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Policy Department Structural and Cohesion Policies

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Briefing Paper

This study was requested by the European Parliament's committee on Culture and Education.

The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Parliament.

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Content:

The European Commission proposed that 2008 be the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In the context of its report on the Commission's proposal, the Committee on Culture and Education asked for a briefing paper on inter-religious dialogue. The paper was commissioned to Prof. Jamal Malik, an expert on intercultural dialogue in Europe and Asia.

The author gives his views on how to engage in a sustainable intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. He deals with the form and the content of dialogue, with dialogue partners and forums and with the possibilities and limits of intercultural dialogue. His recommendations for European policy makers focus on the institutionalisation of dialogue as well as on education and media policies.

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Executive Summary

Much before 9/11 took place, 'Inter-religious Dialogue' was trying to get a foothold in academic debates. However in post 9/11, religions, and more specifically 'Islam', have received renewed attention and greater curiosity, which has led well-meaning and peace-willing people to engage 'the' Muslim community in a process of dialogue on Islam. These initiatives have come from outside Muslim communities as well as from within. The issues addressed range from theological questions to secular ones. The selection of dialogue partners usually depends on parameters chosen by those who set the stage for the dialogue, who represent its results and who interpret its conclusions. The dialogue often has no aim and content with regard to topics and persons involved. This is especially the case if high authorities are involved, since they stage their public appearance to promote their own views and to exchange compliments and express good intentions, but no serious dialogue takes place and no results are reached – except the promise to meet again.

Another major difficulty is that all such dialogues tend to suggest that there is one specific and distinct Islam with which it is possible to have a dialogue. But Islam, unlike Christianity, does not provide for an over-arching body and central authority, which can speak on its behalf. Muslim minorities in Europe are from very diverse ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and belong to various social classes and interest groups that are inherently pluralistic and diffused in their widespread geographical distribution and organisation, mostly conditioned by regional/local cultural traditions.

An intercultural dialogue in Europe should therefore take the heterogeneity of Muslims in Europe seriously into account. Problems have to be addressed which do not seem to be related to religion in the first place, since the initial and general problems of minorities in Europe pertain to social and educational inequalities, the lack of language skills, racism/xenophobia, questions of integration/isolation/assimilation, the lack of representation and so forth. The patterns of dialogue must be developed constantly within the contexts of conflicts that stem out of socio-economic causes, rather than stiffening the increasingly confessionalised discourse, which further inhibits us in many ways to go beyond confessional boundaries.

What is needed therefore is to understand the 'other' by broadening and extending the dialogue beyond the realm of the 'religious' and confessional lines. In order to curb this problem of 'othering' and make our dialogues more meaningful, we need to, perhaps, reformulate this discourse around the issues of minorities in Europe that include religious as well as non-religious groups, and enable them to participate in intercultural dialogue.

This also implies that intercultural/inter-religious dialogue must not be solely confined to communication with Muslim minorities but must also include all other minority groups within the European Union. Problems of integration, cultural differences and issues of discrimination seem to be most apparent with the large Muslim communities but they likewise exist in other cultural groups as well. Repressing or granting certain rights and privileges to Muslims only would not solve the problem: it might create greater social tension in the long run.

Hence, dialogue should focus on specific topics (such as democracy, human rights, education, globalisation, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and religious tolerance/apostasy, rights of women, commitment to cultural diversity) and have specific aims. A critical dialogue is also needed with extremist forces within Islam and Christianity; inner-Islamic and inner-Christian dialogue is a precondition for inter-religious dialogue; dialogue must be a two-sided project: within each community/society and between the communities/societies.

There will always be ethnic, religious and cultural differences among European populations. The need of the hour is to recognise and accept those differences and to implement strategies to incorporate them by highlighting similarities in experiences rather than the ascribed status or faith of an individual or a community. A prerequisite for such a dialogue is mutual respect, curiosity and openness, as well as mutual trust in the pursuit of justice and peace.

To provide minority groups with the opportunity to achieve active membership in the wider community to which they belong and to avoid their alienation from the mainstream society, cooperation should extend to areas of mutual interest, such as the environment, education, issues of public health, higher rates of unemployment among minorities, the economy and the participation in politics. Furthermore, the subject of religious minorities cannot only be dealt with in a national context that is monolithic and homogenising in character. While the process of the minorities' full integration remains incomplete, increasing numbers of Muslims are becoming integrated into the majority society. However, in many European countries with large Muslim populations, pockets of poor, uneducated, and alienated youth are increasing in numbers.

If left untreated, this situation could increase the tensions between Muslim communities and the majority societies, and therefore undermine social and perhaps even political stability of those European countries that have large Muslim populations. This is particularly true since growing religious radicalism is an outcome of socio-economic marginalisation, as people start uniting around the perceived cause of their discrimination, e.g., their religious affiliation. Existing structures, hence, must be supported and new/alternative organisations, including those established by minorities themselves, have to be attracted for the dialogue.

Similarly, youth should be the prime target of dialogue as well as regions with more homogenous populations who are not directly in contact with minorities, since it is there that xenophobia is most prevalent. At university level, the administration must see to it that nobody is feeling part of an 'out' group rather than a 'core' group in university life. University life must provide an atmosphere in which individuals can assert their heritage without any notion of shame. To provide such an atmosphere, each university must host an intercultural cell that would look at activities of intercultural concerns among students.

The EU must also focus on kindergartens, schools and TV programmes to impart greater knowledge and highlight positive aspects of religious minorities in Europe. In kindergartens and schools, teachers must be encouraged to attend refresher courses and workshops that outline how to go about it. Schoolteachers must carry a sense of greater responsibility while dealing with questions of religious minorities or religious issues of minorities. Kindergarten provides for an excellent space for cultural encounter right from an early age, since it is here that children can initially and with some sustainability face and interact with a variety of lived – cultural – traditions. Intercultural kindergarten education should thus be made a matter of policy.

As far as TV programmes are concerned, cartoon networks and other serials on different TV channels can be used to highlight similarities and differences between religious minorities that would further develop curiosity both among European citizens and school children to engage in an inter/intra religious/cultural dialogue. To build such an environment, the EU can recommend guidelines for school textbooks and extracurricular activities. In school textbooks, the following chapters must be emphasised and introduced as a matter of policy to promote European identity with a 'common European history':

- What has Europe learnt from other cultures?
- The contribution of minorities in the making of Europe, and
- Unity and diversity in Europe.

With regard to extracurricular activities, schools can organize intercultural drama/theatre week, intercultural dance classes, intercultural quiz contests and sports activities that represent minority cultures in Europe. The participation of every student in such intercultural events should be compulsory. Every student could represent another's culture. The schools could also design a curriculum in which major stereotypes about religious minorities in Europe could be challenged. More importantly, similarities between different religions and cultures must be emphasised in school textbooks. Parents should be more rigorously involved in intercultural communication. Besides all this, adequate funding is necessary for organising events like summer schools, winter schools, and global exchange programmes of students.

As far as the issue of integration is concerned, we need to carve out a new dialogical approach that would integrate different cultural groups in Europe rather than othering and ultimately essentialising them. We need to build bridges between different cultures through inter-cultural understanding that is based on ethical, religious, and political as well as social issues in order to identify both the differences and mutual interests of all parties concerned. This would require a greater level of tolerance, recognition and acceptance of minorities – ethnic, linguistic, social, religious and cultural, etc. – in Europe, which ultimately means that the burden of integration should not solely be expected from these minorities but that the majority society must also take it seriously in order to have more genuine and meaningful integration, instead of simply and paternalistically asking the minorities to learn 'British' or 'French' culture and values.

Just as many minorities take part in the week-long Christmas celebration, majority society must also come forward and celebrate the festivals of minorities who are otherwise feeling left out or secluded from European majoritarian culture while celebrating their own festive times. Religious minorities or civil society at large will only be able to claim national/European identity when European countries are able to celebrate the heterogeneity of cultures in Europe.

To begin with, we have to show each culture's historical links to Europe. It must be a part of our curricula in education, and nobody should feel alienated from the country that he/she is living in.

A second step in this direction would be that European countries should celebrate various cultural heroes who lived, or have been living, in their respective countries. This will reduce the sense of alienation among those who are in one way or the other linked with such representation.

A third, bold step in this regard would be to grant holidays to cultural minorities during their festival times. Expressing such a gesture by majority society would impart a greater level of solidarity and trust among diverse populations.

All this, besides reducing the sense of alienation, would also impart greater knowledge to majority communities who have been living with these minority cultures without an adequate amount of information about them, and it will impart greater knowledge of other cultures among majoritarian society. This will help in building new relationships between majority and minority society.

We must also understand that Europe is a media-dependent society, where complexities involved in human affairs often go missing under the garb of 'sensational', 'exotic' and 'popular' images. The EU must therefore recommend to both print and electronic media to act responsibly, in order to have better exchange of values among diverse European populations.

This means that the media must exercise 'freedom of expression', but not at the cost of becoming irresponsible in relation to any group or community; the media must carry a sense of 'social responsibility' while exercising their right to freedom of expression. And the EU must ask media agencies and respective governments in Europe to maintain a clear-cut distinction between 'unpopular expression' and 'hate/negative expression' – where the former must be allowed and defended and the latter must be subject to trial in a court of law.

Hence, an 'ethical code of conduct' for the media should be drawn up as a basis for national and international reporting to counter stereotypes and misconceptions. Strict instructions and guidelines for 'social responsibility' must be made and circulated to media agencies to foster a positive representation of different cultures, not portraying any community or culture in a bad light. When representing specific individual cases, usage of broad terminologies with regard to religion (e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism etc.) must be avoided. The EU should also commission advertising agencies to bring spots that represent unity and diversity in Europe and suggest better ways of living together, which would ultimately lead to intercultural exchange, awareness, tolerance and trust among diverse European populations. Only in this way can the media build cultural bridges.

Over the last few years, European countries have stepped up efforts to integrate their Muslim populations. However, key policies relating to integrating Muslims into society — including citizenship laws, education, treatment of religious institutions, and anti-discrimination measures — largely lie with individual governments. None has been completely successful.[1]

An institutional framework is therefore required in order to enforce the legal protection to preserve and promote one's cultural needs. European countries must ensure that the practice of intercultural dialogue is in place by establishing certain governmental bodies to monitor and protect intercultural dialogue. This assurance will develop the faith of people of different cultures to come forward and practise their own culture openly in the public sphere, which would ultimately lead to emblematic representation of diversity in European countries.

Besides a legal framework, this would also require NGO interventions at the micro level in order to bring fruitful results of intercultural dialogue. Public debate is necessary to spread knowledge about diverse cultures that exist in Europe. The EU must, therefore, intervene and

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[1]   See Gallis, P. 2005.

seek support from various institutions, e.g. tourism, business industry, film industry, film clubs, sports clubs, media production houses, media tycoons, religious and cultural representatives, NGOs, and kindergarten, school and university administrations, who in turn can help in promoting intercultural dialogue by organising food festivals, trade fairs and book fairs, producing films, screening talk shows and episodes of serials, films and documentaries, airing radio broadcasts, publishing features, reports and columns in the newspapers, organising intercultural drama/theatre weeks, intercultural dance classes and intercultural quiz contests, hosting intercultural sports activities, and bringing local leaders in direct contact with NGOs and civic authorities.

What we really lack are neighbourhood initiatives that would involve an intermixing of representatives of cultures through maintaining community parks and organising community dinners, festivals, debates and discussions, as well as multi-prayers that would require support from neighbours and inculcate strong reliance and trust of one's neighbour. To help initiate such a process, civic bodies can tie up with NGOs that will help in bringing forward local leaders to represent and host such functions. Hence, new dialogical actors have to be found and encouraged, especially among those who hold intercultural capital and competency. This will have another positive side effect: by encouraging credible interlocutors from minority groups, the crisis of leadership, particularly among Muslim communities in Europe, can be overcome. Such interaction with diverse institutions and cultures is bound to play a significant role in the intercultural communication that helps us understand diverse cultural realities from close quarters, which is otherwise more distant and simplified.

There are a few things that need to be streamlined with regard to our policy makers. The EU must recommend our policy makers to focus on the following three fields:

1. educational empowerment,
2. cultural regeneration, and
3. political empowerment of minorities in Europe.

European policy makers in various fields must support and promote the perspectives of cooperative coexistence and identify all forces in politics and society that support democracy, human rights, and social justice. While making policies, they should avoid simplistic paradigms of understanding conflicts, e.g. Islam versus the West, religion versus secularism etc., as all such terminologies carry a danger of boxing diverse people and a complexity of issues into one category. There is a need to address as well as understand Muslims in Europe, for which our policy makers have to acknowledge the fact that Islam, as a political, religious, or cultural phenomenon, is very diverse. It is important to understand the concrete political, social, and economic conditions under which migrants and their families, who happen to be Muslims, live.

The future of such minorities will be determined by both the development of these factors and of the relationship between the European and the Muslim populations. Europe must pay attention to criticisms expressed in other cultures, both in Europe and abroad, and must not simply reject such criticisms by branding them as non-modern, non-scientific or irrational. Moreover, the 'West' asks its dialogue partners (non-Westerners) to accept universal values which it has accepted for some time now; whereas in changing the other 'the West' merely wants to assist patronisingly as if the West had no requirement to learn from the non-West. Europe should therefore once again revive its learning culture instead of becoming a preacher of universal values.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.   Introduction

Much before 9/11 took place, 'Inter-religious Dialogue' was trying to get its foothold in academic debates[2]. However in post 9/11, religions, and more specifically 'Islam', have received renewed attention both in the academic world and in the public domain. Among the more pleasant aspects of this attention are the attempts of well-meaning and peace-willing people, Muslim and non-Muslim, to engage 'the' Muslim community in a process of dialogue on Islam. These attempts have come from outside Muslim communities as well as from within.

The motives behind such attempts are manifold. Some of these 'dialogues' pursue theological questions within the manifold manifestations of Islam or interfaith questions across confessional boundaries; some accentuate the interface between religion and society that comprises non-religious people, agnostics and atheists. Some dialogues focus on the relationship between state and religion, the state and the believer, the state and religious organisations, etc. In all these attempts at dialogue the implicit assumption is that there is a problem, an incompatibility, which, if it remained unresolved, could threaten the desired peaceful interaction between the dialogue partners.

The difficulty with all these attempts is that there is, in real life, never a straightforward way of having a religion or a religious community engage in a dialogue. Invariably, the stage has to be prepared, representatives chosen, the process administered and interpreted by someone. This someone, a person or an agency, as a matter of course, stands in a power relation with respect to those whose faith or community is to be represented. There is much room for manipulation here, obviously, and the result of such 'dialogue' is often and to a large extent dependent on the parameters chosen by those who set the stage for the dialogue, who represent its results and who interpret its conclusions. In a way, the 'creation' of the counterpart, the dialogue partner, tells us more about this someone or the agency that attempts to conduct the dialogue than about the dialogue partner with whom the interaction is sought.

The urgency to have a dialogue with Islam suggests that there is one specific and distinct Islam with which it is possible to have a dialogue. Muslim leaders themselves – just like other religious leaders - often contribute to this impression when they harmonise the variety of lived Islam. But Islam, unlike Christianity, does not provide for an over-arching body and central authority which can speak for it, or even in the name of a large section of 1.25 billion Muslims, because Islam is inherently pluralistic and diffuse in its widespread geographical distribution and organisation, mostly conditioned by regional or local cultural traditions[3]. Muslim migration, which usually took and still takes place into the lower social strata, has resulted in a crisis of Muslim leadership. In some countries such as Germany converts are leading the Muslim discourse.

The Muslim minorities in Europe are not only Muslims; they are from very different ethnic, cultural and linguistic backgrounds and belong to various social classes, interest groups and so on. An intercultural dialogue in Europe should therefore not only cover a 'western'/European/Christian-'oriental'/non-Western/Muslim dialogue, but should instead take the heterogeneity of Muslims in Europe seriously into account. Problems have to be addressed which do not seem to be related to religion in the first place, because the initial and general

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[2] Klostermaier, K. K, 1984

[3] For a historical overview on Islamic-Christian dialogue see Malik, J., 2005 (c); transl. and slightly updated in 2005 (d).

problems of minorities in Europe pertain to social and educational inequalities, the lack of language skills, racism/xenophobia, questions of integration/isolation/assimilation, lack of representation and so forth.

This also implies that intercultural/inter-religious dialogue must not be solely confined to the communication with the Muslim minorities but must also include all other minority groups within the European Union as well. Problems of integration or cultural differences seem to be most apparent with the large Muslim communities but they likewise exist in other cultural groups as well.

Here a major issue arises, since conflicts today are often expressed through religious and cultural symbols and channels even though the underlying causes may be economic or political. Therefore patterns of dialogue must be developed constantly within the contexts of conflicts, rather than stiffening the increasingly confessionalised political discourse.

Hence, a 'cultural dialogue with Islam' seems to be quite problematic since culturalisation and confessionalisation of the political discourse actually denies adequate clarification and resolution. What is needed therefore is to understand the 'other' by broadening and extending the dialogue beyond the realm of the religious and confession: 'The idea that it is possible to engage in "dialogue with Islam" is potentially reductive and misleading, rather than practical and constructive. Numerous dialogues, supported by national or regional political and legal initiatives, need to take place, according to the variety of lived social and cultural realities both within and beyond the Islamic world'[4].

The dialogue of cultures is difficult – not only because there are structural differences between various cultures, their aims and points of view – but also because it has to be conducted within each community first, and more often than not there are disputes about the form and aim of intercultural dialogue, if not resistance to the very idea of a dialogue. Therefore, an intra-religious/-class/-ethnic/-gender etc. dialogue has to be initiated, taking into account that religious comments/expressions are not always a sign of strong religiosity but instead point to a strong 'inculturalisation' of Islam in various contexts. After all, Islam, like any other world religion, is made and re-made by its actors. Hence, dialogue needs pragmatics rather than dogmatics.

Dialogue should focus on specific topics and have specific aims (even sensitive topics such as democracy, human rights, education, globalisation, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and religious tolerance/apostasy, rights of women, commitment to cultural diversity); dialogue cannot remain an exchange of superficialities. Differences should be discussed as well as similarities and commonalities – the aim of dialogue is not necessarily a form of syncretism or amalgamation but rather respect for difference. Yet, there is much preconception about Muslims, when Cardinal Lehmann utters doubts because 'Islam' cannot accept basic rights of non-Muslims and has a strong tradition and inherent tendency towards violence – whereas Christianity is a religion of love and tolerance[5]. Similarly, 'Dialogue is not random conversation, but aims at persuasion, at discovering the truth. Otherwise it is worthless'[6].

According to this paternalistic and even arrogant view the true believer has a duty to spread the gospel. Moreover, the 'West' asks its dialogue partners (non-Westerners) to accept universal

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[4] Oxford Analytica 2004.
[5] Interview with Cardinal Karl Lehmann, December 9th, 2004 (http://www.welt.de/data/2004/12/09/372011.html).
[6] Ratzinger, J., 2006, p. 6.

values which it has accepted for some time now, and in changing the other 'the West' merely wants to assist. Fatally, Islamist ideologies´ aims are to stress the accusation of Europeans and thereby foster the call for acceptance of cultural difference. In this way Islamists politicise cultural difference[7]. By the same token, Muslims often mistrust Christian initiatives for dialogue because they feel that the church and individuals want to promote Christianity and/or 'Western values'[8].

As it stands, many institutions such as German political foundations have not only initiated scholarly encounters but also provide space for direct cultural encounters, exchange programmes for young artists, music festivals and parties, film and poetry awards, dinner parties/eating and cooking together, sports competitions and much more[9].

Various religious institutions engage in a Christian-Jewish-Muslim-Dialogue (or Trialogue) trying to stress the commonalities of monotheistic religions. Similar efforts are made in regard to multi-religious communication and cooperation. Projects such as Hans Küng's 'Projekt Weltethos' emphasise similarities and shared history as well as mutual enrichment of world religions. EU organisations are responsible for projects especially in the field of intercultural learning (at the level of secondary education as well as university level), and in 2001 the UN organised a 'year of dialogue of civilisations'.

Dialogue projects organised by these institutions are already taking place at grass roots level, such as the 'Intercultural Kindergarten' project in Salzburg where pedagogues of different cultural backgrounds and mother tongue help children with problems in the language of the resident society[10]. Similarly, many intercultural projects take place in and around schools and children's education, such as exchange programmes of German school classes with school classes in Muslim countries.[11] Many projects strongly use popular culture in order to attract the pupils' attention – music, films, role-plays, etc.

Hence, nothing new has to be invented, different sorts of intercultural projects exist. However, the existing structures must be supported and they must be de-confessionalised and made known to a wider public. Moreover, new and alternative organisations including those established by migrants themselves have to be attracted for the dialogue beyond those which are already active in the field of intercultural communication. Similarly, youth should be the prime target of dialogue, as well as regions with more homogenous populations who are not directly in contact with minorities, since it is there that xenophobia is most prevalent.[12]

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 provides precisely for this challenge by offering a variety of concrete projects in the fields of education, media and culture in particular. To this extent, Europe can be conceived as a space of cultural diversity[13].

The European Commission proposal to make 2008 the Year of Intercultural Dialogue seems to be indeed a good sign towards 'acceptance of difference' and 'building trust' in each other

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[7] Atilgan, C. et al., 2003, p. 7.
[8] Bauschk, M., among others, 2002.
[9] See www.koerber-stiftung.de
[10] www.stadt-salzburg.at/internet/salzburg_fuer/frauen/t2_34001/t2_34003/p2_163063.htm
[11] See www.koerber-stiftung.de
[12] See Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 05/2003.
[13] See *Déclaration du Conseil de l'Europe sur la diversité culturelle*, 2001.

among European populations. For the European Commission to promote a genuinely multi-cultural society, European society will have to find ways to address a range of issues.

On one hand, it has to address the social and economic situation of minorities in Europe, on the other, it has to deal with sensitive issues with regard to religious beliefs in the intercultural dialogue, such as the question of the veil, or protests against homosexuality, or against the use of contraceptives, etc. The creation of an intercultural dialogue with such groups in the EU is a complex task. The Commission must extend its support to organise effectively an inter-religious as well as intra-religious dialogue that addresses issues that are of concern beyond religious lines. In fact, 'The keys to harmonious integration and assimilation lie in practical local political and legal initiatives, not in the niceties of theological hermeneutics…'[14]. A communitarian project of creating a culture of dialogue can only take place if the encounter transcends religious identity. Indeed, there are a variety of examples for intercultural dialogue on different levels, stretching from church organisations to government initiatives to NGOs.

But to provide minority groups with the opportunity to achieve active membership of the wider community to which they belong and to avoid their alienation from mainstream society, cooperation should extend to areas of mutual interest such as environmental, educational, public health issues, the economy and participation in politics. Furthermore, the subject of religious minorities cannot only be dealt with in a national context that is monolithic and homogenising in character. European institutions will have to provide a meaningful framework for dialogue as various organisations are starting to realise that many issues will need to be dealt with at an inherently trans-national level.

While the process of the minorities' full integration remains incomplete, increasing numbers of Muslims are becoming integrated into the majority society. However, in many European countries with large Muslim populations, pockets of poor, uneducated, and alienated youth are increasing in numbers. If left untreated, this situation could increase tensions between Muslim communities and the majority societies, and therefore undermine the social and perhaps even political stability of those European countries that have large Muslim populations[15]. This is particularly true since growing religious radicalism is an outcome of socio-economic marginalisation when people start uniting around the perceived cause of their discrimination, e.g. their religious affiliation.

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[14] Oxford Analytica, 2004.
[15] Frankel, G., 2005.

2.   Form and content of dialogue

- **Best practices of dialogue**

   Until now, intercultural dialogue has mainly been carried out at the official level in which inter-religious dialogues have mainly acquired a centre stage that includes views ranging from the extremely radical to the most liberal proponents of dialogue. This has further helped in making the whole discourse a confessional debate that restricts us in many ways from going beyond confessional boundaries of identity; whereas any individual's or community's life experiences are much wider and more complex than issues of religious identity. This is not to deny the significance of inter-religious dialogues but, in fact, it has had little effect on the dialogues at civil society level among European publics where fear gets perpetuated and stereotypes exist. In order to curb this problem of 'othering' and make our dialogues more meaningful, we have to, perhaps, reformulate it around the discourse of minorities in Europe that includes religious as well as non-religious groups and enables them to participate in intercultural dialogue.

- **Similarities and differences**

   With regard to minorities in Europe, there will always be ethnic, religious and cultural differences among European populations. The need of the hour is to recognise and accept those differences, and to implement strategies to incorporate these differences by highlighting similarities in experiences other than ascribed status or faith of an individual or community. To build such an environment, the EU can recommend guidelines for school textbooks and extracurricular activities. In school textbooks, the following chapters must be emphasised and introduced as a matter of policy to promote European identity with a 'common European history'[16]:

     - What Europe has learnt from other cultures
     - The contribution of minorities in the making of Europe, and
     - Unity and diversity in Europe.

Specific attention needs to be paid at university level, where students from all parts of Europe and the world come and study. Students at this stage are more vulnerable to different ideologies. This vulnerability could be disastrous as there remains a possibility of feeling alienated and hence turning back to extreme ideologies for solace that are harmful for both the individual and the community/society to which he/she belongs. The university administration must see to it that nobody is feeling part of an 'out' group rather than a 'core' group in university life. University life must provide an atmosphere in which individuals can assert their heritage without any notion of shame. To provide such an atmosphere, each university must host an intercultural cell that would look at activities of intercultural concerns among students. Universities should invite minorities on the occasion of minority festivals and other events. What is lacking in most European universities is the South Asian Dhaba Culture or Adda Culture, i.e. extra-mural space where students from diverse disciplines and backgrounds interact with each other, and not only students but even teachers take an interest and participate in such discussions.

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[16]   Suggested by Banus, E., 2002.

Hence, faculty staff of universities must be instructed to promote outside-classroom-discussion to create a dialogic culture in Europe. Students' Unions can also prove to be an agent in such initiatives.

Similarly, kindergarten provides an excellent space for cultural encounter right from an early age, since it is here that children can initially and with some sustainability face and interact with a variety of lived – cultural – traditions. Intercultural kindergarten education should thus be made a matter of policy[17].

- **Main priorities**

    1. Tourism should be promoted not only within European countries but also tourists from abroad should have attractive offers to visit Europe that would generate greater cultural exchange and will impart knowledge about Europe in the trans-European context.

    2. Dialogue through electronic media involves presenting and promoting cultural diversities that exist in Europe through films, TV programmes including talk-shows, translations, radio broadcasts, and online networks[18].

    3. Participation of minorities has to be promoted in European media production and the number of programmes addressed to people of immigrant background must be increased[19].

    4. Sports clubs or societies that are involved in documenting, exchanging, sharing, screening and disseminating knowledge on sports should be promoted. Every national sports team should encourage representation of minorities.

    5. Film clubs or film societies that are involved in documenting, exchanging, sharing, screening and disseminating knowledge and initiating discussion on diverse cultural issues in Europe among the publics of various kinds must be encouraged. To introduce a culture of public film-screening, at least in the major cities of Europe, all film clubs or film societies that are non-profit organisations should get adequate funding and resources to sustain themselves[20].

    6. A strong nexus among all NGOs that are dealing with religious and cultural issues should be established and their cooperation should extend at the level of both research and implementation that are aimed at creating a dialogic culture in Europe.

    7. A strong relationship should be fostered among cultural representatives and theological elites – also the more traditional and radical ones – who have certain effects on the masses, and the European countries should see to it that their demands are not neglected. This would inculcate a greater level of transparency as well as trust in the governments and its laws.

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[17] www.stadt-salzburg.at/internet/salzburg_fuer/frauen/t2_34001/t2_34003/p2_163063.htm

[18] 'In Internet websites (e.g. islam-online) much attention is given to personal and everyday matters, but there is also lively discussion of wider issues: good governance, pluralism, the need for people to express their views freely and participate in decision-making, women's rights and even feminism.' (Mulack, G., 2005). The German example may be noticeable here: the cultural journal 'Fikrun wa Fann' (Thought and Art), the multilingual website qantara.de, the translation program litrix.de, the city chronicler program midad, the radio project Telephone FM, etc. At the 2004 Frankfurt Book Fair the states of the Arab League were Guest of Honour.

[19] See Hansen, L., 2001

[20] Here the author shares Sonja Hegasy´s views on 'Popular Diplomacy', 2005.

8. The contribution of Muslims and other religious or cultural minorities in the making of Europe should be emphasised to avoid the sense of alienation that many cultural minorities are facing at the moment. The construction of post-war Europe would not have been possible without immigrants, many of whom are now European citizens, and this aspect needs to be highlighted as a matter of policy by all governments of Europe.

9. Even during colonial times, Europeans learnt a lot from their colonised countries. So, e.g. allopathy has incorporated many things from alternative medical practices from China, South-Asia and the Middle-East. Hence, Europe must highlight what it learnt from other cultures' inventions in the course of the history.

- **Sustainable dialogue:**

An institutional framework is necessary for the sustainability of dialogic culture. It would help to enhance human relations among European populations. This requires the enforcement of legal protection from European countries to preserve and promote one's cultural needs. To promote the required sustainability, European countries must ensure that the practice of intercultural dialogue is in place. Establishing a separate ministry can do this (as a separate Ministry of Minority Affairs has recently been instituted by the Government of India – this seems to be an urgent requirement for all states who do not have much concern for their minorities). Along with this, a central governmental body (Commission/Department/Board/Committee) of intercultural dialogue is required in each respective European country that would assure the functioning of dialogue as well as promote the values of peaceful coexistence. Establishing certain governmental bodies and NGOs to monitor and protect intercultural dialogue can bring this into reality. This assurance will develop the faith of people of different cultures to come forward and practise their own culture openly in the public sphere, ultimately leading to emblematic representation of diversity in European countries. Besides this legal framework, NGOs should also intervene at micro level, in order to bring fruitful results of intercultural dialogue, by training young people from different communities in the skills of intercultural leadership, such as initiated by the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School, Rome, and its sub-branches.

- **Public debate for better exchange of values**

Public debate is necessary to spread knowledge about the diverse cultures that exist in Europe. This can be generated through the diversity of cultures in Europe represented:

1. by both electronic and print media (in which media tycoons must be instructed to foster dialogic culture for better exchange of values between cultures);

2. by public film screening sessions on a monthly basis (if possible, followed by discussions on the issue with the director, the script writer, the artists or with the expert);

3. by hosting cultural sports activities (including film screenings on sports, seminars, contests, workshops etc.);

4. by organising food festivals (in which all embassies of respective governments can be involved to demonstrate the distinctiveness of their own culture);

5. by organising an intercultural book fair (that would keep moving from one place to another to promote knowledge about different cultures);

6. by hosting a European or International trade fair (that should not only attract businessmen but also should be able to attract national and international tourists).

Such interaction with other cultures is bound to play a significant role in intercultural communication that helps us understand diverse cultural realities from close quarters, which is otherwise a more distant and simplified representation.

- **Countering stereotypes and misconceptions**

To counter stereotypes and misconceptions, guidelines must be made and circulated to media agencies to foster positive representation of different cultures and not place any community or culture in a bad light. Special TV programmes or films can be sponsored with a view to fostering intercultural reception among its audience. And usage of broad terminologies with regard to religion (e.g. Islam, Christianity, Judaism etc.) must be avoided in representing specific individual cases. Towards this end, the EU must recommend to journalists and filmmakers that they place a sense of 'social responsibility' and not just 'sensational' elements on their list of priorities. The EU should also commission advertising agencies to invent slogans that represent unity and diversity in Europe and suggest better ways of living together, which will ultimately lead to intercultural exchange, awareness, tolerance and trust among diverse European populations. These slogans can be used on TV channels, hoardings, banners, and posters in the public place, and they can help to disseminate knowledge and awareness among its audiences.

- **The best way to spread knowledge about religious minorities**

In order to have a greater knowledge of religious minorities in Europe, the EU must focus on kindergartens, schools and TV programmes. To impart such knowledge and highlight positive aspects of religious minorities in kindergartens and schools, teachers must be encouraged to attend refresher courses and workshops that outline how to go about it. Schoolteachers must carry a sense of greater responsibility while dealing with the questions of religious minorities or religious issues of minorities. This means that their roles should be neutral and encouraging towards spreading a differentiated knowledge of religious minorities. The schools can also design a curriculum in which major stereotypes could be challenged about religious minorities in Europe[21]. More importantly, similarities between different religions and cultures must be emphasised in school textbooks. Parents are to be involved in intercultural communication more rigorously. As far as TV programmes are concerned, cartoon networks and other serials on different TV channels can be used to highlight similarities and differences between religious minorities that would further develop curiosity both among European citizens and school children to engage in an inter-/intra-religious/-cultural dialogue.

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[21] For a critical appraisal of European curricula on Muslims and Jews see Kaul-Seidman, L., et al., 2003.

3.   Dialogue Partners and Forums

- **Main interlocutors**

Usually the selection of dialogue partners depends on the parameters chosen by those who set the stage for the dialogue, who represent its results and who interpret its conclusions. Moreover, the dialogue often has no aim and content with regard to topics and persons involved. This is especially the case if high authorities are involved since they stage their public appearance to promote their own views and to exchange compliments and express good intentions, but no serious dialogue takes place and no results are reached – except the promise to meet again[22].

Hence, new dialogical actors have to be found and encouraged, especially among those who hold intercultural capital and competency. The EU must invite media tycoons that include representatives or owners of different newspapers, TV channels, radio stations, advertising agencies, film makers etc. as partners for fostering intercultural dialogue in Europe. The second main partners for such dialogue would be a strong nexus between NGOs and local leaders through which we can reach publics at grassroots level. This will have another positive side-effect: by encouraging credible interlocutors from migrant groups, the crisis of leadership, particularly among Muslim communities in Europe, can be overcome[23]. At present, we encounter many state-sponsored umbrella organisations in Europe which are not representative and which are competing with each other. Experience tells us that only small homogeneous groups with coherent programmes can possibly be accepted as a representative body, first at the local level and then at regional level and finally at national level. This could initiate an organic institutional building process. Individual acceptance of divergent umbrella organisations that could be partners for religious instruction, building of mosques etc., seems to be one way to integration. This would also reflect the pluralistic structure of Islam better than one major national body of Muslims[24].

We need to bring local leaders in direct contact with NGOs and civic authorities at the micro-level; in terms of neighbourhood initiatives, these leaders have to be addressed in local migrant-specific institutions, such as migrant mosques, dharamsalas, gurdwaras, churches and clubs, etc. where they can act as opinion-makers. Besides this, they also have to orient themselves in devising techniques for interaction beyond the realm of religious institutions, e.g. community parks, inviting and helping others in organising religious or cultural festivals, and act as agents of a dynamic public sphere that has to be devloped in Europe. We also need to train young leaders from different communities in the skills of intercultural leadership, with the aim of taking the task of intercultural harmony forward through their initiatives.

- **Space for meeting (neighbourhood initiatives)**
  There are already institutionalised spaces in Europe, for example different clubs, bars, discotheques etc. But these are the places where, for one reason or another, not everybody can go and spend their time. What we really lack are neighbourhood initiatives that would involve intermixing of representatives of cultures through

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[22] Kandel, J., 2003, pp. 1-2.
[23] See also Malik, J., 2005 (a).
[24]

maintaining community parks, organising community dinners, intercultural festivals, food festivals, debates and discussions, as well as intra-, inter- and multi-prayers, and strong reliance on and trust in one's neighbour. To help initiate such processes, civic bodies can tie up with NGOs that will help in bringing forward local leaders to represent and host such functions.

Majority neighbourhood committees and clubs should be encouraged to invite migrants on a regular basis. Majority ladies' clubs should also invite female migrants to take part and share their cultural competency with the majoritarian society. This constant stretching out of hands would gradually motivate those who refrain from these events due to financial problems or even mental blockage.

- **Education (interschool exchange and other cultural programmes):**

With regard to extracurricular activities in schools, students must be given an opportunity to get to know each other's culture by organising events like intercultural drama/theatre week, intercultural dance classes, intercultural quiz contests, and sports activities representing minority cultures in Europe. Participation of every student in such intercultural events should be made compulsory. Every student could represent another's culture. This would also help to make these young minds realise the significance of living together with other cultural representatives. Every child should have an opportunity to learn from, and respect, each other. Besides all this, adequate funding is necessary for organising events like summer schools, winter schools and global exchange programmes of students. This will give students an opportunity to know cultures different from their own, and it will ultimately enable them – e.g. by a playful use of clichés – to expose cultural differences as social constructions and to question stereotypes about various communities or societies.

- **Media (through ethical code and promotion)**

We must understand that Europe is a media-dependent society where interpersonal communication happens largely in private enclaves. This is dangerous in a sense that the media can dominate the minds of European populations. However, the media does not always represent the complexities involved in human affairs. It works on the logic of saleability; and it can sell only what one doesn't have. Hence, sensationalism and exotic elements are intrinsic to media representations.

To curb this problem, strict instructions to media agencies are necessary to spread knowledge about the diverse cultures that exist in Europe. Towards this end, the EU must recommend to both print and electronic media that they act responsibly in order to have a better exchange of values among diverse European populations[25].

This means that the media must exercise 'freedom of expression', but not at the cost of becoming irresponsible to any group or community. The media must carry a sense of 'social responsibility' while exercising their right to freedom of expression. And the EU must ask media agencies and respective governments in Europe to maintain a clear-cut distinction between 'unpopular expression' and 'hate/negative expression' – where the former must be allowed and defended and latter must be subject to trial in a court of law.

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[25] Compare Hafez, K., 2002 (a).

Hence, an ethical code of conduct for journalists should be drawn up as a basis for international reporting[26]. Only in this way can the media function as cultural bridges.

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[26] Suggested by Bielefeld, H., p. 17, 1999 (a).

4. Possibilities and limits of intercultural dialogue

- **New dialogical approach (beyond the process of othering)**

Since dialogue can be a painful process of projection and introjections and thus presumes reciprocity, dialogue partners often reciprocate in a manner to communicate, or even convince, the other. This process of negotiation certainly imparts more knowledge about the other to each dialogue partner, and helps in evolving a consensus that is required for a peaceful world. However, we need to carve out a new dialogical approach, that would rather integrate different cultural groups in Europe instead of othering and ultimately essentialising them, to build bridges between different cultures through inter-cultural understanding that is based on ethical, religious, and political as well as social issues in order to identify both the differences and mutual interests of all parties concerned. This would require a greater level of tolerance, recognition and acceptance of minorities – ethnic, linguistic, social, religious and cultural, etc. – in Europe, which ultimately means that the burden of integration should not solely be expected from these – religious, cultural, linguistic etc. – minorities but the majority society must also take it seriously in order to have a more genuine and meaningful integration, instead of simply and paternalistically asking the minorities to learn 'British' or 'French' culture and values.

- **Socio-political participation and building trust (with regard to values of the host society)**

Liberal as well as conservative migrants have to be attracted to political and social discourse; the Muslim Academy of Germany can be such a forum, which seeks debates about questions of social and political participation of Muslim migrants in intra- and inter-religious dialogue.

Introduction of double citizenship as a gesture by majority society would impart a greater level of solidarity and trust among diverse populations as a sign of welcome to migrants, instead of introducing for example the notorious 'Muslim tests' (like the ones currently under way in Germany) which latently and openly doubt the migrants' loyalty to the state. After all, the majority of migrants of third and fourth generations will be staying in Europe, even without European citizenship.

One of the ways through which mutual trust could be built is through finding common symbolic denominators, such as a symbol for the euro, a symbol which Muslims, Christians and Jews as well as Hindus etc. can identify with. Probably the most effective expressions of dialogue are, however, not found in great projects, but in the day-to-day work of ordinary people who bring a desire to share life into unheralded surroundings, such as celebrating religious or cultural festivals together. Just as many minorities take part in the week-long Christmas celebration, majority society must also come forward and celebrate the festivals of minorities who are otherwise feeling left out or secluded from European majoritarian culture while celebrating their own festive times.

Expressing such a gesture by the majority society would impart a greater level of solidarity and trust among diverse populations of Europe, as well as a greater knowledge of other cultures among the majoritarian society. And it will help in building new relationships between the majority and minority society. The first steps in this direction

are the inter-cultural calendars published by various ministries of interior and local networks of trust to communicate and build joint projects, inter-partner programmes and inter-regional sharing. Media advertisements should appreciate religious festivals. The example of South Asia might be helpful, when in TV and radio Christmas, Eid, Holi, Diwali, Guru Nanak Jayanti etc. are made part of economic and cultural enterprise.

- **How can religious minorities or civil society claim national/European identity?**

Religious minorities or civil society at large will only be able to claim national/European identity when European countries are able to appreciate and indeed celebrate the heterogeneity of cultures in Europe.

1. To begin with, we have to show each culture's historical links to Europe. It must be a part of our curricula in education, and nobody should feel alienated from the country that he/she is living in.

2. A second step in this direction would be that European countries should celebrate various cultural heroes who lived, or have been living, in their respective countries (instead of celebrating Reconquista etc. alone). This will reduce the sense of alienation among those who are in one way or the other linked with such representation.

3. A third, bold step in this regard would be to grant holidays to cultural minorities during their festival times.

All this, besides reducing the sense of alienation, would also impart greater knowledge to majority communities who have been living with these minority cultures without an adequate amount of information about them.

5. Recommendations for European policy makers

- **Mutual understanding**

Intercultural dialogue should not only/simply mean talking to each other. It also means resolving certain differences, or arriving at a certain consensus to make peace on new grounds. Dialogue cannot only place special emphasis on cultural similarities but must also identify areas of possible confrontation. An open and honest discourse, however, has to go beyond superficialities and platitudes, in which all civilisations can share an intellectual history, morality and values affecting one another.

- **Projects to be supported**

There are various research projects and projects for implementation that get supported by various governmental and non-governmental agencies. However, there are a few points that various funding agencies must bear in mind while supporting projects that are in one way or the other related with European life. Those points are as follows.

1. To understand cultural similarities and differences in Europe, we must support projects that highlight and share both and that provide certain solutions to the problem in question. This means that we have to pay more attention to education, training and research.

2. We have to look into the process and the effects of education in Europe at kindergarten, school and university level. We need to understand why dropout rates of students are prevalent in some communities more than in others. Once we have an understanding of what students or parents want from an education, we can broach the issue of solving them.

3. The respective European states must see to it that children and students from all groups have proportionate representation in kindergartens, schools and universities. Teachers must be recruited to impart knowledge of religious history and theology. It will help in bringing not only students but also teachers of respective religions in contact with teachers of other religions. This overall representation will help in bringing students of different communities in contact with each other, further giving them an opportunity to forge new relationships and build trust in each other.

4. We should invite more and more foreign students and researchers in the field of cultural and social sciences who are willing to work on different aspects and problems of Europe. We need 'researching with' rather than 'researching on' minorities. This will further help us in broadening our horizons of understanding our own crisis.

5. Proposals for interschool or interuniversity exchange programmes must be given priority.

6. Proposals that specifically deal with questions of intercultural dialogue must be supported.

7. Proposals that come from various NGOs for implementing greater intercultural awareness and fostering intercultural dialogue must also take priority.

8. The European states must support the emergence of intercultural communication and leadership in places where local people choose to rely on governmental assistance.

9. All NGOs that offer training in intercultural communication and leadership for young people from different locations must receive adequate support and recognition.

10. We must support networks and new initiatives for the peace building process and cooperation for coexistence. Such operations can be based on the principles of civic-public-private partnerships.

11. If people organise themselves democratically, they could deal with their conflicts through negotiation. Hence, any initiative from the local level or neighbourhood activities must seek approval and support from government bodies.

- **Guidelines for policy makers to foster dialogue (instead of confrontation)**

  1. The EU must recommend to policy makers to focus on the following three fields:

     - educational empowerment,
     - cultural regeneration, and
     - political empowerment of minorities in Europe.

     One may ask, in this context, why politics? The simple answer is that it is essential for the survival of any group. It has always been the articulate sectors (irrespective of numerical strength) who have had a say in the power structure – policymaking and decision-making. The entire drama is about representation. A genuine democracy means that every section of the population should have a proportionate representation in the power structure. If this is not the case, then the state should be persuaded to do the needful. The logic should be clear that politics is an art of preserving and promoting interests. In a world where 'harmony of interests' appears to be a dream and 'conflict of interests' a reality, it is a tool for empowerment[27]. It is not a luxury but a duty, which the marginalised groups can ill afford to ignore. Especially in the case of minorities and women, it stands relevant. If the disadvantaged group does not muster the capacity to represent itself, the power-dynamics must see to it that they are represented. It should not, therefore, remain an art of the few, but a practice for all, simply because everyone is more or less affected.

  2. European policy makers in various fields must support and promote the perspectives of cooperative coexistence, which essentially means that Muslims, for instance, share a different religious ethics/morality from Christians, Hindus, Jews etc., but

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[27] The tool for empowerment is more democratisation of all institutions from where minorities can seek their benefits and assert their rights. This is only possible if we have proportionate representation of minorities in policy making and decision-making bodies. A policy of affirmative action would be useful in this regard. Similarly, internal institutions of minority communities also have to be democratised (since a large majority of Muslims in Europe are Sunnis, they should not dominate over the rest of the Muslims, e.g., Shias, Alawiyya, Ahmadiyya etc. in representing the Muslim cause), strengthened and used for the peace-building process.

that we can search for commonalities in norms and values – a basic consensus over democracy, individual human rights, and civil society. To strengthen such an atmosphere, our policy makers must identify all political and social forces that support democracy, human rights, and social justice.

3. While making policies, they should avoid simplistic paradigms of understanding the conflicts, e.g. Islam versus West, religion versus secularism etc. All such terminologies carry a danger of boxing diverse people and a complexity of issues into only one category.

4. There is a need for addressing as well as understanding Muslims in Europe for which our policy makers have to acknowledge the fact that Islam, as a political, religious, or cultural phenomenon, is very diverse. What is important is to understand the concrete political, social, and economic conditions under which migrants and their families, who happen to be Muslims, live. The future of such minorities will be determined by both the developments of these indicators and by the relationship between Europe and the Muslim populations.

5. Dialogue can be international, national and on a non-governmental level but a collective spirit must be valued and respected by all conflicting parties.

6. The media has a responsibility to give news but not those that spread hatred.

7. Europe must pay attention to criticisms expressed in other cultures, both in Europe and abroad, and must not simply reject such criticisms by branding them as non-modern, non-scientific or irrational.

8. Furthermore, effective anti-racial policy should be devised, campaigns should be launched, and governmental bodies be established to monitor and pursue cases of discrimination.[28] This assurance would impart, among the racially discriminated, a sense and practice of seeking justice from the state instead of organising around religious lines and, at times, taking up illegal routes to assert their demands that further creates social tension.

Hence, one may reconsider concepts of identity that stress the importance of boundaries, drawing sharp lines between us and them. The question is whether a dialogic principle can constitute identity, and the other be perceived as part of the self[29]. There is a need to address how, in terms of concrete organisational and institutional arrangements, structures might be evolved that enable people living by different and sometimes radically conflicting values and expressions of ultimate concern, to coexist and to cooperate. In this sense, dialogue implies active engagement with plurality, it requires participation; and it is more than mere tolerance, because of its inherent, active attempt to understand each other. It does not displace or eliminate deep religious commitments, but it is the encounter of commitments.

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[28] The lesson can be learnt from the Indian Government that hosts similar bodies like Scheduled Castes' & Scheduled Tribes' Commission, Minority Commission etc. See http://socialjustice.nic.in/, http://ncm.nic.in/.
[29] See also the articles in Malik, J. and Reifeld, H. (eds.), 2005 (b).

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Links

Arbeitskreis christlicher Kirchen in Deutschland (Working Group of Christian Churches in Germany) – Inter-religious projects carried out by this German ecumenical movement
http://www.oekumene-ack.de/lade/

Association for Communal Harmony in Asia - A non-political, non-profit organisation. It was formed in 1993 in Beaverton, OR, USA to promote harmony and peace among South Asians of all ethnic, religious, regional and national origin, regardless of where they live.
http://asiapeace.org/

Bertelsmann Stiftung e.V. - Presentation of the foundation"s activities in the field of intercultural dialogue
http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID-0A000F0A-F1B04354/bst/hs.xsl/459.htm

Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations (CSIC) - The Centre for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations (CSIC) was founded in 1976 as a joint Muslim-Christian graduate teaching and research institute. The centre seeks to encourage respect for the various Christian and Muslim traditions in their own terms and rejects polemics and proselytism.
http://www.theology.bham.ac.uk/postgrad/islam/intro.htm

Christlich-Islamische Gesellschaft (CIG) - Registered association whose aim is to promote understanding and dialogue between Christians and Muslims, Christian churches and Muslim communities.
http://www.chrislages.de/

Conference of European Churches (CEC-KEK) - Activities of the "Islam in Europe" Committee of the Conference
http://www.cec-kek.org/content/islam_eu.shtml

Council for a Parliament of the World"s Religions - its mission is to cultivate harmony among the world"s religious and spiritual communities.
http://www.cpwr.org/who/who.htm

Duncan Black Macdonald Center - The Duncan Black Macdonald Center is an academic unit within Hartford Seminary dedicated to scholarly research, teaching, publication and communication with the public. A major part of the activity of the Macdonald Center is involvement in interfaith dialogue, with particular emphasis on Christian-Muslim relations.
http://macdonald.hartsem.edu/

Euro-Islam.info - A network on comparative research on Islam & Muslims in Europe, composed of scholars and doctoral students from Belgium France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden, The United Kingdom and The Netherlands. The researchers" aim is to provide continuous information and analysis on the most important cultural and religious change that Western Europe is experiencing.
http://euro-islam.info

Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Evangelical Church in Germany) - Information on Christian-Muslim Dialogue published by the German Protestant Church
www.ekd.de/islam/islam.html

Global Ethic Foundation - Presided by Dr. Hans Küng, a German theologian, the aims of the Foundation are to carry out and encourage inter-cultural and inter-religious research, to stimulate and implement inter-cultural and inter-religious education and to enable and support such inter-cultural and inter-religious encounter necessary for research and education.
http://www.weltethos.org/index.htm

Institute for Foreign Relations (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen - IFA) - Presentation of the *Media Dialogues* Conference Programme of the institute.
http://cms.ifa.de/index.php?id=1126&type=0&L=1

Institute for Interreligious Dialogue – Institution for communication between cultures, civilizations and religions.
http://www.iid.org.ir

Intercultural Communication and Leadership School (ICLS)
http://www.intercivilization.net/

Interfaith dialogue in Norway - Articles & documents on interfaith dialogue, by Norwegian authors and an overview over Centres/networks for interfaith dialogue in Norway.
http://folk.uio.no/leirvik/dialogueNorway.html

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V. (Konrad Adenauer Foundation) - Presentation of the programme *Dialogue with Islam*
http://www.kas.de/themen_projekte/islam/1279_webseite.html

Interkultureller Rat e.V. (Inter-cultural Council) – Registered Association bringing together people of different origin, nationality and social strata who are committed to promoting dialogue among the different population groups.
www.interkultureller-rat.de

International Council of Christians and Jews (ICCJ) - Umbrella organisation of 38 national Jewish-Christian dialogue organisations world-wide. The ICCJ"s efforts to promote Jewish-Christian dialogue provide models for wider interfaith relations, particularly dialogue among Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
http://www.iccj.org/en/index.php

International Interfaith Centre - The International Interfaith Centre promotes inter-religious understanding and co-operation between different faith communities and organisations of religious or spiritual conviction.
http://www.interfaith-center.org/

Interreligious Council of Southern California - Many faiths, shared purpose: understanding, dialogue, social, religious issues. In solidarity with all world faith traditions, seeking peace, promoting brotherhood among all.
http://www.ircsocal.org

Interreligiöse Arbeitstelle (INTR°A) e.V. - Association of theologians, educators, economists and other interested people who aim at promoting inter-religious dialogue through encounters and publications.
http://www.interrel.de/frame.htm

Körber-Stiftung - Presentation of dialogue projects aimed at promoting German-Turkish relations in Germany
http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/internationale_verstaendigung/deutsch-tuerkischer_dialog/dialogprojekte/index.html

Masy Arakat Dialog Antar Agama (MADIA)/Society for Inter-Religious Dialogue (SIDA) - organisation born out of a hope that the many different religious traditions -- including Muslims, Catholics, Buddhists, Confucians, and Brahma Kumaris -- in Indonesia can come to live in harmony.
http://ecumene.org/MADIA/MADIA.htm

Quantara.de - The Internet portal Qantara.de represents the concerted effort of the German Federal Center for Political Education, the radio station *Deutsche Welle*, the *Goethe Institut* and the Institute for Foreign Relations to promote dialogue with the Islamic world.
http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_softlink.php/_c-365/i.html

Society for Hinduism-Christian Studies - For scholars and others interested in the study of Hinduism, Christianity, and the interrelations between these two religious traditions.
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~shcs/

Society of Jesus - Website published by the Jesuits containing papers and presentations on interreligious dialogue
http://www.sjweb.info/dialogo/index.htm

The Children of Abraham for religious and cultural co-existence - Educational programmes for all school-levels in close collaboration with libraries, schools and preschools.
http://www.abrahamsbarn.org/

The Global Dialogue Institute (GDI) - Its aim is to promote dialogue in the broadest sense among individuals and groups of different religions and cultures, focusing especially though not exclusively on the "opinion-shapers" of society, e.g., scholars, professionals, and institutional and business leaders.
http://astro.temple.edu/~dialogue/

The Institute of Interfaith Dialog (IID) is a non-profit organisation whose purpose is to unite the global communities through interfaith dialogue by sharing the differences and similarities in cultures and religions in an effort to achieve world peace in the foreseeable future.
http://www.interfaithdialog.org/

The Interfaith Alliance - Alliance for promoting interfaith cooperation around shared religious values
http://www.interfaithalliance.org/

The International Association for Religious Freedom - Registered charity whose aim is working for freedom of religion and belief at a global level and encouraging interfaith dialogue and tolerance.

http://www.iarf.net/

The International Center for Religion and Diplomacy serves as a bridge between religion and politics in preventing and resolving conflicts in various parts of the world. By linking religious reconciliation with official and unofficial diplomacy, the Center has created a new synergy for peacemaking in such places as Kashmir, Sudan, and Pakistan.
http://www.icrd.org/

The North American Interfaith Network - Non-profit association of interfaith organisations and agencies in Canada, Mexico and the United States.
http://www.nain.org/

The World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) - WAMY UK is a non-governmental youth and student organisation affiliated with the United Nations. It aims to preserve the identity of Muslim youth and help overcome the problems they face in modern society, educate and train them in order for them to become active and positive citizens in their countries, introduce Islam to non-Muslims in its purest form as a comprehensive system and way of life, establish a relationship of dialogue, understanding and appreciation between Muslim organisations and the western societies, provide assistance to Muslim and non-Muslim organisations to fulfil these goals through training and cooperation.
http://www.wamy.co.uk/bd_about.htm

The World Conference of Religions for Peace - a forum of leaders of the world"s many religions in which they can share common concerns, address collective challenges, and express their hopes for a peaceful future.
http://www.wcrp.org/

The World Council of Religious Leaders (WCRL) - Founded in 2002 following the UN Millennium World Peace Summit the Council aims to serve as a model and guide for the creation of a community of world religions.
http://www.millenniumpeacesummit.org/

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) -
Presentation of UNESCO"s activities in the field of intercultural dialogue
http://www.unesco.org/culture/dialogue/html_eng/index_en.shtml
http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=11680&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

United Religions Initiative (URI) - Global community committed to promoting enduring, daily interfaith cooperation and to ending religiously motivated violence.
http://www.uri.org/

World Council of Churches (WCC) - Presentation of the work done by the WCC"s team on interreligious relations and dialogue which promotes contact between Christians and neighbours of other faiths primarily through multi-lateral and bi-lateral dialogue with partners of other faiths.
http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/interreligious/index-e.html

ANNEX I

Intercultural dialogue - Projects

Some links which seem to be promising:

eTwinning

(Part of the European Commission's e-Learning Programme)
eTwinning encourages the establishment of school partnerships via the Internet. With the aid of a user-friendly Internet platform, two or more partner classes share ideas on a subject which is part of their curriculum. The results are presented on a joint website.
eTwinning uses the Internet as an effective tool to achieve intercultural learning objectives and transcend borders in Europe. Existing school partnerships, e.g. under EU funding programmes such as Comenius, can be broadened and deepened by means of eTwinning.
'eTwinners' acquire and build on their foreign language knowledge through direct communication with the partner schools. Teachers get new ideas for lessons and school activities. Professional exchanges with colleagues throughout Europe take place at international teachers' meetings and in virtual discussions.
A total of 28 countries, including most EU Member States and Iceland, Norway and Bulgaria, have a national eTwinning coordination office.
The programme incorporates conferences and workshops, help with identifying a suitable partner school, advice concerning the planning, development and implementation of a school partnership, teaching material and model projects on topics such as intercultural learning.

See: http://www.etwinning.de/etwinning/index.php

'Early Start - German and intercultural education at nursery school'

The 'Early Start' project began on 1 January 2004 and is a pilot project set to last three years. It is being implemented in a number of childcare centres in Frankfurt, Gieβen and Wetzlar (the organiser is the Herbert Quandt Foundation working in cooperation with CIBEDO). By means of language training, intercultural education and work with parents, the aim is to provide children from an immigrant background with the basis for a successful school career, from nursery school onwards. The project is run jointly by the non-profit-making Hertie Foundation, the türkisch-deutsche Gesundheitsstiftung e.V. (Turkish-German Health Foundtion) and the Herbert Quandt Foundation.
The Herbert Quandt Foundation is responsible for the project component entitled 'intercultural education'. The aim is to make nursery-school teachers, parents and children more culturally open and to improve their ability to engage in dialogue. Further training modules provide teachers and children with basic knowledge about personal cultural identity, foreign cultures and the development of values, judgments and prejudices.
The aim is to ensure that nursery-school teachers, parents, children from an immigrant background and German children know how to act in cross-cultural situations.
Children and their parents should be made aware of their own traditions and learn about the traditions of others, through friendly interaction. This learning process takes the form of practical experiences (e.g. celebrating Christmas and the Sugar Festival, preparing a visit to a mosque together or talking about attitudes to living and dying, birth and death in the various cultures concerned). In addition, the aim is to provide foreign children who do not yet have a

full command of German with language teaching in order to help them when they start primary school. 'Early Start' trains 'parent advisers' who speak the parents' mother tongue. They provide parents from an immigrant background with information and guidance with a view to enabling them to play an active part in their children's education.

See: http://www.h-quandt.stiftung.de/root/index.php?lang=en&page_id=39;
http://www.projekt-fruehstart.de/frames.php

Weisst du wer ich bin? (Do you know who I am?)

The aim of the project entitled 'Weisst du wer ich bin?' is to foster peaceful coexistence in Germany by organising meetings between people from differing religious traditions. Starting from the basic question 'do you know who I am?', discussions and events are held with a view to increasing people's knowledge of their own and other religions. In this way, the project enables people to discover their curiosity about each other and helps to overcome prejudice and strengthen a sense of community.

The target groups are thus young and older people from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities and in nursery schools or youth groups, schools or associations. The various local initiatives range from lectures and exhibitions via joint participation in religious celebrations and festivals to joint religious services.

The project is run by the following organisations:

Association of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK)
Central Council of Jews in Germany
Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD)
Turkish-Islamic Union of Religious Organisations (DITIB)

See: http://www.weisstduwerichbin.de/htdocs/index.php?sID=02

Kinderwelten.net - 'Prejudice-aware' education in childcare centres

Since January 2005, 15 organisations which run a total of 32 childcare centres in Baden-Württemberg, Lower Saxony and Thüringen have been involved in a project to disseminate and develop the concept of 'prejudice-aware' education. The project is supported by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and is set to run for three-and-a-half years, to March 2008.

It is a quality-development project which helps childcare teams to develop their methods in keeping with the objectives of 'prejudice-aware' education. The focus is on communication and activities with children, but also on classroom design, rules and routines, games and media and the involvement of parents and children. 'Prejudice-aware' quality development relates to both the quality of the education provided and the structural quality of the childcare centres and thus involves the organising bodies.

Following workshops designed to make the childcare advisers, representatives of the organising bodies and all the members of the childcare teams more aware of issues relating to prejudice and discrimination, the four objectives of 'prejudice-aware' education will each in turn provide the focal point for a six-month project phase. Interim results will be presented at an interregional conference in Berlin in summer 2006. The project will end with a large-scale final meeting in winter 2007.

See: http://www.kinderwelten.net/pdf/9_projektprogramm.pdf

Abrahamic forum

The forum works, for example, by sending out Abrahamic teams consisting of Jews, Christians and Muslims to act as speakers and discussion partners at events and, in particular, in schools, carrying out Abrahamic education projects, such as reciprocal visits as part of religious education in nursery schools, schools and universities, and organising Abrahamic festivals and celebrations to mark 3 October (German Unity Day) in synagogues, churches and mosques, followed by shared meals. It also organises meetings and discussions on shared values and differences.

With a view to dispelling mutual fears and fostering peaceful coexistence between religions, the Groeben Foundation encourages the establishment of Abrahamic forums and similar bodies. The project encourages networking between joint initiatives involving Jews, Christians and Muslims and has the following objectives:

- coexistence on the basis of trust, respect and friendships between people of differing religions, in particular young people,
- positive shared experiences and recognition of differences,
- public activism and European exchanges,
- contributions to overcoming prejudices and fears concerning religions (in particular Judaism, Christianity and Islam) and xenophobia and racism.

Forms of action include: reciprocal visits as part of religious education; Abrahamic tours of places of worship with meetings, in particular as part of intercultural weeks, mosque open days; Abrahamic festivals and celebrations to mark 3 October (German Unity Day) in synagogues, churches and mosques, followed by joint meals, and reciprocal visits on other occasions, e.g. at Christmas, during Ramadan and during the Sukkot festival; meetings and discussions on shared values and differences; joint projects for rabbis, priests and imams and, possibly, other professional groups; further activities, such as joint social projects, mutual help projects or projects as part of a youth exchange are desirable and can be given additional support.

See: http://www.interkultureller-rat.de/Themen/Abr_Forum/Abr_Forum_allgemein.shml

Institut für Deutsch-Türkische Integrationsstudien und interreligiöse Arbeit e.V. (Institute for German-Turkish Integration Studies and Interreligious Work)

The institute was set up in 1995 during the controversy on the rebuilding of the Yavuz-Sultan-Selim mosque in Mannheim. The institute works with municipal organisations, schools, Muslim communities, churches and residents' groups with a view to fostering intercultural and interreligious communication and raising awareness in the host society and among immigrants.

Projects include: mosque open days, guided tours of mosques, help with homework for immigrant children, interreligious events, integration courses for women, Sufi music and interreligious readings.

As part of the 'Open Mosque' project, the institute organises mini-seminars and guided tours which are designed to foster a better understanding of Islam and provide forums for the discussion of topical issues and problems concerning relations between religions and integration. Inter-religious services for schoolchildren are held in the mosque and events in support of peace involving schools are planned and carried out. Multi-religious weddings, which the Institute's Head of Islamic Studies conducts jointly with priests, are held either in churches or in the mosque, as agreed.

A special office helps churches and schools, nursery schools and mosque associations plan joint celebrations involving Christians and Muslims - e.g. the breaking of the fast, Christmas, agape celebrations, Ramadan and religious services in support of peace involving meditational music.

For some time the Institute has organised joint celebrations of religious festivals in schools and nursery schools in Mannheim.

As part of the of the innovative youth project 'Brücke' ('Bridge') supported by the Municipal Youth Agency, the Institute offers young people the following activities: music and dance for children, inter-religious theatre for children and young people, Islamic calligraphy, Islamic mystical music and mystical dance for young people.

For the last three years the Institute has offered in this mosque women's integration courses funded by the "Verein für internationale Jugendarbeit" (Association for International Youth Work) in Stuttgart. These courses aim to teach women basic German and provide them with information about German society.

See: http://www.institut-mannheim.de/Mambo/index.php

europschool.net: Internet resource providing material to encourage school exchanges between nursery and primary schools in Europe

europschool.net is a European project supported by the European Commission (DG Education and Culture) as part of the e-learning programme. The aim of the project is to familiarise nursery and primary school teachers in the EU Member States with new information and communication technologies. With the aid of the Internet, and with the involvement of the children, letters can be exchanged between schools and intercultural exchange projects carried out. Under the headings 'teachers' room', 'training', 'media directory', 'sources of material', 'parents' and 'blackboard', a comprehensive range of information and material is provided in the areas of new media, early foreign language learning, intercultural learning and multilingualism.

See: http://www.europschool.net/english/index.html

Moderne Zeitzeugen - Besuche im anderen Leben ('Modern witnesses to history - visits to another life')

'Modern witnesses to history - visits to another life' is an exchange programme, run by the initiative 'Gesicht zeigen - Aktion weltoffenes Deutschland e.V.' ('Show your face - for a Germany open to the world'), as part of which young female immigrants from Berlin and female pupils from Brandenburg visit one another. The project aims to nip racist, anti-Semitic and extreme right-wing attitudes and behaviour in the bud by fostering exchanges on the basis of tolerance and equal rights between young people and young female immigrants. The visits are documented on-line.

See: http://www.gesichtzeigen.de/bimal/index.htm

'Schüler bauen Brücken' ('Students build bridges') - Euro-Arab school newspaper project

(supported by the German Foreign Ministry and UNESCO)

The aim of the project 'Euro-Arab neighbours: Students build bridges' is to foster Euro-Arab dialogue among young people and develop a network of Euro-Arab school partnerships through the medium of school newspapers. The project encourages the thoughtful use of information and media. Schools of all kinds and for all age groups from all European and Arab countries which are interested in journalistic cooperation can take part.

See: http://students-build-bridges.hostingkunde.de/ (www.students-build-bridges.net)

Europe weeks

As the body running the IIZ (Internationales Interkommunales Zentrum - International Intercommunity Centre), the Verein Kooperation und Bildung (Association for Cooperation and Education) organises project weeks for school classes on the topic of 'the European Union' in the municipality of Groß Siegharts (Lower Austria). Leading academics, public figures and experienced educators discuss important issues concerning the future of Europe with young people. The Intercultural Centre (Head: Heidrun Thomas) has helped to develop this innovative educational resource.

See: http://www.iz.or.at/start.asp?b=380&ID=4607

Schools competition 'Schools pulled three ways - European identity and cultural pluralism'

Between 2000 and 2002, working with the Faculty of Theology of the University of Birmingham, ALTANA AG's Herbert Quandt Foundation studied curricula and school life in eight European countries - Finland, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Sweden and Spain - with a view to determining how knowledge about the cultural traditions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam is transmitted. Taking account of all regional differences and differences stemming from school types, the overall picture which emerged was one of a deplorable degree of ignorance and prejudice, but also some hopeful instances of exemplary practice. The foundation analysed these findings and, in its study entitled 'European identity and cultural pluralism - Judaism, Christianity and Islam', put forward recommendations suggesting how the problems in the form of shortcomings in knowledge and distorting stereotypes could be remedied in European curricula. With the aim of putting the recommendations into practice, in January 2005 the Herbert Quandt Foundation launched the schools competition 'Schools pulled three ways - European identity and cultural pluralism'. Not least in the light of the federal system in Germany and the responsibility borne by the Länder for education and religious matters, the competition was aimed initially at Hesse, Thüringen and Baden-Württemberg and urged teachers and pupils in all types of schools to make their own creative contributions to the transmission of knowledge about the three cultures and to think more deeply about the relationship between religion and the state.
The foundation has launched a new competition for the 2006/2007 school year. This time, the focus is on teacher training and on Hesse and Berlin with a view to comparing the impact on a region-based and a city-based Land.

See: http://www.h-quandt-stiftung.de/root/edit_page.php?page_id=1007&preview=true

Model project 'Interkultureller Kindergarten' ('Intercultural nursery school'), Salzburg

This project sees the work of fostering integration as a reciprocal process: the aim is, on the one hand, to provide the children of immigrants with a better understanding of Austrian cultural identity, and, on the other, to investigate how immigrants feel, think and live in their social environment. The focus is on helping young girls and boys to develop their abilities in the light of their cultural background and their gender roles. The intention is to create equal opportunities and to encourage people to think about the way culture affects the way they see gender roles. Closer work with parents leads to greater openness and a better mutual understanding of cultural differences and similarities. The aim is also to provide immigrant children with regular help with speaking their mother tongues, i.e. a Serbo-Croat-speaking nursery school teacher visits

children who have Serbo-Croat as their mother tongue, giving them an opportunity to speak in their language.

It is striking that most parents play an active part in the project and that there is considerable interest in exchanging ideas and experiences. A lecture on language development and the positive impact of the arrangement involving supervision of all the children in the nursery school in their mother tongues has helped to overcome some parents' initial scepticism.

The project builds bridges between cultures, as demonstrated, for example, by the joint celebrations involving the children: St. Nicholas, Apple blossom festival (modelled on the Japanese cherry blossom festival), sugar festival.

At the 'Interkultureller Kindergarten Lehen' young girls and boys are encouraged to abandon traditional paths through life and to take advantage of an extended range of opportunities. With a view to subverting typical gender roles, girls are encouraged to play with building blocks and building materials and boys to carry out domestic tasks. The deliberate involvement of girls and boys in daily chores (laying and clearing tables, etc.) makes the children aware of the need to take joint responsibility for domestic matters.

In the same way, when it comes to expressing feelings such as fear and uncertainty the focus is on encouraging boys not to hide their feelings behind a mask of strength and girls to show their strength as well as their emotions. The joint development of conflict resolution strategies is a further focal point.

The pilot project 'Interkultureller Kindergarten Lehen' was developed in 2003 as part of the EU project 'Salzburg goes Equal'. That project focused on practical measures to bring about equal opportunities for female immigrants. The City of Salzburg was involved as a partner.

See:
http://www.stadt-salzburg.at/internet/salzburg_fuer/frauen/t2_34001/t2_34003/p2_163063.htm

The 'Interkultureller Kindergarten Graz' project is very similar, see:
http://www.graz.at/cms/beitrag/10045590/394457

ANNEX II

Links concerning inter-cultural projects in Luxemburg

Ministry of culture: Ministère de la Culture, de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche
http://www.mcesr.public.lu/culture/organisations_culturelles/conseil_europe/dialogue_interculturel/index
.html?highlight=intercultural%22dialogue

Projects include:
- Intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention
- Intercultural Forum "Repenser les stéréotypes - Construire le dialogue interculturel et interreligieux"
(Sarajevo 2003)
- Intercultural Forum "Valeurs fondamentales pour un dialogue interculturel: vers une Europe de tous les
citoyens" (Troina, 2004)

European Institute of cultural routes
http://www.culture-routes.lu/php/fo_index.php?lng=en&dest=bd_pa_det&rub=22

Projects include:
- towards young Europeans : creating bridges and working on otherness
- places of European memory are re-visited and young Europeans sensitised to the questions of restoring
intercultural dialogue between populations separated by borders in the recent history of Europe (based
primarily on school networks), to questions concerning European citizenship, the ethical sources of
European construction and of the meeting of cultures

CLAE – Comité de Liaison et d"Action d"Etrangers
http://www.clae.lu/actualite.et.agenda/actualite+agenda.html

Projects include:
- an intercultural festival is organised annually: "Festival des migrations, des cultures et de la
citoyenneté"
- it includes conferences on migration, integration and living in a multicultural society; music, dance and
poetry)

Le Gouvernement du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg/Ville de Luxembourg
http://www.technolink.lu/4DACTION/WEBH_AR_News_Detail/?idclasse=0&id=714&ID_BATIMENT
=86&fonction=visu
(http://www.technolink.lu/)
(http://www2.myschool.lu/portal/server.pt?space=CommunityPage&cached=true&parentname=Commu
nityPage&control=SetCommunity&CommunityID=1307&PageID=1814)
(http://www.gouvernement.lu/salle_presse/actualite/2005/11/17delvaux_etwinning/eTwinning.pdf)

Projects include: eTwinning – Network of European schools (via internet)

Centre Information Jeunes
http://www.cij.lu/seminaires.php?catc=cij_act

Projects include:
- international youth exchange/encounter (e.g. International Student Week in Timisoara, Romania)
- international youth camps and voluntary programmes/summer work camps
- competitions of films, posters, music etc. cultural diversity
- forum to find pen friends

Catholic Church Luxembourg
http://www.cathol.lu/article.php3?id_article=302&var_recherche=dialogue

Projects include:
"Deux continents se rencontrent", Symposium des évêques d'Afrique et d'Europe (Rome 2004)