

THE POTENTIALITY OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN PROSPECTING THE PROMOTION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL VALUES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract: The role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and, last but not least, education in promoting the fundamental values of the European Union (EU) is a very important one. The society of each Member State in general has to get more involved for these three vectors to work. In this respect, we can say that not only political actors will have an important contribution to achieving intercultural dialogue, but also mass media, businesses, communities and why not, even religious leaders. Authentic intercultural dialogue cannot be achieved without a profound knowledge of one's own culture but also of others. Thus, culture can develop an important role in European Union (EU) foreign policy, intercultural dialogue even helping to avoid conflicts or conflicts by promoting reconciliation within and between Member States.

The present Communication proposes a strategic framework for the deepening of international cultural relations, realizing that they constitute a new model of cooperation between the Member States and managed to create, through their own national cultural institutions, opportunities, optimization and socio-economic advantages. Culture becomes a factor of economic growth not only in its traditional forms, but also thanks to the cultural and creative industries. Intercultural dialogue, not being a legal concept, is neither regulated by national law nor by the European Union (EU)¹ but is based on international frameworks that refer to respect for human rights and cultural diversity.

It is well-known that in international relations culture is one of the three pillars of the European Agenda for Culture². Since 2011, the development of a strategic approach in this area has been a priority of the European Council's cultural plans. A further step has also been taken by the European Parliament through the "Strategy for Cultural Relations It is well-known that in international relations culture is one of the three pillars of the European Agenda for Culture³. Since 2011, the development of a strategic approach in this area has been a priority of the European Council's cultural plans. A further step has also been taken by the European Parliament through the "Strategy for International Cultural Relations" (2013-2014)⁴. Culture continues to play an important role at the municipal level, so involving citizens⁵, state people and civil servants working in cultural institutions as an excellent opportunity for the European Union and, implicitly, for its member states to better coordinate cultural diplomacy .

Keywords: Intercultural dialogue, cultural education, culture strategy, international cultural relations, cultural diplomacy, model of cultural cooperation.

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¹Tratatul de la Lisabona de modificare a Tratatului privind Uniunea Europeană și a Tratatului de instituire a Comunității Europene, Lisabona, 1 decembrie 2007, intrat în vigoare la 1 decembrie 2009.

²Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 19 ianuarie 2016 referitoare la rolul dialogului intercultural, al diversității culturale și al educației în promovarea valorilor fundamentale ale UE.

³Agenda europeană pentru cultură, disponibilă pe [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/Ro/TXT/?uri=celex:32007G1129\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/Ro/TXT/?uri=celex:32007G1129(01)).

⁴O nouă strategie pentru a pune cultura în central relațiilor...disponibilă pe europa.eu/rapid/press-release_ip16-2074_ro.pdf.

⁵Cezar Birzea, *Cetățenia europeană*, București, SNSPA Politeia, 2005, p.16.

Introduction

Article 3 of the Maastricht Treaty (TEU) provided for an extraordinary fact for Union countries based on the European Communities, namely one of its missions being "a contribution to quality education and training and the flowering of the cultures of the Member States"⁶.

Over the years this desideratum has also been achieved through the development of fruitful intercultural dialogue, as we could say, becoming a priority objective of the President of the European Parliament, Hans-Gert Pöttering. On this subject he said why this subject was so important for his mandate not only for the states of Europe but even for the whole world: "The understanding of cultures is crucial to peace throughout the world, and the relations between the West and the Islamic and Arab world are decisive for the 21st century. I will never forget the speech of Mr. Anwar Al Sadat (Egypt), which referred to Islam as a religion of peace. We need to establish a connection with the Islamic world, because in this way the predicted conflict between civilizations will not occur. We must develop a dialogue based on tolerance and truth"⁷.

1. European Year of Intercultural Dialogue

Thanks to the European Commission's initiative, by decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18 December 2006, it was decided to proclaim 2008 as the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue"⁸.

To accomplish this project the capital of Slovenia, Ljubljana hosts a conference on "Intercultural Dialogue as the Fundamental Value of the EU"⁹ starting January 7, with the participation of European Commissioners Ján Figel and Janez Potočnik, academics, philosophers, writers, artists and journalists from many European countries discussing the challenges of multicultural Europe. Topics addressed were culture, art, education, research, sustainable economic development, the media, as well as issues related to migration, multilingualism and religions, thus preparing for the official launch of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue¹⁰.

On January 8, 2008, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Slovenian Prime Minister Janez Janša and European Parliament President Hans Gert Pöttering officially proclaimed the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue¹¹.

The event marks the beginning of a wide range of activities held across Europe throughout the year, in order to enhance intercultural interactions and also to deepen relations between peoples and religions, and not least to help strengthen understanding between nations through dialogue, tolerance, solidarity and the perception of a common destiny among European citizens in all environments¹².

Ján Figel, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, said: "In the XXI century, Europe faces a new challenge: how to become an intercultural society based on sharing, with full respect for the ideas of everyone, including individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds. We want to overcome multicultural societies, if cultures and communities are limited to coexist, the mere tolerance of others is not enough. we need to start a real metamorphosis in our societies to create an intercultural Europe in which exchanges and interactions between cultures take place constructively and human dignity be universally respected "¹³.

⁶Tratatul de la Maastricht- Eur-Lex- europa, disponibil pe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3Axy0026>.

⁷2008:Anul European al dialogului intercultural- Europa Eu disponibil pe www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=//EP/TEXT=IM.

⁸*Ibidem*.

⁹Dialogul Intercultural- [W@ordPress.com](https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.files.wordpress.com/.../Kc1-intercultural-dialogue), disponibil pe <https://centerforinterculturaldialogue.files.wordpress.com/.../Kc1-intercultural-dialogue>.

¹⁰Eur-Lex-52016 JC0029-EN-EUR- Lex disponibil pe <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ro/TXT/?=Celex%3A52016JC0029>.

¹¹*Ibidem*.

¹²Salat,Levente, *Multiculturalismul liberal*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2001, p.15.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm -Situl Comisiei Europene secțiunea- Cultura.

The main messengers of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue materialized in twenty-seven national projects and seven major pan-European projects covering a multitude of topics, attended by representatives of all Member States. In this process, the participation of civil society at national, regional and local level was of particular importance¹⁴.

At European Union (EU) level, intercultural dialogue is understood as a practice that refers to two different areas of interaction. On the one hand, there is the area of interest of specialists and citizens today, which is focused on relations with "languages, ethnic groups, religions" and, on the other hand, intercultural dialogue is a fundamental aspect of the European Union, because it has always been the objective and instrument of the pacification project of Europe desired by founding parents at the end of the Second World War¹⁵.

The European construction project¹⁶ could have been strengthened by the fact that each Member State voluntarily renounced the exclusive exercise of its sovereignty - which justifies the traditional policy of power in international relations - for a joint project of peaceful coexistence by affirming "unity in diversity"¹⁷. In this way, each nation also gave up, in principle, claiming to assert its cultural identity to the detriment of others. Just because the European project comes from overcoming national exclusivity, Europe is configured as a particularly favorable context for experimenting with coexistence models based on the dialogue between cultures and not on the opposition¹⁸.

Promoting dialogue between different cultural environments in Europe has been and remains a priority¹⁹, especially since half a century after the start of the integration process, Europe and the world have changed profoundly²⁰. In particular, the past generation wanted the European project to be able to assert "the never-ending war and totalitarianism in Europe"²¹ of the new generations. Unlike the founding fathers, who have matured and affirmed the value of coexistence in dramatic life experiences of European citizens, young people in today's society must learn to appreciate the importance that this value implies, today more than ever, in the perspective their existentialism²².

Above all, they need to be helped to understand that prosperity and peace in Europe are the result of a construction that survives and develops, provided that each new generation knows how to take responsibility for making that living value, learning to transpose it in the daily practice of dialogue and cooperation²³.

Returning to the text of the EU Decision²⁴, can be noticed that it also defines precisely the objectives related to the proclamation of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008²⁵. These objectives are summarized as follows²⁶: raising awareness among European citizens of the importance of dialogue; promoting common values and the principle of mutual respect; stimulating contacts and debates; also paying special attention to the dialogue between religions²⁷.

¹⁴ Teodor Cozma, (coord.), *O nouă provocare pentru educație: interculturalitatea*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2001.

¹⁵ Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *op.cit.*, p.25.

¹⁶ Sterian Dumitrescu *Construcția europeană; Uniunea Europeană.* – Pitești, Editura Independența economică, 2005.p.35.

¹⁷ TUE.

¹⁸ Hofstede Geert, *Managementul structurilor multiculturale*, București, Editura Economică, 1996,p.59.

¹⁹ Articolul 1, TFUE.

²⁰ Aldecoa Luzarraga, F., Llorente, M.G., *Europa viitorului. Tratatul de la Lisabona*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2011.

²¹ Jose Echkenazi, *Ghidul Uniunii Europene*, București, Editura Niculescu, p.8.

²² Henri Atlan, *Tout non peut-etre, Education et verite*, Paris, Editura Du Seuil,1991.

²³ Pascal Fontaine, *Construcția Europeană de la 1945 până în zilele noastre.* – Iași, Editura Institutul European, 1998,p.43.

²⁴ JO L 412/44, 30 decembrie 2006.

²⁵ 2008:Anul European al dialogului intercultural- Europa Eu disponibil pe www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=//EP//TEXT=IM.

²⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm -Situl Comisiei Europene secțiunea- Cultura.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

A final point to be made with regard to the text of the decision is that school has a central role, as its objectives include the need to strengthen the role of education as an important means of teaching diversity, increasing understanding other cultures and to develop skills and best social practices²⁸. Before reflecting on the implications, definitions and objectives indicated in the European Union (EU) decision, especially on how schools can contribute practically to the intercultural dialogue, a well-known problem for all those who engage in concrete way in achieving this goal, especially teachers. They should engage in dialogue, learn, understand the other, develop the motivations and competencies of pursuing active citizenship, etc.: these goals are so simple, but it is true that they are hard to translate into today's daily practices²⁹.

2. An "inclusive" political-institutional "framework" as a precondition for intercultural dialogue

In order to achieve intercultural dialogue, we must be available to include both our perspective and that of each other. We/they prevail in the context in which we live. In other words, regardless of the goodwill of individuals, in a politico-cultural based on exclusivity, dialogue with those who are different is by definition excluded or strongly impeded³⁰.

In order to clarify the field of possible misunderstanding, it should be immediately stated that inclusion does not imply the abandonment of cultural specificity. Rather, it means internalizing these particularities with much greater awareness than those held by those who protect themselves from the principle of exclusion, in order to avoid profoundly reflecting on the contours and limits of their own identity. The constructive confrontation with the other, on the one hand, stimulates us to understand what we lack and what is necessary for our completeness³¹.

With this expression, Melucci³² specifies the meaning of a new form of social solidarity "difference" - based on the idea of complementarity between different backgrounds - which, in an increasingly interdependent world, should set itself in place of the traditional principle of solidarity "for similarity".

The constructive confrontation favors the valorization not only of the peculiarities of others, but also of their own particularities. There is a certain fact: Comparison favors a process of self-knowledge, which allows us to understand both what we "miss" and what one of us "lacks the other"³³.

3. Dialogue: the bridge to respect and reciprocity of the European Union states

The report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions shows that the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue has been a response to growing cultural diversity in Europe following the enlargement of the European Union (EU), labor mobility in the single market, through old and new migration flows and the phenomenon of globalization³⁴.

The aim was to raise awareness of the principle that Europe's cultural diversity is a significant asset, as well as encouraging learning opportunities from different cultural experiences across national borders and within communities³⁵.

Respect and reciprocity are the cornerstone of inclusion. What do we mean by mutual respect? They are, above all, cultural identity. They begin to find themselves in the eyes of others as subjects that stand out due to their (identifying) specificity and at the same time feel part of a

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ Gheorghe Bunescu, , *Școala și valorile morale*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1999.

³⁰ J Hobsbawn, T. Ranger, , *The invention of Tradition*, , Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.37.

³¹ *Idem*, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, London, Canto, 1991, p.15.

³² A. Melucci (1999), *Diventare persone. Nuove frontiere per l'identità e la cittadinanza in una società, planetaria*, Roma, Carocci, 1999, p.17.

³³ *Ibidem*, p.35.

³⁴ Untiled.-Eur-lex- Europa disponibil pe <https://eur-lex.europa.u/legalcontent/Ro/TXT/PDF/?uri:CELEXfrom=EN>.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

common context in which individual identities that work together contribute to the realization of joint projects identification)³⁶.

Reciprocity is an indispensable condition of respect. And it can only be developed within a normative and cultural framework that sets precise limits to each individual's claim to act according to their specific point of view. This statement must cease when it becomes detrimental to the freedom of others³⁷. Respect does not live in a totally permissive or anarchic context, where everyone does what he / she thinks best for himself / herself. We need an institutional framework that establishes universally valid rules of play, accepted and practiced by everyone. And we need an agreement between the subjects involved in the relationship, which aims at defining a minimum basis of meaning, which allows communication³⁸.

Insofar as the dialogue between different viewpoints - and therefore from different cultures - requires respect and reciprocity, the quality of the "framework" in which relationships develop and the construction of a minimal language is also a pre-condition for the feasibility of intercultural dialogue. Insofar as the dialogue between different viewpoints - and therefore from different cultures - requires respect and reciprocity, the quality of the "framework" in which relationships develop and the construction of a minimal language is also a pre-condition for the feasibility of intercultural dialogue³⁹.

4. European Inclusion and Exclusivity of Modern National Citizenship

Over the last fifty years, the European construction⁴⁰ process has created, in the day-to-day life of Europeans, the conditions for achieving this framework, a method based on dialogue, co-decision, respect for differences, awareness of a common destiny which indissolubly links the peoples and the states of the European Union⁴¹.

However, with regard to the feasibility of intercultural dialogue, the assertion of "unity in diversity"⁴² is an obvious objective: to be emphasized and strengthened day after day. The difficulties arise from the fact that this principle is exactly the opposite of the one on which national democratic states were built in the modern age and which, in many ways, continues to influence the contemporary political culture.

As shown by the recent success of political forces and movements inspired by micro-nationalism⁴³, intolerance, racism, in many European countries it makes it difficult to "undermine" the collective unconscious and individual collective idea that democratic coexistence would only be possible within the framework of solidarity " similar ", which is almost " natural "among subjects who share" blood, language, common roots"⁴⁴. It is understandable that this idea still retains some of its attractions, especially if we remember that modern democracy was able to develop by power, not only rationally, but also emotionally, the call for solidarity of each a citizen with common roots through exclusive cultural experiences and, ultimately, sacred⁴⁵.

This idea helped to wipe out citizens' awareness that - as demonstrated by contemporary historiography, "the modern idea of the nation is the result of a huge effort to bring unity to the many differences that have historically characterized the closed territory within the boundaries of the democratic states undergoing training"⁴⁶.

The supremacy of the combination of exclusivity and contrast in the culture we inherited provokes the rights and obligations of citizenship related to the affirmation of the values of liberty, equality, social justice, these being not designed as a framework for the dignity of the person

³⁶S. Abou, *L'identité culturelle*, Paris, Anthropos, 1981, p.38.

³⁷Henri Atlan, *Tout non peut-être, Education et verité*, Paris, Editura Du Seuil, 199, p.45.

³⁸*Ibidem*, p.38.

³⁹2008: Anul European al dialogului intercultural- Europa Eu disponibil pe [www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/get Doc.da? pub Ref=// EP//TEXT= IM](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pub Ref=// EP//TEXT= IM).

⁴⁰Cezar Birzea, *Cetățenia europeană*, București, SNSPA Politeia, 2005, p33.

⁴¹Incluziunea socială în Uniunea Europeană, Ministerul Muncii, www.mmuncii.ro/.../Incluyiunea 20% asistenta% sicial[?...?25080 Constanta_0...

⁴²TFUE.

⁴³Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *Noua Europă. Identitate și model European*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2015, 23.

⁴⁴S Abou, *L'identité culturelle*, Paris, Anthropos, 1981, p15.

⁴⁵Malița, Mircea, *Zece mii de culturi, o singură civilizație*, București, Editura Nemira, 1998, p.37.

⁴⁶Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *op.cit.*, p.35.

himself. They are rather "privileges and responsibilities" of those belonging to a specific national community. In this context, the concept of intercultural dialogue is potentially "revolutionary", especially if it becomes the backbone of European citizenship in training that characterizes membership⁴⁷.

5. The dialogue involves knowledge and science

It has been said that, for the purposes of dialogue, we must first acknowledge the equality of the dignity of the interlocutor, and in return receive a similar recognition. It is also said that, from the point of view of the dialogue between cultures, Europe is in the process of developing a framework that allows to overcome the main limitation of mutual recognition. Such dignity is the principle of exclusivity on which the nation of the modern nation⁴⁸ is founded, historically. The supranational cadre which is raised- by definition, culturally diversified and for this reason in an inclusive vocation - represents yet a necessary but not sufficient condition.

It was mentioned that dialogue with the other cannot be based on simple statements of "reasons"⁴⁹, is an obvious objective: to be emphasized and consolidated day by day. Difficulties arise from the fact that this principle is exactly the opposite of that on which national democratic states were built in the modern age and which, in many ways, continues to influence contemporary political culture. As the recent success of political forces and movements inspired by micro-nationalism shows, democratic coexistence would only be possible within a solidarity that establishes that "similar" is almost "natural" among subjects who share "blood, language, roots common"⁵⁰.

Regarding accessibility to this type of knowledge, it is true that today the cultural training of individuals is achieved in a variety of ways and through the activity of several factors. However, the basic "tools" of knowledge, in the full sense, continue to be provided, first and foremost, by school through certain tools. What are these tools⁵¹ they are a combination of motivations, attitudes, abilities, notions. To begin to "decipher" this mixture, two observations seem important. The first refers to the ability to appreciate the role that school has always played on the European cultural scene, and the second relates to the ability to identify what, irrespective of certain cultural inherited cultural features that are united with the present⁵².

6. Dialogue seen as a "shared" language, faced by the future

The dialogue resulting from knowledge implies access to specific languages and interpretative categories of reality. This applies through the School of Physics, as well as social history, art and traditions, whether religious, political, etc. The problem faced by schools today is double. On the one hand, there are questions about the most appropriate way to motivate young people to engage in becoming more and more multifaceted, on the other hand, identifying the content and the minimal language that allows them to deal with the heterogeneity of the situations⁵³.

All of this sets out a European and global horizon in which their future is played. In part, such content and language can result from a cognitive process that, as observed over time, has allowed us to appreciate the value of complementarity. In part, they must be designed from scratch, taking into account that the desire to "know" involves strong motives related to the expectations that everyone has for the future⁵⁴.

In this regard, it was found that there is no stronger motivation to address the complex implications of the dialogue with the "different" than the one deriving from the fact that they are

⁴⁷Hartley Trevor, *The Foundations of European Union law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.39, 2014.

⁴⁸Richard L. Wiseman, *Intercultural communication theory*, London, Sage Publications, 1995, p.57.

⁴⁹Constantin Cucoş, *Educația. Dimensiuni culturale și interculturale*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2000, p.25.

⁵⁰Cezar Birzea, *op.cit.*, p.29.

⁵¹Bunescu, Gheorghe, *Școala și valorile morale*, București, Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1998, p.63.

⁵²Irina Oberlander- Tîrnoveanu, *Un viitor pentru Trecut, Ghid de bună practică pentru păstrarea patrimoniului cultural*, București, editat de CIMEC- Institutul de Memorie Culturală, 2002, p.10.

⁵³*Ibidem*, p. 19.

⁵⁴Henri Atlan, *Tout non peut-etre, Education et verite*, Paris, Editura Du Seuil, 1991, p.43.

united by a common destiny, then having to cope with major challenges in to determine their own future⁵⁵.

Among the most important challenges for young people living in Europe today is mobility - which implies a corollary of legislative regulations on the protection of human rights. It is no coincidence that some of the most significant initiatives of the European Union are about this issue. This is exemplified in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Citizen⁵⁶ and the guiding principles of the Lisbon Strategy.

Conclusions

We can say that intercultural dialogue consists mainly in the exchange of opinions between different cultures. Unlike multiculturalism, where the focus is on preserving distinct cultures, intercultural dialogue seeks to create common ties and foundations between different cultures, communities and populations to promote mutual understanding and interaction.

With 28 Member States and other cultural clusters and identities within the European Union, intercultural dialogue is essential to avoid conflicts and marginalization of citizens on the basis of their cultural affiliation.

In conclusion, the European Union's (EU) action in the cultural field, and especially in relation to intercultural dialogue, has improved since 2008 when it became official "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue" and continued its size with a fairly large progress. Thus, the states of the Union have become aware of the importance of culture, becoming a source of growth and employment, and in the last few years world trade in creative products has not stopped despite the economic uncertainties. Through intercultural dialogue, peace has been promoted and the phenomenon of radicalization has been tackled.

Intercultural dialogue has led to effective cooperation between the countries of the Union and the effective development of international relations, and this has led to a very good cooperation between Member States. Concluding, intercultural dialogue is the vector that, through the awareness and direct involvement of every European citizen, has even led to an understanding between different societies, while helping to demonstrate the value of cultural diversity and human rights.

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⁵⁵ L. Iacob. Ovidiu Lungu, *Imagini identitare*, Iași, Editura Eurocart, 1999, p55.

⁵⁶Carta drepturilor fundamentale a Uniunii europene- Eur-lex, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ro/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12012%TTXT>.

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38. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/it>-Situl Parlamentului European;
39. www.museum-security.org.