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

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The committee adopted the report by Erna HENNICOT-SCHOEPGES (EPP-ED, LU) broadly approving the proposal for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), subject to a number of amendments under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:

- the broad aims of the Intercultural Dialogue Year should include helping all those living in the EU "to overcome the differences inherent in their cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, not only between the cultures of the different Member States but also between different cultures and religious groups within Member States";

- the campaign should also highlight "the contribution of different cultures and expressions of cultural diversity to the heritage and ways of life of the Member States of the European Union";

- intercultural dialogue should be integrated as a "horizontal and trans-sectoral priority" into Community policies, actions and programmes;

- the actors involved in achieving the objectives laid down should include NGOs working in the field of intercultural dialogue, organisations involved in inter-religious and secular dialogue, sociocultural associations and the media;

- actions at regional and local level as well as national level should be eligible for Community funding, of up to 80% of the total cost;

- a prize for intercultural dialogue should be awarded to a youth project carried out as part of Community programmes such as Socrates, Youth and Culture;

- lastly, the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue should be concluded with an Intercultural Forum at the European Parliament bringing together representatives of civil society and the political and religious world, and an inter-religious meeting of churches and religious communities recognised by the Member States should also be organised.