Preparing the
"White Paper on intercultural dialogue"
of the Council of Europe

Introduction to the consultation process

Consultation document

January 2007

Contents

1.   Introduction

In November 2007, the Council of Europe is set to publish a "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" (henceforth called the "White Paper"), the first of its kind on this specific topic at least at international level.

The present working document is designed as a tool for the consultations, which the Council of Europe is about to organise with many different partners in preparation of the White Paper. In order to structure the consultation debate, this document suggests a number of questions (shown in boxes and in Appendix 1), which are however neither exhaustive nor exclusive.

The Council of Europe is an intergovernmental organisation with currently 46 member states. Numerous international conventions and other legal instruments, policy statements and programme documents guide its policy, which is marked by its resolute commitment to the promotion of the universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. This basis *("acquis")* has evolved over more than 50 years and will undoubtedly shape its future policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. However, the process of consultation, which is starting now, will provide important fresh inputs for the debate. It will help the Council of Europe to face successfully the new challenges of ever-increasing cultural diversity on our continent, to develop standards and tools for the democratic management of cultural diversity, and to play its role as the guardian of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in years to come.

2.   Facing cultural diversity

Our cultural environment is changing quickly and becoming more and more diversified. New cultural influences pervade virtually every society, not only in Europe, but everywhere on the planet.

Cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society. It is caused and fostered by many factors such as cross-border migration; the claim of national and other minorities to a distinct cultural identity; the cultural effects of globalisation and the growing interdependence between all world regions; and the advances of information and communication media. More and more individuals are living in a "multicultural" normality, i.e. facing the influences of different cultures in their daily life, and have to manage their own multiple cultural affiliations.

> **Consultation question**
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> How urgent are efforts to promote intercultural dialogue today? Why are they urgent?

Cultural diversity is not only a fact and a right to be protected, but also an economic, social and political plus, which needs to be developed and adequately managed. Protection, promotion and maintenance of cultural diversity are factors of human development and a manifestation of human liberty, and they are an essential requirement for sustainable development for the benefit of present and future generations. "Cultural diversity is a rich asset for individuals and societies."[1]

On the other hand, increasing cultural diversity brings about new social and political challenges. Cultural diversity often triggers fear and rejection. Negative reactions – from stereotyping, racism, xenophobia and intolerance to discrimination and violence – can threaten peace and the very fabric of local and national communities. International conflicts, the socio-economic vulnerability and marginalisation of entire groups, and widespread cultural ignorance – including the lack of knowledge of one's own culture and heritage – provide fertile ground for rejection, social exclusion, extremist reactions and conflict.

> **Consultation question**
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> What can be done to give cultural diversity a more positive connotation than it has today? What should the response be to intolerant, racist and xenophobic tendencies in the public debate?

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[1] UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Article 2.6

The most fundamental challenge, therefore, is that of combining social cohesion and cultural diversity. So far, Europe has discussed this challenge under categories like "multiculturalism" and "assimilation". However, there is no consensus yet on the best long-term vision for living together peacefully in multicultural societies.

Consultation question
Which is the most promising overall "vision" for living together in multicultural societies, what is the most suitable model for managing its diversity in a democratic way?

It seems obvious that the right balance between social cohesion and cultural diversity cannot be achieved by compromising the core values that are at the very heart of the fabric of our societies – the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law.

Consultation question
How do cultural diversity and human rights relate to one another?

The promotion of dialogue plays a singular role in this context. "Dialogue seeks to enable and promote the best in humanity", UN Secretary General Kofi Annan wrote in 2001.[2] Dialogue is the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation. It is both a specific working method and an integral part of all other policies to manage cultural diversity today. It is an antidote to rejection and violence. It is a tool that can be used by everybody, by every local and regional authority, every government, every religious community, by migrants and host societies, minorities and majorities, civil society organisations and international bodies like the Council of Europe, in order to improve the situation.

The cost of "non-dialogue" may be high. Continued non-communication, ignorance and mutual cultural isolation will lead to ever more dangerous degrees of misunderstanding, mutual seclusion, fear, marginalisation, and violent conflict.

This is the background of the Council of Europe's decision, in 2005, to put the promotion of intercultural dialogue very high on the political agenda.

3. Intercultural dialogue as a political priority of the Council of Europe

The Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, May 2005) explicitly endorsed intercultural dialogue – together with political and interreligious dialogue – as a means of ensuring that the diversity of European cultures becomes a source of mutual enrichment. The Summit also committed itself to a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions – the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia.[3] Since then, the promotion of intercultural dialogue has been a major political priority of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

The following conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs (Faro/Portugal, 27-28 October 2005) was an important milestone. Here, the Ministers adopted the "Faro Declaration" containing the Council of Europe strategy for developing intercultural dialogue.[4] The document places the strategy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue in the context of the overall remit of the Council of Europe to promote human rights, democracy and the rule of law, to strengthen social cohesion, peace and stability. The Declaration thus clears the ground for the "mainstreaming" of intercultural dialogue in all working areas of the Council of Europe.

The overall approach of the Council of Europe policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue is characterized by three basic parameters: its value basis; its transversal nature; and its different geographical dimensions.

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[2] Introduction to the Report of the Secretary-General on the "United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations". UN document A/56/523, 2 November 2001, p.4

[3] "Warsaw Declaration", Document CM(2005)79 and the "Action Plan", Document CM(2005)80. Excerpts shown in Appendix 4.

[4] Document CM(2005)164. Excerpt shown in Appendix 4.

Intercultural dialogue is neither an expression of, nor leading to, cultural relativism. Dialogue must be based on the principles of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The Council of Europe rejects the idea of a clash of civilisations and expresses its conviction that, on the contrary, increased commitment to cultural co-operation – in the broad sense of the term – and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term.

Secondly, the Council's policy for the promotion of intercultural dialogue is not "another" theme, added onto the list of other existing policies. Instead, it is conceived as a cross-sectoral, "transversal" approach that influences the agenda of virtually all other policy domains and institutions of the Council of Europe.[5] Coherence is assured through the appointment of a "Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue" and the creation of an inter-service Task Force on Intercultural Dialogue as a platform for the exchange of information.

Furthermore, the strategy of the Council of Europe defines three levels that are important for a coherent policy of promoting intercultural dialogue:

- Intercultural dialogue *within European societies*, such as dialogue between majority and minority cultures living within the same community (e.g. with a focus on immigrant communities, various religious beliefs, national minorities);
- Intercultural dialogue between different cultures *across national borders*, e.g. dialogue activities in international cultural policy programmes, in cross-border exchange schemes, through international media;
- Intercultural dialogue *between Europe and its neighbouring regions.*

The Council of Europe is actively promoting international co-operation with other organisations active in the field of intercultural dialogue, such as the United Nations (particularly UNESCO and the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative), the OSCE, the European Union and the "Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures".[6] The Council of Europe attaches a specific importance to co-operation with other regional organisations, such as the Arab League and its educational, cultural and scientific organisation ALECSO, which represents a neighbouring world region with many ties to Europe and a distinct cultural tradition.

| **Consultation question** |
| What is the "added value" of Council of Europe action on intercultural dialogue, which distinguishes it from that of other international organisations? |

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[5] In practice, all component parts of the Council of Europe contribute already to intercultural dialogue in various forms:
- Legal instruments that set certain standards for the interaction between majority and minority cultures, such as the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities or the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
- Statutory activities like the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, or the reports of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), monitoring the quality of intercultural interaction;
- Long-term action programmes, e.g. those focussing on education for democratic citizenship, teacher training for intercultural learning and history teaching, inter-community relations (in the framework of the CDMG), the programme for the development of monitoring and communication tools of national programmes for Roma in South East Europe, or specific programmes run by the North-South Centre, the European Centre for Modern Languages and the two European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe;
- Distinct high-visibility initiatives like the Ministerial conference in Faro (2005), the 3rd Intercultural Forum (Bucharest, March 2006) or the conference on "Dialogue of Cultures and Inter-Faith Co-operation" (Nizhniy Novgorod, 2006);
- Individual activities that are part of other programmes of activities but have a clear relevance for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, such as the "European Language Portfolio";
- Ad hoc activities like meetings with representatives of non-European international organisations, which often lead the way to more structured programmes.

[6] For details on the activities of other organisations in the field of intercultural dialogue see:
- United Nations: www.un.org, more specifically www.unaoc.org and www.unesco.org
- OSCE: www.osce.org/activities/
- European Union: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/dialogue/dialogue_en.html
- Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures: www.euromedalex.org
- ALECSO: www.alecso.org.tn

4. The concept of "intercultural dialogue"

4.1 Defining "intercultural dialogue"

In political parlance, the term "intercultural dialogue" is still only loosely defined. The Council of Europe has rarely offered suggestions in this area.[7] For the purposes of the consultation process, the following preliminary formulation may serve as a reference:

Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's world perception.

In this definition, "open and respectful" means "based on the equal value of the partners"; "exchange of views" stands for every type of interaction that reveals cultural characteristics; "groups" stands for every type of collective that can act through its representatives (family, community, associations, peoples); "culture" includes everything relating to ways of life, customs, beliefs and other things that have been passed on to us for generations, as well as the various forms of artistic creation; "world perception" stands for values and ways of thinking.

Consultation question
How can we best define "intercultural dialogue"?

Consultation question
In which political, social and cultural contexts can "intercultural dialogue" play a relevant role?

4.2 Objectives

In a very general sense, the objective of intercultural dialogue is to learn to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging. Intercultural dialogue can also be a tool for the prevention and resolution of conflicts through enhancing the respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law. More specifically, the following goals have been mentioned:

- To share visions of the world, to understand and learn from those that do not see the world in the same way as we do;
- To identify differences between, and similarities of, different cultural traditions and perceptions;
- To achieve a consensus that disputes should not be settled by violence;
- To help managing cultural diversity in a democratic manner, by making the necessary adjustments to the existing social and political arrangements of all kinds;
- To bridge the divide between those who perceive diversity as a threat, and those who see it as an enrichment;
- To share best practice particularly in the areas of intercultural dialogue, the democratic management of social diversity and the promotion of social cohesion;
- To develop jointly new projects.

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[7] At their conference in Opatija/Croatia in October 2003, the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs adopted a "Declaration on intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention" that contains the following definition: "Intercultural dialogue: this term covers the tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities, whether individual or collective, in changes and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible element of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or have a political, economic, social, philosophical or religious dimension. In this context, interfaith and interreligious dialogue must be viewed in terms of its cultural and social implications vis-à-vis the public sphere…" Document CM(2004)18, Appendix 1.

4.3   Enabling factors

Easier than a definition is a description of the conditions, the "enabling factors" that characterize a true, meaningful intercultural dialogue. Based on existing experience, one can propose at least six crucial conditions that must be fulfilled from the very outset, or achieved during the process:

- Equal dignity of all participants;
- Voluntary engagement in dialogue;
- A mindset (on both sides) characterised by openness, curiosity and commitment, and the absence of a desire to "win" the dialogue;
- A readiness to look at both cultural similarities *and* differences;
- A minimum degree of knowledge about the distinguishing features of one's own and the "other" culture;
- The ability to find a common language for understanding and respecting cultural differences.

Consultation question

Which measures are necessary to enable cultural minorities, such as migrants and national minorities, to express their cultural identity and to contribute to the cultural richness of the whole society?

Consultation question

Which role does the principle of gender equality play in intercultural dialogue?

Consultation question

Are there minimum conditions that must be fulfilled in order to make intercultural dialogue at all possible?

4.4   The religious dimension of intercultural dialogue

In the international debate, intercultural and interreligious dialogue are sometimes seen as two separate, though interrelated issues; whereas others, like the Council of Europe, stress that religious beliefs and traditions – like agnostic, atheist or secularist convictions – are one dimension of culture.

In the past, the Council of Europe has essentially been dealing with religious beliefs under two aspects:

- The protection of the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and of the freedom of expression as laid down in the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Articles 9 and 10);
- The role of religious beliefs as an important cultural fact, similar to other identity sources such as languages, history or cultural heritage.

Over recent years, religious issues have gained in importance in Council of Europe activities. Since 2000, the Commissioner for Human Rights has developed a dialogue with religious communities on various practical issues related to human rights.[8] At the same time, the role of religions in the context of social cohesion and mutual understanding has been increasingly acknowledged, which has led to initiatives e.g. on the relationship between religious diversity and intercultural education (including the teaching of religious facts in schools), and to a general encouragement – addressed to religious communities – to engage in inter-religious dialogue.[9]

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[8] Dialogue themes were the role of monotheistic religions with regard to armed conflicts (2000), the State-Church relations with regard to the exercise of the right of religious freedom (2001), human rights, culture and religion (2002), religion and education (2004) and dialogue, tolerance and education (2006)

[9] E.g. in the "Warsaw Declaration" and "Action Plan", adopted by the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (the Action Plan uses the term "inter-faith dialogue") and the "Faro Strategy for developing intercultural dialogue" (Document CM(2005)164). Parliamentary Assembly: Recommendation 1396 (1999) on "Religion and Democracy"; Recommendation 1687 (2005) on "Combating terrorism through culture"; Recommendation 1693 (2005) on its contribution to the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe; Resolution 1510 (2006) on "Freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs"; Recommendation 1753 (2006) on "External relations of the Council of Europe".

| **Consultation question** |
| What is the place of religious communities in a policy promoting intercultural dialogue? Which significance has the dialogue among religious communities? |

| **Consultation question** |
| Should the Council of Europe engage in dialogue with religious communities? If yes: how? |

4.5 Partners

"Cultures" as such cannot talk to each other; people can. The Council of Europe is of the opinion that intercultural dialogue is a shared responsibility of individuals, groups and institutional representatives.

The ability of everyone to be a partner in intercultural dialogue implies that dialogue cannot be the exclusive right of authorised representatives. This is an important safeguard against tendencies to reify cultures, and to forget about their internal differentiations. It has been argued that "gender perspectives" are among the most important internal differentiations to take into account. The active involvement of civil society in this dialogue, in which both men and women should be able to participate on an equal basis, must be ensured.

Sociologists point out that the individual capacity for dialogue is heavily influenced by social and cultural factors. Similarly, social groups and institutions often show differing degrees of "openness" towards other cultural influences and world views.

| **Consultation question** |
| How can the capacity of individuals, groups and institutions for intercultural dialogue be enhanced? |

| **Consultation question** |
| How can the equal participation of men and women in intercultural dialogue be ensured? |

4.6 Methods

How can one engage in intercultural dialogue?

There is not only one single method to organise intercultural dialogue. Being a part of the White Paper process, the collection of examples of good practice (see below) is expected to demonstrate the richness of approaches and methods that can be used in intercultural dialogue in different contexts.

It has often been argued – and the White Paper is expected to do the same – that generally speaking the methods must harmonise with the aims, in the sense that in order to be successful any approach must fully respect the universal human rights and

- allow an input from both sides on an equal basis;
- be non-coercive ;
- be non-prescriptive, i.e. not have pre-defined results;
- have a certain duration.

Other than these general considerations, probably all forms of human interaction by individuals and groups have their place in intercultural dialogue.

Consultation question
Which dialogue methods are specifically suited for promoting intercultural understanding?

Consultation question
What is necessary for going from intercultural dialogue to joint action?

4.7   Results

The Council of Europe (like any public authority) is promoting intercultural dialogue (like any other policy) because it wants to achieve demonstrable results.

Intercultural dialogue is meant as much more than an exercise of reciprocal respectful curiosity. It has an operational dimension: intercultural dialogue is expected to strengthen social cohesion, decrease inter-community and intra-community tensions, increase tolerance, overcome prejudices and stereotypes about other cultures, open social institutions to the needs of different cultures, and to increase the mutual influence of cultures upon each other.

The expected effects of intercultural dialogue on individuals and social groups include increased knowledge about "other" cultures, growing awareness of the cultural environment (including awareness of one's own culture), stronger social trust, a higher degree of respect for other cultures, the emergence of "transcultural" attitudes and values, and generally better intercultural skills.

Both at political and individual level, the question arises how to "measure" the effects of intercultural dialogue.

Consultation question
What are the expected political and individual "results" of intercultural dialogue? How can they be "measured"?

5.   The White Paper process

5.1   What is a "White Paper"?

Generally speaking, "white papers" are policy documents containing background information and proposals for action in a specific political area.

The name and concept of White Papers originated in parliamentary practice particularly in England in the first half of the 20th century, where this type of document was bound in white instead of the customary blue paper cover.

The Council of Europe has published in the past very few White Papers,[10] whereas the European Commission is frequently using this method for advancing certain policy approaches. At national level, many parliaments and governments regularly publish White Papers.

5.2   Objectives of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

Apart from the description of intercultural dialogue and the presentation of the accomplishments and approaches of the Council of Europe in this area, the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue has a number of different but interrelated objectives.

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[10] In 2000, the Organisation published the "White Paper on the protection of the human rights and dignity of people suffering from mental disorder, especially those placed as involuntary patients in a psychiatric establishment"; in 2003, a "White Paper on the principles concerning the legal consequences of parentage".

- The White Paper will *formulate a long-term vision* of what to expect from a policy promoting intercultural dialogue within European societies, across national borders and between Europe and neighbouring regions.
- The White Paper will *suggest policies and initiatives* that the various stakeholders may consider implementing in different contexts, in order to support intercultural dialogue and to maximize its benefits.
- The White Paper will identify, more specifically, how the *Council of Europe* – through model actions and follow-up programmes – can help create better conditions for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, how it can support dialogue and how it can pursue its policy of dialogue with neighbouring regions.
- The White Paper will provide *standards and tools,* in particular examples of good practice.

5.3   The consultation process

The White Paper will be the end result of an open consultation process, ensuring that the experience of the various stakeholders (governments, parliaments, local and regional authorities, academic experts, ethnic and religious communities, civil society organisations and others) is reflected in the final document. The consultation process will also help to ensure that the White Paper, once published, induces a lasting discussion process and leads to practical measures by as many partners as possible.

In April 2006, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe set down the guidelines for the consultation process.[11] They map out the consultation process with:

- the governments of the 46 member states;
- the various independent organs of the Council of Europe and the institutions set up under partial agreements;
- the steering committees of the Council of Europe;
- international organisations active in the area of intercultural dialogue;
- representatives of local and regional authorities, of ethnic and religious communities and civil society organisations;
- experts in the field of intercultural dialogue.

The consultation period is approximately October 2006 to April 2007. The table in Appendix 3 presents the consultation mechanisms and the envisaged timetable (subject to change).

The consultation process will be accompanied by a group of eminent intellectuals and high political representatives who will meet to evaluate the results of the consultations and to contribute to the drafting of the final text of the White Paper.

6.   The central messages of the White Paper

Cultural diversity poses challenges in many different contexts. The White Paper will argue that intercultural dialogue can help meeting these challenges. Dialogue will however only be effective if the dialogue partners share at least some basic values and cultural references and if they are willing to engage in dialogue on an equal basis; if the political environment is supportive and aiming at greater social justice, and does not work against intercultural dialogue; if there is coherence between the initiatives at local, national and international level; if civil society is involved; and if the cultural industry supports dialogue.

6.1   Shared values

The Council of Europe is committed to common values and principles, which are rooted in Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage – a heritage both shared and rich in its diversity. The statutory mission of the Organisation is the promotion and active defence of pluralist democracy, the universal human rights and the rule of law. Values are important building material for social cohesion. The White Paper will set out the general principle that Europe can manage its cultural diversity – in any context – only on the basis of, and with respect for, these values.

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[11] Document CM(2006)44 final

Intercultural dialogue, as a tool for the promotion of cultural diversity and social cohesion, can only be successful if the dialogue partners – independent of all differences – are sharing certain common values and cultural references. These are, by definition, not culture-specific; if it were otherwise, we would not talk about intercultural dialogue.

Quite a few such indispensable values and principles have already been formulated in the past:

- Recognition of the equality of the dialogue partners as bearers of human rights;
- Recognition of the primacy of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- Recognition (tolerance) of, and respect for, each other's culture;
- Recognition of cultural diversity as a fundamental characteristic of contemporary societies;
- Acceptance of the fact that cultures – for all their diversity – are not opposed to each other but overlap and influence each other constantly, and that cultural "purity" is neither a justifiable nor a realistic aim;
- Recognition of the principle of non-violent conflict resolution and of the need to keep or achieve peace.

Consultation question

Which underlying values are important for the promotion of intercultural dialogue? Are "new" values needed?

Consultation question

Are there "natural" limitations to what intercultural dialogue can achieve? What are the possibilities of dialogue with those who do not share our world view, have a different interpretation of shared values or refuse to dialogue?

6.2   Coherence across different policy areas

The Council of Europe's approach to intercultural dialogue brings into focus all policy areas directly influencing the diversity of cultural practices and cultural identities. It concerns, to name just the most obvious, policies regarding citizenship and rights of participation, education, social cohesion, minority rights, immigration, foreign affairs, language, relations between the state and religions, the development of civil society and gender equality.[12] Education, in all its forms, arguably plays the most important role of all, since the skills necessary for living peacefully together in a culturally diverse environment need to be acquired and can be taught; this includes for instance the important areas of teaching of foreign languages and of history.

Consultation question

How can formal, informal and non-formal education promote intercultural dialogue and prepare individuals for living in a multicultural society?

In a wider sense, however, coherence must be achieved also with other policy areas, i.e. with those that influence the material living conditions and the sustainability of cultural identities, such as social services, housing, labour market, urban planning, public health and many more. A better integration of these policy areas is necessary for addressing the negative consequences of social fragmentation and the precarious social and economic position of many individuals and groups.

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[12] For cultural rights cf. the "Wroclaw Declaration", adopted by the European Ministers responsible for culture, education, youth and sport in December 2004

Consultation question

How can the awareness be strengthened that intercultural dialogue is not "just" a cultural issue, but needs systematic supportive action in other policy areas?

Consultation question

Which institutional arrangements must be put in place to ensure a better coordination of the different policy areas concerned – at international, national and local level?

The diversity and scope of policy areas concerned by intercultural dialogue presents a specific challenge, which cannot be addressed by ad hoc or sectoral measures without running the risk of neutralising the efforts in one domain by opposite or ill-conceived measures taken in another. In order to be effective, the principle of promoting intercultural dialogue must therefore become an integral part of policy-making and policy implementation in practically all other areas. This is usually called "mainstreaming".

Consultation question

Where should the policy of "mainstreaming" intercultural dialogue begin, which policy areas should have priority over others?

6.3 Coherence between international, national and local action

Similar demands can be formulated for the coherence between international, national and local action.

This brings into focus the role of the different stakeholders of intercultural dialogue, who act in very different political and institutional contexts. At the local level, initiatives by individuals and civil society organisations, the activities of religious communities, the policies and services of local and regional authorities as well as neighbourhood media – they all play arguably the most important role for the promotion of intercultural dialogue. Issues faced by cultural and religious minorities can often be best addressed at the local level. National parliaments, governments and administrations, national NGOs and media share this responsibility. International organisations at regional or world level can contribute in various ways. All of these work more effectively if they share the same priorities and convictions.

Consultation question

How can intercultural dialogue be promoted in the local community?

Consultation question

How can intercultural dialogue be promoted through measures at national level?

Consultation question

How can international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, support local and national initiatives for the promotion of intercultural dialogue?

6.4   Public authorities and non-governmental action

The Council of Europe sees the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a shared responsibility, engaging governments, individual, civil society organisations, the media. In accordance with this basic principle, intercultural dialogue as well is a shared responsibility of all stakeholders.

Governments, civil society organisations, cultural communities and the media respond to each other in many ways. Their actions are shaped by the actions of others. This interplay characterises open societies. In the area of the promotion of intercultural dialogue, it seems obvious that some degree of coherence between the stakeholders – e.g. a common understanding of civil rights and duties – will greatly increase the effectiveness of their initiatives and policies.

The White Paper will therefore be addressed not to one target group alone, but to the widest possible audience – including the various bodies of the Council of Europe itself.

Consultation question

How can civil society organisations be encouraged to strengthen their commitment to intercultural dialogue at international, national and local level?

Consultation question

What is the responsibility of political parties in promoting intercultural dialogue? Which specific role can they play?

6.5   The role of cultural industries

In pluralistic societies, the cultural industries that include access to and participation in the creation and production of cultural goods and services make a positive contribution to fostering a culture of understanding. This also includes the particular role of the media, referring to printed and broadcast media and the growing importance of new technologies, as tools of creation and communication.

With due regard to the fundamental right to freedom of expression and information and to the importance of cultural industries in promoting intercultural dialogue (for example, through music, film, publishing, cultural tourism), the cultural industries, including the media, could be encouraged to reflect more equitably society's diversity. In terms of the media, particularly in the context of audiovisual programming, there is a need to report on ethnic, cultural and religious matters in a sensitive manner, avoiding demeaning stereotypes and generalisation and providing insight into each community's own diversity.

The Council of Europe is of the opinion that media self-regulation is an important element in this context, and for reconciling the right to freedom of expression and information with respect for human dignity and the protection of the reputation or the rights of others. Other responses, especially of a regulatory nature, must respect obligations under international law and conform to the relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights.

With reference to other cultural industries, a more strategic and targeted approach may be required to address imbalances and offer opportunities to certain groups who are currently denied such opportunities as a means of enhancing intercultural understanding and exchange.

Consultation question

How can the cultural industries, including journalists and media organisations be encouraged to develop approaches that more effectively promote intercultural dialogue?

7.   *Examples of good practice*

In order to make the White Paper as relevant as possible for practical initiatives promoting intercultural dialogue in the various contexts, the Council of Europe will collect examples of good practice and make them available to the public. The power of good examples is usually much stronger than the effects of abstract principles.

What is an example of good practice? The Council of Europe will apply a number of loosely defined criteria. In order to qualify, projects or programmes must be able to show that they:

- promote intercultural dialogue;
- achieved their aims;
- can be managed within a given budget and framework;
- can be continued beyond the experimental period (which very often profits from an exceptional funding opportunity).

Examples of good practice must allow repetition and adaptation by other organisers, in other countries and in other cultures.

> **Consultation question**
>
> What makes a practical example of intercultural dialogue an "example of good practice"?

In the context of the White Paper, examples of good practice can relate to one or several of the main aspects of intercultural dialogue. They can be proposed by everybody and every institution, either through the White Paper website at www.coe.int/dialogue or by using the attached form (Appendix 2).

> **Consultation question**
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> How can examples of good practice (in the area of intercultural dialogue) be publicised in the best way?

Selected examples of good practice will be used within the White Paper, and appear on the web site.

8.   *The next steps*

The follow-up to the publication of the White Paper, foreseen for November 2007, will be the primary indicator of its quality and relevance. The clearer its messages, the more practical its recommendations, the more balanced its views, the better are its chances of being useful and productive.

Following the publication, the Council of Europe – in partnership with a group of patrons composed of eminent intellectuals and high political representatives – intends to take a number of initiatives in the area of standard development and to prepare activities at European level and co-operation projects with other international institutions.

It is hoped that the White Paper will entice all other stakeholders to develop new initiatives, including:

- national parliaments and governments, e.g. regarding institutional and legislative changes;
- local and regional authorities, e.g. as regards the provision of local services;
- civil society organisations, e.g. regarding training activities, campaigns and lobbying policies;
- ethnic and religious communities, e.g. regarding their involvement in dialogue initiatives;
- media organisations, e.g. regarding the standards of reporting on cultural diversity.

At European level, one of the issues will be to develop a recognisable format for recurrent activities promoting intercultural dialogue, thereby to increase the visibility and impact of this policy.

With the European Union and other international organisations, the Council of Europe shares the view that intercultural dialogue is a crucially important tool for learning to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has expressed itself in favour of enhanced coordination efforts in this field with the European Union (in particular with a view to 2008, which they wished to be a European Year for Intercultural Dialogue) and the OSCE.[13] There are numerous possibilities for synergy and co-operation, thus giving the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue a special importance as a basic reference tool.

Consultation question

How should the Council of Europe co-operate with other international institutions, in order to achieve a maximum impact of activities promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue?

The consultation phase and the follow-up activities to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue will also coincide with activities of the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative of the UN Secretary General. The report of the "Alliance" initiative has been published in November 2006; its results and recommendations will be reflected in the White Paper. The Council of Europe has expressed a strong interest in developing joint initiatives with the United Nations for the promotion of intercultural dialogue.

Consultation question

How can the Council of Europe contribute to the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative of the United Nations?

9. *An invitation to participate in the White Paper process*

This consultation document is an open invitation to participate in the drafting of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

All bodies and units of the Council of Europe are convinced that such a basic policy document on intercultural dialogue cannot be developed "top-down". The White Paper has to be the result of an interactive process, open to everybody and every type of organisation that wishes to participate. Civil society organisations, religious and ethnic communities, experts, politicians, parliamentarians, administrators, simply everybody has a lot to contribute.

A document on dialogue must be borne in dialogue. And dialogue must continue after the publication of the White Paper.

Throughout the present text, readers will have found information regarding the practical arrangements the Council of Europe is putting in place for this consultation process, as well as suggested themes for the discussion. As mentioned above, these suggested questions are neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Everyone is welcome to raise other aspects of intercultural dialogue as well, or to propose amendments to the approach of the White Paper.[14]

Strasbourg, January 2007

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[13] Document CM(2006)76 final.
[14] Updated information on the White Paper process and contact addresses are provided regularly on the White Paper web site of the Council of Europe (www.coe.int/dialogue).

Appendix 1
Suggested questions for the consultation process

The following list puts the questions contained in chapters 1 to 8 of this document into a logical order.

The challenge of managing cultural diversity in democratic societies

1. How urgent are efforts to promote intercultural dialogue today? Why are they urgent?
2. Which is the most promising overall "vision" for living together in multicultural societies, what is the most suitable model for managing its diversity in a democratic way?
3. How do cultural diversity and human rights relate to one another?
4. What can be done to give cultural diversity a more positive connotation than it has today? What should the response be to intolerant, racist and xenophobic tendencies in the public debate?
5. Which measures are necessary to enable cultural minorities, such as migrants and national minorities, to express their cultural identity and to contribute to the cultural richness of the whole society?

The concept of intercultural dialogue

6. How can we best define "intercultural dialogue"?
7. In which political, social and cultural contexts can "intercultural dialogue" play a relevant role?
8. Are there minimum conditions that must be fulfilled in order to make intercultural dialogue at all possible?
9. What is necessary for going from intercultural dialogue to joint action?
10. Which role does the principle of gender equality play in intercultural dialogue?
11. How can formal, informal and non-formal education promote intercultural dialogue and prepare individuals for living in a multicultural society?
12. Which underlying values are important for the policy of promoting intercultural dialogue? Are "new" values needed?
13. Are there "natural" limitations to what intercultural dialogue can achieve? What are the possibilities of dialogue with those who do not share our world view, have a different interpretation of shared values or refuse to dialogue?
14. Which dialogue methods are specifically suited for promoting intercultural understanding?
15. What are the expected political and individual "results" of intercultural dialogue? How can they be "measured"?
16. How can the capacity of individuals, groups and institutions for intercultural dialogue be enhanced?
17. What makes a practical example of intercultural dialogue an "example of good practice"?

Organising intercultural dialogue

18. How can civil society organisations be encouraged to strengthen their commitment to intercultural dialogue at international, national and local level?
19. What is the responsibility of political parties in promoting intercultural dialogue? Which specific role can they play?
20. How can the equal participation of men and women in intercultural dialogue be ensured?
21. How can intercultural dialogue be promoted in the local community?
22. How can intercultural dialogue be promoted through measures at national level?
23. What is the place of religious communities in a policy promoting intercultural dialogue? Which significance has the dialogue among religious communities?
24. Should the Council of Europe engage in dialogue with religious communities? If yes: how?
25. How can the awareness be strengthened that intercultural dialogue is not "just" a cultural issue, but needs systematic supportive action in other policy areas?
26. Which institutional arrangements must be put in place to ensure a better coordination of the different policy areas concerned – at international, national and local level?
27. Where should the policy of "mainstreaming" intercultural dialogue begin, which policy areas should have priority over others?
28. How can international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, support local and national initiatives for the promotion of intercultural dialogue?
29. How can cultural industries, including journalists and media organisations be encouraged to develop approaches that more effectively promote intercultural dialogue?
30. How can examples of good practice (in the area of intercultural dialogue) be publicised in the best way?

Co-operation with other international organisations

31. What is the "added value" of Council of Europe action on intercultural dialogue, which distinguishes it from that of other international organisations?
32. How should the Council of Europe co-operate with other international institutions, in order to achieve a maximum impact of activities promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue?
33. How can the Council of Europe contribute to the "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative of the United Nations?

Appendix 2
Examples of good practice

Suggested structure for the nomination of examples of good practice

1.   **Title** of the project

2.   **Organiser(s)** of the project (association, institution, public body, school etc) *including name, postal address, e-mail address, web site, telephone, fax*

3.   **Themes** addressed by the project *(e.g. art, communication, new technologies, social cohesion, equality, fight against racism, development of participative citizenship, history/collective memory, education/training, standard of living, sustainable development, environment, health, rural areas, cities/urban areas, work/employment/professional integration, illiteracy, fight against exclusion, solidarity between generations, international solidarity, interreligious dialogue, cultural diversity, raising awareness of religious practices, mobility, democracy, minorities, fight against stereotypes, integration, equality between men and women, conflict prevention, cultural co-operation, freedom of expression, human rights, linguistic diversity, media)*

4.   **Target groups (beneficiaries)**

5.   **Intervention level (international, national, local), geographic area**

6.   **Objectives**

7.   **Start and end date**

8.   **Description of activities** (participants, activities)

9.   **Outcomes** (reports, publications, exhibitions, press releases etc)

10.   **Budget and financial sources**

11.   **Overall project results, evaluation**

12.   **Follow-up** (planned or already realised)

13.   **Why is this project regarded as an "example of good practice"?**

Nominations should reach the Council of Europe either in English or French language (preferably in both) before the end of April 2007. The text volume should not exceed 1.000 words. Additional details are available on the Council of Europe's web site at www.coe.int/.

Appendix 3
Roadmap of the White Paper consultation process

Mechanisms, dates and events are subject to change

Consultation partner	Mechanisms	Dates and events
Member states	Written survey (questionnaire) on views, results of policies and activities at national level, and examples of good practice Discussions of the GR-C and the Committee of Ministers (plus all Steering Committees mentioned in the "Guidelines")	January to April 2007 Interim reports at regular intervals
Council of Europe independent bodies and partial agreements (North-South Centre, Eurimages, ECRI, Commissioner for Human Rights, Parliamentary Assembly, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities)	Written invitation by the Secretary General or the Co-ordinator to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice Consultation hearings	Parliamentary Assembly: information at committee level; discussion on a consultation debate North-South Centre: Colloquy on the consultation results, Lisbon, June 2007 Congress: Specific colloquy on inter-religious dialogue (23-24 November 2006)
Steering Committees	Written invitation by the Secretary General or the Co-ordinator to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice Consultation hearings	First discussions held e.g. with CDED, CDCULT (committee + expert meeting), CDPAT, CDEJ/CMJ, CDMG, DH-DEV Several committees will provide written contribution
UNESCO, ALECSO, Anna Lindh Foundation	Written invitation by the Secretary General or the Co-ordinator to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice Discussion in working meeting and/or meetings of the "Faro Platform" and in the context of the colloquy on consultation results	Beginning of 2007 January to March, June 2007
European Commission, OSCE, "Alliance of Civilizations" initiative of the UN Secretary General	Written invitation by the Secretary General or the Co-ordinator to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice.	Project presented in June 2006 to both European Commission (DGEAC) and OSCE ("3+3 meeting") Consultation meeting in January 2007

Consultation partner	Mechanisms	Dates and events
Representatives of local and regional authorities	Invitation of selected local and regional authorities, proposed by the Congress and/or the Task Force, to a hearing. General invitation of the Congress to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice. Open invitation to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice through the White Paper website.	Specific consultation forum in early 2007
Ethnic communities	Invitation of representatives of selected ethnic communities, proposed by the Congress, the Parliamentary Assembly, CDMG, the Secretariat of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities and/or the Task Force, to a hearing. Open invitation to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice through the White Paper website.	Specific consultation forum in spring 2007 Consultation with immigrant communities, Lisbon (foreseen in May 2007)
Religious communities	Invitation by the Co-ordinator for intercultural dialogue (following proposals by the Commissioner for Human Rights) to selected religious communities, to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice in writing or during meetings. Open invitation to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice through the White Paper website.	San Marino Conference, 23-24 April 2007

Consultation partner	Mechanisms	Dates and events
INGO Conference, relevant civil society organisations	Written invitation by the Secretary General or the Co-ordinator to the INGO Conference, to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice in writing.	First discussions with the INGO Conference on 28 June and 5 October 2006
	Invitation of the INGO Conference to a hearing.	Hearing in January 2007
	Consultations in the framework of the European Youth Campaign "All different – All equal".	Consultation meeting in March 2007
	Consultation with social partners.	February to March 2007
	Open invitation to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice through the White Paper website.	
Experts	Individual invitations to experts proposed by Steering Committees, the Task Force and other bodies, to provide views, results of previous work and examples of good practice in writing.	First meeting in January 2007
	Invitation of selected experts to a hearing.	

Appendix 4
Selected Council of Europe statements on the promotion of intercultural dialogue

"Warsaw Declaration" adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe, Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005 (excerpt)

"6. We shall foster European identity and unity, based on shared fundamental values, respect for our common heritage and cultural diversity. We are resolved to ensure that our diversity becomes a source of mutual enrichment, inter alia, by fostering political, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. We will continue our work on national minorities, thus contributing to the development of democratic stability. In order to develop understanding and trust among Europeans, we will promote human contacts and exchange good practices regarding free movement of persons on the continent, with the aim of building a Europe without dividing lines."[15]

"Action Plan" adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe, Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005 (excerpt)

"5. Protecting and promoting cultural diversity

"Respect for, and promotion of, cultural diversity on the basis of Council of Europe values are essential conditions for the development of societies based on solidarity. The Council of Europe will therefore develop strategies to manage and promote cultural diversity while ensuring the cohesion of societies. We support the adoption by UNESCO of a convention on cultural diversity.

"We will foster dialogue on the role of culture in contemporary Europe and define ways to support diversity and artistic creativity, defending culture as a purveyor of values. Steps will be taken to enhance access to cultural achievements and heritage by promoting cultural activities and exchanges.

"6. Fostering intercultural dialogue

"We shall systematically encourage intercultural and inter-faith dialogue, based on universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation and tolerance, as well as preventing conflicts and ensuring integration and the cohesion of society. The active involvement of civil society in this dialogue, in which both men and women should be able to participate on an equal basis, must be ensured. Issues faced by cultural and religious minorities can often be best addressed at the local level. Therefore, we ask the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to be actively involved in these issues and promote best practices.

"We will strengthen cooperation and coordination both within the Council of Europe and with other regional and international institutions. To this effect, a coordinator for intercultural dialogue shall be appointed within the Council of Europe to monitor in cooperation with existing structures the implementation of the Organisation's practical programmes and ensure coordination with other institutions.

"Convinced that dialogue between cultures is also fostered by accurate understanding of history, we endorse the Council of Europe's work in history teaching and related projects, and decide to intensify our efforts in this direction. We encourage more active involvement of civil society in this work.

"We are committed to a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions - the southern Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia - based on the above-mentioned principles. We recognise the role of the North-South Centre in promoting this dialogue, as well as its mission of fostering European awareness of intercultural and development issues."[16]

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[15] Document CM(2005)79
[16] Document CM(2005)80

"Faro Declaration" on the Council of Europe's strategy for developing intercultural dialogue, adopted by the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs of the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, Faro/Portugal, 27-28 October 2005 (excerpt)

"We undertake to pursue our efforts in favour of European identity and unity on the basis of shared fundamental values, respect for and valorisation of our common heritage and cultural diversity. At the same time, we will remain open and co-operate with neighbouring regions and the rest of the world.

"We are committed in particular to promoting a model of democratic culture, underpinning the law and institutions and actively involving civil society and citizens, and to ensuring that diversity is a source of mutual enrichment, by promoting political, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue. Access to and participation in cultural life for all – in the sense of the European Cultural Convention – are essential conditions to achieve this aim.

"We are also determined to build supportive societies and strengthen cohesion in social, educational and cultural terms. We shall endeavour in particular to create the right conditions for the emergence and development of sustainable communities where people want to live and work, now and in the future.

"We forcefully condemn all forms of intolerance and discrimination, especially on the grounds of sex, ethnic origin or religion."[17]

Last update 31/01/2007

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[17] Document CM(2005)164