
- Optional cultural programme

#### **Sunday 1 April**

- Departure of participants

### **Profile of participants and procedure for application**

The symposium seeks to bring together youth workers and youth leaders directly interested or concerned by the themes of the symposium and the “all different-all equal” campaign.

#### *All participants must:*

- Have direct personal experience in interreligious or intercultural dialogue in youth work or intend to develop projects in this field during or as a result of the “all different-all equal” campaign;
- Be highly motivated to participate and contribute to the event and to the implementation of its results, notably through the campaign;
- Be ready and able to work as multipliers;
- Be aged between 18 and 30 year (exceptions will be possible);
- Be able to attend the full duration of the symposium;
- Be able to work in Turkish, French or English;
- Be resident in a Member state of the Council of Europe (some exceptions will be possible on the basis of special invitations)

- Be supported by a national campaign committee, a youth organisation or a governmental youth partner of Council of Europe (for participants from outside Turkey only).

### **Procedure for application and selection**

#### *Applicants who are resident in the Council of Europe Member states (except Turkey)*

These applicants must fill in the enclosed application on-line, available at <http://coe.opencontent.it/> according to the instructions provided in the site. The Preparatory Group will select 80 participants, securing balance between sexes, as well as a representation of the diversity of religions and cultures across Europe.

#### *Applicants from Turkey*

The applicants from Turkey must apply using the application form available on-line at [www.genclikhizmetleri.gov.tr](http://www.genclikhizmetleri.gov.tr)

The selection of the participants from Turkey will be done by the General Directorate for Youth and Sports, Youth Services Department. A total of 80 participants from Turkey will be selected by trying to ensure a balance between sexes, geographical regions, and diversity of religions, cultures and organisations. The motivation and interest of the individual participant are among the criteria which will be taken into consideration during the selection process.

#### *Applicants from the OIC countries*

The applicants from the OIC countries must send filled application form to the ICYF-DC Secretariat email address at: [office@icyf.com](mailto:office@icyf.com)

The selection of the participants from the OIC countries involved in dialogue with their European counterparts will be done by the Secretariat of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation. A total of 20 participants from the OIC countries and the ICYF-DC affiliates will be selected based on a balance between gender, geographical regions, and diversity of religions, cultures and organisations. The motivation and interest of the individual participant are among the criteria which will be taken into consideration during the selection process.

### **Deadline for receiving applications for participation: 19 February 2007.**

Each application must be accompanied by a **supporting letter** from the sending organisation or national campaign committee. The letter should specify the added-value of the participation of the applicant to the organisation or the campaign the participation of the applicant. In case one committee or organisation recommends more than one person, the recommendation letters must also state the order of priorities. Each national campaign committee may recommend up to a maximum of 3 candidates. Any other organisation may recommend up to a maximum of 2 applicants.

### **Working languages**

The symposium will be held in French, Turkish and English, with simultaneous interpretation. NB: interpretation will be possible only in a very limited number of working groups.

### **Financial conditions**

- Board and lodging will be paid and provided for by the General Directorate for Youth and Sports, Turkey.

- Travel expenses of the participants from outside Turkey will be fully reimbursed according to the rules of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe.
- An enrolment fee **of 28 EURO** is due from each symposium participant. This fee will be deducted from the amount to be reimbursed for travel expenses.
- The participants from Turkey will be reimbursed of their travel expenses by the General Directorate for Youth and Sports, Turkey. These participants do not pay registration fee.

**Further information and contacts:**

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