

IV

(Notices)

NOTICES FROM EUROPEAN UNION INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES

COUNCIL

Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on Intercultural Competences

(2008/C 141/09)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. referring to the provisions of Decision No 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 ⁽¹⁾;
2. referring to the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
3. having regard to the Commission's Communication of 10 May 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World ⁽²⁾ and to the Council Resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture ⁽³⁾;
4. recalling the Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning ⁽⁴⁾;
5. recalling the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education,

CONSIDERING that:

- intercultural dialogue is a key tool in addressing some of the most important challenges Europe is facing at present and that it constitutes one of the three strategic objectives of the European Agenda for Culture, to be implemented through triennial work plans,
- in order to foster open and inclusive societies established on core European values and to promote active citizenship,

European citizens need to be equipped with intercultural competences, which constitute a key factor for strengthening intercultural dialogue,

- the knowledge, skills and attitudes of particular relevance to intercultural competences are those relating to the following key competences: communication in foreign languages, social and civic competences, and cultural awareness and expression ⁽⁵⁾.

RECOGNIZING that:

With a view to strengthening intercultural competences in society, a sustainable and cross-sectoral approach towards intercultural dialogue needs to be developed. This approach should seek to integrate and support the following relevant initiatives in the fields of:

- A. CULTURE, in particular as foreseen in the Work Plan of the Council for the period 2008-2010:
 - the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as a means to foster open and inclusive societies,
 - the promotion of everyone's active participation in cultural life and access to culture and heritage in all their diversity, with particular attention to people who have less opportunities for access,
 - the improvement of the conditions for mobility of artists and works of art,
 - the supporting of cooperation between culture and both formal education and training and informal and non-formal learning in the field of cultural awareness and artistic education,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 44.⁽²⁾ Doc. 9496/07 and ADD 1.⁽³⁾ OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.⁽⁵⁾ Key competences as defined in the Recommendation 2006/962/EC.

- the fostering of linguistic competences and of translation to facilitate access to artistic expressions in different languages.

- the promotion of the role of organised civil society, particularly the involvement of youth organisations.

B. EDUCATION:

- the development of a lifelong learning perspective which includes the acquisition by all citizens of the key competences most relevant to intercultural competences and most likely to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity as a core value, such as linguistic, social and civic competences and cultural awareness and expression,
- the development of policies based on equity principles aimed at integrating children from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds into mainstream forms of education and training, without any discrimination,
- within the framework of a coherent policy for multilingualism, the active promotion of language learning by encouraging the provision of a wide variety of opportunities, including the use of ICT and distance learning, to learn languages in formal, non-formal and informal environments,
- the encouragement of mobility schemes among learners, teachers and other teaching staff as an effective tool for the promotion of intercultural dialogue,
- the career-long development of skills that will enable teachers to better manage cultural diversity and facilitate the development of intercultural competences, and thereby contribute effectively to the establishment of inclusive learning communities.

C. YOUTH:

- the engagement of young people as a resource for contributing to intercultural dialogue in open and pluralistic societies,
- the promotion, development and recognition of intercultural competences of young people through non-formal and informal learning,
- the development of opportunities for young people for acquiring intercultural competences as early in life as possible through various forms of active participation in society, including voluntary activities, and through greater mobility as a way to experience the diversity of cultures and multilingualism,
- the promotion of access to and the role of culture, arts, music and sport in shaping young people's identities and bringing them together,
- the promotion, development and recognition of intercultural competences of youth workers and youth leaders by facilitating their mobility and their educational and training opportunities,

D. AUDIOVISUAL:

- the encouragement of media literacy, in line with the Commission Communication of 20 December 2007 'A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment' and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of 11 December 2007 ⁽¹⁾ which, *inter alia*, promotes cultural diversity, both for linear and non-linear services, so that individuals are better equipped:
- to identify, access and appreciate content relating to or originating within different cultures, and
- to use new technological tools (software and hardware) to create and distribute their own cultural content,
- the promotion of media and audiovisual content that is culturally rich, diverse, and informative for all individuals by means of, *inter alia*:
 - encouraging co-productions at European, national and regional levels,
 - encouraging non-profit civil society-based media ⁽²⁾ to better take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital technologies,
- fostering the process of digitalisation of cultural materials and content to enable new media — on-line as well as mobile services — to contribute to enhanced accessibility of cultural diversity.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF COMPETENCES, TO:

- promote intercultural competences through the existing instruments and initiatives in the fields of culture, education, youth and audiovisual policy, in particular by exploring how these measures could be further deepened and enhanced in support of intercultural dialogue,
- increase synergies between these fields with a view to developing intercultural competences, for example by envisaging joint initiatives, taking into account the need of citizens to understand and respect their own culture, the culture of others and cultural diversity in general, to communicate in a culturally diverse environment and to identify and actively participate in fostering and developing common values of democracy and fundamental rights,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 332, 18.12.2007, p. 27.

⁽²⁾ Often referred to in English as 'community media' and in French as 'médias associatifs'.

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- create opportunities for dialogue at local, regional, national and EU levels by strengthening support for the development of intercultural competences through the existing programmes in the fields of culture, education, youth and audiovisual policy,
 - foster a favourable environment for creativity and innovation to make their full contribution in shaping intercultural competences and enhancing intercultural dialogue,
 - identify and share good practices in the development of intercultural competences, taking account in particular, as a follow-up, of initiatives undertaken at national and EU level as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue,
 - enhance and promote the concept of intercultural dialogue in all other relevant policy fields, both within the EU and in their external relations.
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