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MINISTERIAL ★ CONFERENCE

Intercultural Dialogue: The Way Ahead

Closing Conference of the 50th Anniversary of the European Cultural Convention
27-28 October 2005
Faro, Portugal



Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe's Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue

We, the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs of the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, meeting in Faro on 27 and 28 October 2005:

On the basis of the Declaration and Action Plan of the Third Summit of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), at which our Heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to the common values and principles rooted in Europe's cultural, religious and humanistic heritage and expressed their firm belief that education and culture are keys to ensuring the promotion of these values in our societies,

Convinced that the Council of Europe, on the basis of the universal human rights reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant instruments of the United Nations and the European Convention on Human Rights, has an essential part to play in the systematic development of intercultural dialogue as advocated at the Summit, with a view to both building Europe without dividing lines and promoting dialogue and co-operation with neighbouring regions and the rest of the world,

Drawing on the discussion of the future of cultural co-operation held as part of the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention, especially the guidelines set out in the Wroclaw Declaration on Fifty Years of Cultural Co-operation, adopted on 9 December 2004, and the conclusions of the colloquy on "European culture: identity and diversity" (Strasbourg, 8-9 September 2005),

Also bearing in mind the conclusions of the conferences of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs on their new role and responsibilities in initiating intercultural dialogue (Opatija, 21-22 October 2003), of European Education Ministers on "Intercultural education: managing diversity, strengthening democracy" (Athens, 11-12 November 2003) and of European Ministers responsible for Youth on "Human dignity and social cohesion: youth policy responses to violence" (Budapest, 23-24 September 2005), as well as the Kiev initiative resulting from the 5th Ministerial Colloquy of the STAGE Project "Culture and Cultural Policies for Development" (15-16 September 2005),

Aware of our role, within each of our countries and in the dialogue between Europe and the rest of the world, in giving appropriate responses to the major challenges of our multicultural societies,

Wishing, together with senior representatives of the Council of Europe's main partner organisations at international and regional level, to:

- i. assert the political **vision** on which we wish the Council of Europe to base its strategy for developing intercultural dialogue both inside European societies and between Europe and the rest of the world;
- ii. define the **lines of action** on which this strategy should be implemented between the States Parties to the European Cultural Convention, through intergovernmental co-operation, and within European societies, using the different facets of the Council of Europe's work and its networks and field contacts;

- iii. extend, as far as possible, implementation of the strategy beyond Europe and set up **instruments** for that purpose;

Adopt this declaration as the basis for our future action in favour of intercultural dialogue and submit it to the 115th Session of the Committee of Ministers (Strasbourg, 16-17 November 2005) so that it may be implemented by the member states and the appropriate Council of Europe bodies.

Part 1: Vision

We reaffirm our vision based on the principles of the universality and indivisibility of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We reject the idea of a clash of civilisations and firmly believe that, on the contrary, increased commitment to cultural cooperation – in the broad sense of the term – and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term, including with respect to the threat of terrorism. We will work towards a true and open dialogue among cultures on the basis of mutual understanding and respect.

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.

We emphasise that in order to translate this vision into reality, it is essential to strengthen co-operation between the competent international and regional organisations and with civil society – particularly young people – in Europe and beyond. We are committed in particular to intensifying co-operation with the European Union as well as with the OSCE and the United Nations. We underline in this respect the importance of the “Alliance of civilisations” initiative adopted by the United Nations and of the Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions adopted by UNESCO on 20 October 2005, and we support the European Commission’s proposal to declare 2008 “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue”.

Part 2: Action

We shall systematically encourage intercultural dialogue on the basis of universal human rights, as a means of promoting awareness, understanding, reconciliation, tolerance and respect for the other, of preventing conflicts and of ensuring an integrated and cohesive society.

We stress the importance of closely involving civil society in this dialogue, in which both men and women shall be able to participate on an equal footing. We support the active involvement of parliaments and local and regional authorities in the member states, as well as the role of the Parliamentary Assembly and of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe to develop contacts and promote best practices in this area.

We undertake to contribute to the swift and effective implementation in the States Parties to the Cultural Convention of the decisions taken at the Warsaw Summit, in particular:

- enhancing all opportunities for the training of educators in the fields of education for democratic citizenship, human rights, history, intercultural education;
- developing intergovernmental co-operation on democracy and good governance at all levels, and promoting freedom of expression and information and media freedom as a core element of these;
- supporting the Council of Europe's work on history teaching.
- further developing the Council of Europe's work on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications and its contribution to the Bologna Process, aimed at creating a European Higher Education Area by 2010.

As Ministers of Culture, we shall work more particularly on developing strategies to manage and promote cultural diversity while ensuring the cohesion of our societies.

We shall also endeavour to see that the political will shown at the Summit to engage in a new dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions – the southern shores of the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia – translates into action, particularly by:

- initiating a process to develop intercultural dialogue through concerted action between the competent international and regional organisations, with the active involvement of the member states concerned and civil society;
- developing human rights, democratic citizenship and civil participation education programmes, as well as intercultural exchanges at secondary school and youth level, both within Europe and with neighbouring countries;
- beginning work on the shared past of Europe and its neighbouring regions, based on the conviction that dialogue between cultures is also fostered by a common understanding of history;
- launching cultural and audiovisual heritage co-operation programmes.

To give an operational basis to this twofold commitment, we shall capitalise on the achievements of 50 years of cultural co-operation, focusing on the following lines of action:

- respect for, and access to cultural rights and the right to education, in order to fight exclusion and build equitable societies, paying particular attention to all vulnerable groups;
- setting up inter-sectoral public policies encouraging cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, as well as language learning and access to information technologies as a means of promoting intercultural exchanges at world level;
- developing the knowledge of history, cultures, arts and religions, and highlighting elements illustrating both the historical and the contemporary influence of cultures and civilisations on each other, as well as cultural cross-fertilisation;
- devising and applying principles and methods for management of the heritage and use of cultural resources as factors for human development and sustainable development;
- supporting cultural and artistic activities and exchanges and recognising the role of artists and creators— as vehicles for dialogue and mutual understanding, and introducing incentives to facilitate everyone’s access to and participation in these activities.

Part 3: Instruments

To implement this strategy, we shall build on the standard-setting *aquis* of the Council of Europe in the cultural cooperation and human rights fields, and use the instruments put at our disposal by the Organisation, particularly:

- the European Cultural Convention, as the framework for intergovernmental co-operation between all countries in Europe, as well as the steering committees and mechanisms set up under the Convention. In this respect, we stress the importance of Eurimages - the Council of Europe Fund for the Co-production, Distribution and Exhibition of European Cinematographic Works and we note with interest the opening for signature of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society at Faro;
- the Human Rights Commissioner, whose mandate includes the promotion of education in, awareness of and respect for human rights, as embodied in the Council of Europe human rights’ instruments;
- the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) and the youth campaign for diversity, human rights and participation, to run from 2006 in the spirit of the “All different, all equal” campaign of 1995, as well as the Euro-Mediterranean activities carried out as part of the partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Union in the youth field;
- the North-South Centre, whose role in promoting intercultural dialogue was recognised by the Warsaw Summit, together with its mission of fostering European awareness of intercultural and development issues. In this connection, we invite states that do not yet take part in the Centre’s activities to consider doing so.

Furthermore, to provide the Council of Europe with the new resources required to implement this strategy, we advocate:

- the launch of a Council of Europe “White paper on integrated policies for the management of cultural diversity through intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention”;

- the setting up of new instruments for intercultural dialogue between Europe and its neighbouring regions. In this respect, we welcome the first steps in this direction which are:
 - i. the signature of a co-operation memorandum between the Council of Europe and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures;
 - ii. the setting-up of a co-ordinated activity programme between the Council of Europe and ALECSO in the areas of education, culture, cultural and natural heritage, youth and sport;
 - iii. the creation of a platform for intercultural dialogue and co-operation between the Council of Europe and UNESCO, open to other international or regional partners.