European year of intercultural dialogue 2008: respect and promote cultural diversity in Europe and develop an active European citizenship

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The Commission presents its report on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue ("EYID" or "the Year") 2008 established in Decision N° 1983/2006/EC. The report presents the conclusions and recommendations drawn from the external evaluation of the Year and the Commission's response to those findings.

Evaluation: the evaluation of the Year was very positive in a number of aspects. The Year was relevant to stakeholder needs and to the challenges identified around cultural diversity in Europe. Resources were efficiently managed, a result in part of a "dual approach", which combined a strong European-level communication campaign and a small number of flagship projects with decentralised initiatives and one national project per Member State . The Year achieved increased general awareness of intercultural dialogue issues through a critical mass of events, successfully mobilised stakeholders and sparked a high volume of relevant activities organised without direct funding.

More doubts were raised concerning the degree to which the Year was able to impact on general public attitudes in this complex field. Stakeholder engagement with the Year was very strong in the culture sector and to some degree in education, but fell short of the ambitious cross-sectoral mobilisation which was the goal. The absence of more widespread structural changes (to administrations, for example) raises doubts about the solidity of the basis for sustainable follow-up activity on intercultural dialogue.

The evaluators addressed **11 recommendations to the Commission** and six to Member States. These include the following:

- provide continuing support for structured dialogue with civil society, through platforms for example;
- take steps to ensure continuing and systematic dissemination and exploitation of the outputs and results of the Year, for example by supporting the continuation of relevant features of the EYID website and building on the success of the photographic competition “Cultures on My Street” through identifying opportunities to use the images in connection with a range of EU and national activities as appropriate;
- consider commissioning further research in particular on the impact of ICD in schools, given the strong focus on this during the Year and the likelihood of longer-term impacts in a number of countries;
- in particular consider measures to maintain the momentum achieved in the education field during the Year, for example by promoting and facilitating transfer of knowledge on the pedagogy of ICD, curriculum development and teacher training;
- consider ways to promote and stimulate the transfer of learning from the Year between Member States, through working groups at EU level including representatives of governments, civil society and other stakeholders for example;
- establish a monitoring and reporting framework to allow benchmarking of progress on ICD in Member States, for example through existing monitoring and reporting processes in the fields of education and integration of migrants;

- consider strengthening the ICD strand within Community programmes through the process of annual calls for proposals in order better to support co-funding of thematic projects, notably those with an emphasis on cross-sectoral cooperation between education, culture and youth on one hand and public services and/or active citizenship on the other;
- work with other relevant parts of the European Commission including in the field of youth, lifelong learning, employment and education to ensure ICD is operationalised more explicitly and systematically in EU programmes; including making available to other parts of the Commission learning from the design and implementation of the Year;
- continue to work with key international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe and UEFA, building on the current effective strategic partnerships
- consider ways to improve progress in some of the areas which lacked visibility during the Year – sport, disadvantaged communities and public services – including identifying appropriate partners in government and civil society with which to work;
- in terms of future European Years, consider the following: how a systematic three-year cycle for European Years could be embedded in the process (preparation-implementation-follow-up), to ensure maximum preparedness and momentum; and how the objectives of future years could be made more measurable.

Recommendations: the evaluators also addressed **6 recommendations to Member States**, given that lead responsibility for many of the policies concerned lies at national, or in some cases regional and local, level. These recommendations propose that each Member State should:

1. develop a national action plan for ICD, underpinned by an evidence base of research and statistics;
2. develop guidelines to help formulate ICD strategies in fields such as sport, public services and active citizenship;
3. take better account of ICD across different fields, including public service design and delivery, in order to promote community cohesion and social inclusion;
4. help increase capacity of civil society organisations able to address ICD, especially where the NGO base is weak, in particular by mapping the sector, developing networks and providing training;
5. contribute to EU-level fora and working groups which share knowledge, steer policy development and increase the profile of ICD in national and EU policy-making;
6. consider establishing a national system for monitoring and reviewing progress on ICD, together with appropriate indicators.

Conclusions: the Commission agrees with the overall assessment of the Year made by the evaluators. The Year was most successful in raising awareness of ICD issues, notably among policy makers, and in mobilising stakeholders, above all in the arts and culture sector. Its impact on attitudes towards ICD proved harder to measure, given the much longer timeframe needed for profound societal changes to occur and the complex set of factors which influence these attitudes.

Follow-up to the Year requires the combined efforts of the Commission, other EU institutions, Member States and civil society. The Commission will give priority to the evaluators' recommendations and will concentrate its follow-up on:

- encouraging cooperation and transferring learning between Member States and between experts in different policy sectors relevant to ICD. The Open Method of Coordination will be a main vehicle for this type of cooperation and for using the results and the outputs of the Year. Learning will also be shared with sectors which were under-represented in the Year. Projects such as Intercultural Cities, a joint initiative with the Council of Europe, or the proposed network of Romani Studies experts are opportunities to foster precisely this learning transfer and cooperation;
- providing funding support for projects and initiatives on intercultural dialogue. Preparation of the next generation of EU programmes will be the opportunity to consult widely on options for supporting ICD, including through support for cooperation between policy sectors. The

Commission will also aim to ensure that the priority given to ICD in certain Programmes is made clearly operational;

- furthering work in the education field, where initiatives on key competences for lifelong learning and on teacher training, for example, are closely related to ICD.

The recommendations which have been put forward should help ensure that ICD remains high on the EU policy agenda. The increased awareness of the need for a coherent cross-sectoral approach generated by the Year is a sound basis on which to build further cooperation towards reaching this objective.