European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

RAINBOW PAPER II

from the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue

NOTE: Consultation document. Please read the introduction to this consultation on rainbowplatform.labforculture.org

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RAINBOW PLATFORM
civil society platform for intercultural dialogue

The platform was initiated by:

european cultural foundation

culture ACTION europe
The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage

The platform is supported by:

NEF
NETWORK OF EUROPEAN FOUNDATIONS

PART I: The Rainbow Platform

1. Formation and mission

The *Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue*, the *Rainbow Platform*, was initiated in 2006 by ECF (European Cultural Foundation) and EFAH (European Forum for Arts and Heritage)[1]. It counts over 200 civil society organisations and their individual members engaged in intercultural action throughout Europe - at local, national and international level. The Platform aims to contribute to three levels of change in Europe: social (democratic inclusion and greater equality), structural (within organisations and constituencies), and policy changes.

Our core principle is that cross-sectoral cooperation leads to better policy– we want to learn and share across wide areas of expertise. We believe that the divisions in practice and thought must be overcome, from education to social and youth policies, from home affairs and justice - including issues of migration and human rights- to arts and culture.

The Platform's first year of work culminated in the Rainbow Paper ("Practice Makes perfect: A Learning Framework for Intercultural Dialogue. [pdf]"). It presented common view from across the Platform. After a very successful presentation at the opening event of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in January 2008 we began work to take the 'emerging principles' to the next level of recommendations. This Rainbow Paper II is the result.

2. Background

Millions of people are on the move in today's world. As a result migration has become our cultural, social and political reality. Mobility – what we might call 'interculturalism' in practice – increases every day. First, second and third generation immigrants with one foot in several cultures, mixed couples and their children etc. - these are becoming common in European societies. Slowly, they are changing and enriching what it means to be European.

The Platform believes that this mobility enriches European society – new people, new ideas, new cultural expression, new resources, new kinds of identity. But the impacts are still uncertain. Mobility may well decrease the importance of ethnicity. Or it may lead to ethnicity being moved centre stage in individual and group experience. Time will tell. Interculturalism, our focus in the Rainbow Platform, is not about assimilating these cultural differences, nor about dismissing them, but about creating a framework to talk, listen, learn, and be inspired by our differences. Of course, mobility leads to increased tensions, and inequalities. Of course the recomposing of European identity is sometimes painful, complicated and tense – but it is also exciting, energising and enriching. In any case, such tensions are part of Europe's historical experience. There is no single European identity. Many distinct cultural groups have been present in Europe for millennia.

Intercultural ambitions for Europe are not about creating a heightened sense of the 'other' but of understanding the reality and authenticity of everyone's experience.

[1] The Rainbow Platform is supported by the Network of European Foundations (NEF), a consortium involving the following partners: Compagnia di San Paulo, European Cultural Foundation, Evens Foundation, Fondation Bernheim, Freudenberg Stiftung, Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

Each of us has "ethnic" or national background(s) but we also possess personal identities: as parents, as (non-) believers, as men or women, as citizens, with different positions on the work floor. We have professional and cultural identities and life-styles. We share aspirations and meet in a diversity of groups. These myriad identities, fragile or robust, are in continuous negotiation and transformation. They should define and build our self-assurance and, urgently, our interconnectivity.

Respect for diversity and for human rights helps to exercise our capacity for change. Confrontation with other realities is an excellent preparation for meeting an unknown – and ultimately shared – future. Intercultural competence[2] both on the part of individuals, organisations and collectives, needs a supportive framework, an equal opportunities strategy, education and funding. Today, we have scarcely started the process seriously. There are even some reasons to be seriously concerned about the possibility of this exchange in Europe. Exclusion and "cultural" divides seem to dominate public policies and debate; yet, "we ourselves" may often be part of the system of neglect, ignorance, segregation or exploitation, which – mostly unwillingly – feeds hidden new forms of apartheid in our midst.

Europe needs its citizens to be proud of who they are – and to share that pride in the complex geography of every day life. We weave our way – as individuals or members of groups – through this cultural map, complicated by (local or global) power struggles, and we are required to relate to one another from various, ever-changing positions. Note: within this process of mobility, change and transformation, there is no implicit hierarchy of cultures, no 'better' or 'worse'. There must be on the other hand some basic, generally accepted principles. Agreeing them (or rather finding the language to discuss them – is a key challenge). Within our 'non-hierarchy of cultural identities' there is an increased need for tools, languages and systems of exchange and discussion.

3. Terms

The term intercultural dialogue is fuzzy, to say the least. The Platform in fact prefers the notion of 'living and creating together', or 'cultural cooperation': dialogue alone is not enough. Anything intercultural is by its very nature "in dialogue"; intercultural action - and competence - implies exchange of experience, ideas, dreams, as well as personal and organisational challenges. We have to build a shared community – underlining the active verb 'to build' - implying tools, effort and shared working practices, blueprints, plans, architects, craftspeople and artisans, funders, thinkers and eventual inhabitants. Interculturalism is about 'doing', not just 'thinking'. This happens in real places, in real time, between real people. It is not abstract.

Given the huge "intercultural" challenges of our trans-cultural age, we, the Platform, wish to focus on the new kinds of diversity in Europe, due to migration and shifting geographies. There is no greater global challenge today than the permanent interaction and cooperation required between diverse cultures, religions and peoples moving into contact with each other in our cities and countryside. The European Union also, urgently, needs to build this

[2] Intercultural competence is the ability of successful communication with people of other cultures. This ability can exist in someone at a young age, or may be developed and improved. The bases for a successful intercultural communication are emotional competence, together with intercultural sensitivity.

A person who is interculturally competent captures and understands, in interaction with people from foreign cultures, their specific concepts in perception, thinking, feeling and acting. Earlier experiences are considered, free from prejudices; there is an interest and motivation to continue learning (Wikipedia definition).

into its internal but also emerging external policy. The "European agenda for culture in a globalised world" and its related "inter-cultural" agenda are a first (but significant) step forward.

We are concerned about the notion of culture in the current debates. Why is the encounter between cultures considered the root cause of social discontent and conflict? What has happened to the discussion of more endemic factors such as economic differences and social inequalities? The new divides are more than cultural, ethnic or religious, and intercultural dialogue will not solve these broader social challenges. In a real sense, all cultures in the globalised world must face the same issues (economic, social, environmental) together. Blaming culture - or indeed instrumentalising culture - will not "do the trick". Referring to cultural differences may in fact become a strategy of scapegoating, thus avoiding deeper analysis and taking possibly radical but constructive steps.

Thus, the Rainbow Paper rallies Platform participants behind the following understanding of Intercultural Dialogue: "a series of specific encounters, anchored in real space and time between individuals and/or groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds and heritage, with the aim of exploring, testing and increasing understanding, awareness, empathy, and respect. The ultimate purpose of Intercultural Dialogue is to create a cooperative and willing environment for overcoming political and social tensions, whether through new or existing structures (administration, governance, public opinion, values, attitudes)". (Definition from Rainbow Paper I)

Intercultural dialogue asks us all to answer a difficult question: What are the social conditions in which we live? Intercultural action cannot be separated from human rights, citizenship and social equality. Inclusion and equal opportunity are pre-conditions for a dialogue worthy of the name.

On the other hand, economic and social divides cannot explain the emotional "energy" and persistence of conflicts. Culture is about "meaning". Culture is about aspirations, cohesion and sharing. Interculturalism is by extension about interest in and openness towards these differences.

Therefore, the Platform pays special attention to the role of culture and the arts in analysing the current challenges related to diversity. It would like, to explore the "power of culture", civil society[3] and the arts in "negotiating, not managing diversity" in our societies.

[3] Civil society refers to the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil society, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated. Civil society commonly embraces a diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms, varying in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Civil societies are often populated by organizations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups (London School of Economics Centre for Civil Society working definition).

PART II: Encouragement to action

1. Introduction to recommendations

Intercultural Dialogue, or different related topics, already occupy a lot of space in academic writing, in political debates and in civil society organisations.

In other words, "the page is not blank". Yet there remains a lot to do. Building on past efforts, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is an opportunity to decide on further directions. Thus the Rainbow Platform as a civil society initiative does not just want to make demands of politicians, but to call to action the various sectors involved - the Platform recognises its own responsibilities too. Some of these emerging ideas are laid out below.

NOTE: The following statements of belief and commitment just start a process. These ideas will need to be prioritised; maybe some need to be combined, or rejected. But only your additional suggestions and views will allow us to do this.
Please read the Instructions to the consultation before commenting or editing Part II.

⇒ We - the Platform - *believe that a central challenge in our globalised world is to learn to appreciate multi-layered identities.* Interculturalism is not mere cultural relativism. It is not that everything goes, but that we need to make decisions about what goes, and when, which take into account our differences.

Therefore we - the participants of the Platform - welcome the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and want to make a substantial contribution in practice (within our civil society organisations) and vis-à-vis politics. We want change, and sustainable change – beyond the symbolic year 2008.

⇒ We – non-governmental, not-for-profit civil society organisations – *have to learn to develop capacities for change in view of diversity*; intercultural competences in our practice, our governance, and regarding "representation": How can we better mirror the "new" heterogeneity in our environment? How much further can we go? Do we have the human skills and resources to "dialogue", cooperate, reach out to the "new communities" or – vice versa – to build bridges with the institutions and organisations of old majorities?

Working across sectors (from arts institutions to human rights groups, from Roma initiatives to educational platforms) is proving useful not only to understand the multiplicity of the problems, but also to learn more about our responsibilities to each other. Therefore, we thus commit ourselves to understanding the issues in the sector, to set goals and to monitor their implementation in the years to come.

⇒ We – non-governmental, not-for-profit civil society organisations – *demand a consistent public policy shift towards standard setting and better frameworks for diversity policies.* We urge the decision makers to actively fight exclusion, inequalities and breaches of human rights related to cultural diversity. We demand a comprehensive EU strategy and work plan at the end of 2008, with clear objectives; and we wish to see mechanisms put in place to monitor implementation after 2008. We commit to constructive partnership to decision-making bodies and to making available our own policy recommendations for intercultural policies.

Following these initial statements, and based on the variety of voices gathered in the Platform meetings and consultations, we now wish to propose two kinds of recommendations:

1. *One to ourselves, the civil society sector, with ramifications for the arts and culture and hopefully other sectors.*
2. *One to policy makers in Europe.*

The starting point for these recommendations is straightforward: intercultural dialogue is not just about enriching encounters between individuals, but about progressively creating the right conditions for these encounters to occur (and lead to increased interaction and cooperation). In other words, intercultural dialogue should be celebratory, exploratory and transformative.

2. Voluntary commitments for civil society organisations

NOTE: The suggestions[4], once refined through consultation, will be the basis for a series of self-binding, voluntary commitments on behalf of civil society organisations. (A signing-up process is envisaged). Organisations will be asked to look into these issues, to draw up action plans, to implement them, to assess them annually and to report publicly. The Rainbow Platform will record the state of affairs and feed this information into the European Cultural Fora in 2009 and 2010.

a. STARTING WITH OURSELVES: 'Civil society' is not an innocent term. Non-governmental or not-for-profit groups do not automatically embody 'civility'. In particular, it does not mean we always do justice to cultural diversity in society. In civil society organisations we also find people who are uncertain about such dialogue, nervous about possible conflict, tempted by the simplicities of "exclusion". Intercultural dialogue, like charity, must start at home. Every civil society organisation needs to "sweep the front step" or better still, sweep inside their own house first: the Platform encourages us all to consider how we reflect and act on cultural diversity.

b. OWNING UP TO OUR CONTRADICTIONS: Best intentions don't change practice. Parallel world views are maintained by neglecting realities. The reality of many well-intentioned civic organisations is that they are "white", "elitist", and repeat structures and working modes, which they might take disagree with morally. But if they don't do what they preach, that makes them less credible in the eyes of other cultural groups. Organisations drawing their members from immigrant groups or serving them can be similarly exclusive (in the other direction - though perhaps for more legitimate reasons). Sheltering from social pressures or fighting marginalisation as they do, "dialogue" and cooperation might not yet be their aim. But they should also '*do as they would be done to*'. We all need to admit, understand and tackle these contradictions.

c. PHYSICAL PLACES FOR ARTISTIC ENDEAVOUR MUST BE "INTER-CULTIVATED: We need to create and maintain art spaces that are shared by

[4] Some civil society organisations are further advanced with the following suggestions than others. Learning transfers need to take place. Greater resources are needed for this.

These general suggestions are already increasingly exemplified in living, day to day arts practice. Under the consultation process, fresh viewpoints from other sectors are particularly invited.

diverse groups of citizens and artists. In other words, interdisciplinary and intercultural centres should be priorities for public policy. This requires training, the renovation/re-invention of cultural buildings and new communication and reach-out strategies, which reflect the intercultural imperative.

d. INVITING OTHERS TO SHARE POWER: Civic organisations (and their networks) need to analyse their "power" structures, (both management and their governance). How are their boards composed? Do they reflect the changing composition of the societal environment? Is power sharing with representatives of the "new" communities practice, exception or may be alibi? How are the staffs of civic organisations composed? Do they reflect the changing societal environment? If not, why not? What measures need to be taken to include, train, and empower staff members with a migration or minority background? For organisations set up by and for minorities or immigrant groups, these questions are, of course much trickier, but eventually they also need to address them. Let us all take every opportunity to make our governance and staff structures as diverse as our environments.

e. CO-WORKING: Civic organisations already work across cultural groups, very often it is their very raison d'être; but more active support needs to be given to collaborative working practices, rather than merely 'helping' or 'supporting' the other cultural group. There need to be transfers of working skills.

f. CREATIVE LEARNING: The experience of making a theatre, dance or opera work is a delicate endeavour. Every collective artwork is an experiment in harmonization without homogenization, maximizing specific talents of engaged artists without compromising their individual cultural intelligence. These artistic experiments, taking place throughout the world, offer valuable lessons in negotiating potential cultural conflict. And vice-versa, we should extract devises that are at work in social processes and relate them to other spheres.

g. PROCESS AND CO-PRODUCTION: Importing and exporting artworks fills a limited function. Audiences see, consume and applaud. Artists travel, perform and leave. The contact surface exists only within the theatre, concert hall or museum and only for a short time. Guest performances often border on exoticism, regardless of the quality or the country of origin. We can avoid this superficial "internationalism" by turning shallow contacts into long-term collaborative relationships. The real aim must be for engaged co-creation, with genuine transfer and learning across cultural boundaries. The aims must be for co-creation rather than mutual consumption.

h. SERVING A BROADER COMMUNITY: Civic organisations (and their networks) need to analyse their work programmes. Which audiences are they addressing? Who are they serving? Who decides – and how – on the target groups, and on the resources deployed to reach out to publics that are not their traditional constituency? This thinking needs shared across intercultural boundaries, with respect and admiration for differing social attitudes. Let us all address these questions together.

i. INVESTING IN REFLECTION AND CHANGE: Civic organisations (and their networks) need to learn inside an intercultural framework. Internal reflection processes will take time and special attention and planning. Changes in governance, staff compositions and activities will not happen easily; on the contrary, covert resistance or rejection is also "natural". There may be "good arguments" for avoiding change (for example the "quality argument" which prevents organisations to change: 'We cannot find the right people') but they need to be examined rigorously and intelligently.

j. TRAINING AND MENTORSHIP: We must learn to share skills. There should be support for "mentoring programs" that allow artists and cultural operators with competences in one area of endeavour to mentor and transfer their knowledge to people working in other sectors. Likewise, educational programs need to be developed that allow emerging artists and cultural operators to come in close working contact with trained professionals in social and educational sectors. The point is to sharpen the learning curve and increase the speed of developing intercultural competence.

k. REACHING OUT TO OTHER DOMAINS: Civic organisations (and their networks) mostly operate in isolation. Yet cross-sector reflection and cooperation are a useful source for mutual inspiration, learning and for unexpected synergies. The Rainbow Platform helps facilitate this cooperation. Let us all continue further down this road.

l. TRANSNATIONAL NETWORKS: They can lead to consortia that unite divergent ideas, stimulate projects and initiate programs. They can lead to a healthy confrontation of methods and objectives. They create a practical basis for exchange and co-production. They must be supported.

3. Recommendations for European public policy

NOTE: The following recommendations have been collected with various inputs. They are neither prioritised nor made coherent. This will follow later. We repeat, this is work in progress. The recommendations are all open to change, adaptation or rejection. Only you can improve the content and the form, in order to get over the involved sectors' position as clearly and forcefully as possible. Please tell us what you think.

a. We call on public authorities to conclude the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 with a set of endorsed comprehensive policy recommendations at national and European level. We are aware that this will not lead to (immediate) legislative action; yet, standard setting based on negotiations - including with and within civil society - provides the basis for overcoming traditional policy approaches.

b. We call on public authorities to establish mechanisms - inclusive of civil society - to monitor and report on Intercultural Dialogue practice in the years to come. It needs to be agreed who conducts this monitoring and reporting.

c. We call on the European institutions to provide mechanisms and resources to mainstream "diversity policies" and "intercultural dialogue" in their programmes (especially youth, education, citizenship, culture, social affairs, media, research, external relations, enlargement etc.). The cultural fora in 2009 and 2010 will provide the right framework for reporting on progress in mainstreaming (policy goals, financial and programmatic instruments, monitoring mechanisms).

d. We call on the European public authorities to support civic society organisations and their networks in order to improve their practice (in terms of reflection, governance, operational structures and revision of programmatic activities, see above) through specific funding lines.

e. We call on European public authorities to promote global concepts of interculturality, with a clear perspective for "inter-cultural" external relations, complementary to the development of the internal "inter-cultural" European agenda.

f. We call on the European public authorities to adapt the "Lisbon agenda" – but also to move from a predominantly economic agenda (of competitiveness) to a citizens' agenda which re-defines citizenship in view of all people living in Europe; which re-defines creativity and helps tap into the resources provided by these communities, both new and existing.

g. We call on the European Commission to implement appropriate programmes and projects aimed at the de-segregation of migrants, Roma and other disadvantaged minorities in schools. In particular the EC Programme "Education and Training 2010" should aim at improving the education of minorities in the EU.

h. We call on the European Commission to implement programmes and projects aimed at eradicating discrimination in schools. The following actions should be included:
    - awareness raising campaigns on anti-discrimination at school
    - anti-discrimination and intercultural training targeting teachers, school administrative personal and parents associations
    - introducing changes in school curricula providing information on minority cultures
    - where necessary, implementing schemes of cultural mediation at school.

i. We call on the European Commission to ensure that Intercultural Dialogue is systemised, and becomes a focus of the Inter-Service Group on Culture at the European Commission. This Inter-Service Group should not only serve as an exchange of information but be a place for shaping policies promoting ICD in all EU fields of action as a cross-sector approach.

j. We call on the EU national governments to involve Civil Society more directly and strongly in the Open Method of Coordination in the field of Culture (both at national and European level) and to work towards a 'European standard' for supporting culture in general and for placing the accent on intercultural dialogue programmes.

k. We call on the EU institutions and the Member States to ensure that in the educational context the notion of 'interculturality' is widened to embrace all cultural groups, and not just target ethnic minorities, for the development of social, intercultural and civic competences.[5]

l. We call on the EU institutions and the Member States to ensure that:
    - Non-discrimination and equality mainstreaming are put at the core of the schools system, including research and data collection on the acquisition of the core competences by ethnic minorities;
    - A greater emphasis is placed on social and intercultural skills as part of the core competences that each pupil needs and on how schools promote this objective;
    - Better use is made of new forms of teaching and learning as a way to address the needs of pupils from various minority backgrounds;
    - Best practices coming from non-formal education and promoted by NGOs are integrated into the school system of member states;
    - The results of Life Long Learning Programmes (LLP), in particular the cross-fertilisation of research and practices resulting from sectoral LLP

[5] Whilst intercultural competence is part of the framework of key competences, work on intercultural relations presents conceptual and operational difficulties. Intercultural initiatives and exchange in the EU context has so far focused on promoting understanding between national cultures and differences, and not on the issue of cultural and value conflicts or the power differentials between minority/majority cultures. This approach ignores the fact that intercultural contact in relation to ethnic minorities is often characterised by asymmetrical power relations and underpinned by ideologies of racism

programmes, are better disseminated throughout the Member States' national education systems.

m. We call on the European Union to take all the necessary steps to create, or strengthen, the necessary conditions for constructive intercultural dialogue to occur within the framework of the legacy of the 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Both 2007 and 2008 foster social inclusion, equality, responsible and active citizenship as well as an increased well-being for all. A key conclusion of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007 was the need to follow up on achievements by strengthening efforts to prevent and combat discrimination based on sex, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, inside and outside the labour market and to take full account of the specific issues arising from multiple discrimination when designing laws and when monitoring and evaluating policies and support programmes.

n. We recommend that the ambition that the fair and equal treatment of all residents of the European Union (*i.e. that they have full and equal access to employment, housing, education and training as well as to goods and services through the adoption of new legislation banning discrimination on the grounds of age, religion, disability and sexual orientation*) be integrated into the commitment to intercultural dialogue as a practical precondition of such work.

o. Given that access to a level playing field is a key success factor for intercultural and inter-religious dialogues to happen, we recommend that the European Union mainstream anti-racism and non-discrimination in all community policies in the field of intercultural dialogue to ensure that all the residents in the EU have equal opportunities to participate in intercultural and inter-religious dialogue activities.

p. Given that the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions has become European Community law and all internal and external policies of the EU therefore have to conform to it and to contribute to the implementation of its provisions, we therefore call on the European Union to consider cultural goods and service in equal measure to non-commercial cultural expressions in the implementation of this Convention. We ask that it will be applied equally as an instrument for the promotion of plurality in the European cultural industries and as an instrument for the promotion of Intercultural Dialogue in Europe (and internationally), and to pay special attention to the promotion of the cultural expression of minorities in this regard (Art. 2.3 and 7.1a).

q. We call on the EU institutions to rethink the funding distribution under the Culture Programme (2007-2013) in the design of the next generation programme. The goal of this programme is to build a common European cultural space. Projects funded under the programme are meant to reach as many European citizens as possible, and not just as end recipients but as active participants. The promotion of many small-scale projects would reflect this approach. However, in spite of a larger budget provision (400 million rather than the 256 million of the predecessor programme Culture 2000) the new programme only promotes half as many projects…this will not promote, interculturalism on the ground.

r. The Culture 2000 programme supported between 5 and 10 cooperation projects, which largely took place in third countries and enjoyed huge popularity. This was also the case with the first call for projects under the new programme 2007–2013. However, since the second call in 2008, projects with non-EU partners are only admissible with single, pre-selected countries. This contradicts the intention to support intercultural dialogue internationally. We call on the EU Institutions to ensure that in the next generation Culture Programme a number of projects are accepted without predetermined third countries.

s. We call for serious economic resources to be made available for Intercultural Dialogue. This is at the heart of the intercultural policy challenge for the European Union, as well as for national and local governments. Without investment, no visible results. For example, a certain percentage of each EU budget in other sectors might be earmarked for intercultural initiatives. This would encourage decision makers to take into account the "intercultural factor" when developing strategies for their sector. A kind of intercultural tax on every project budget would underline the importance of interculturalism as a core part of the European project.

t. Public awareness raising campaigns of the European Commission such as "For Diversity. Against Discrimination" appear to be ineffective in reaching the very people who discriminate against or prevent minorities from taking part in a societal dialogue. We therefore call on the European Commission to prioritise project-based actions, targeting groups from which change is required. Where the focus remains on awareness-raising (e.g. rights education), campaigns should more clearly address specific groups - such as Roma – taking the special characteristics of the various Member States into account. Attention also needs to be paid to the fact that internet communications – currently prioritised by the European Commission – do not reach impoverished young people, such as many Roma young people in the new Member States.

…