

Promoting Intercultural Dialogue in the European Higher Education Area



CONFERENCE ON 'UNIVERSITIES AS ACTORS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN WIDER SOCIETY'

2- 3 June 2009

**Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (PFUR)
Moscow**

Draft Programme

While the Council of Europe has always been committed to intercultural dialogue, this topic has become an increasingly prominent part of the Council's work over the past few years. This work culminated in 2008 with the adoption of the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue, entitled "Living Together as Equals in Dignity", which responds to an increasing demand to clarify how intercultural dialogue may help our societies to value diversity while sustaining social cohesion. It espouses a European identity based on shared fundamental values, respect for common heritage and cultural diversity as well as request for the equal dignity of every individual. Intercultural dialogue has an important role to play in this regard.

In this overall context higher education institutions have their place in fostering intercultural dialogue. There are at least two ways in which they can and should promote intercultural dialogue. The first one is direct and concerns the furthering of this dialogue on their premises, i.e. inside the institution. The seminar on 'Intercultural Dialogue on the University Campus' (Strasbourg, 4-5 March 2008) focused on this issue. The second concerns higher education's role in promoting intercultural dialogue in the wider society, i.e. outside the boundaries of the institution. This is the topic of the present conference.

Universities are no longer the proverbial 'ivory towers', if indeed they have ever been, and now exist in complicated national and international contexts in a globalised world. This makes it imperative for them not only to look inside their institutions to manage effectively multicultural and diverse staff and student bodies, but to open up to other institutions and other countries. Universities not only need to act on campus; they are also important actors in the broader societies of which they are a part.

The conference will examine the issue of intercultural dialogue from different angles. We shall start by a presentation of the Council of Europe's White paper on intercultural dialogue "Living together as Equals in Dignity". We shall then look at the role of intercultural dialogue in the internationalization of higher education. Internationalization, which is also an important aspect of the reforms undertaken in Europe in the framework of the Bologna Process, is most often considered in terms of attractiveness and in improving the position of an institution or a higher education system in a competitive market. The role of intercultural interaction, communication and dialogue in this process is less often considered, and this will be the starting point for our conference. The issue will be considered from two angles: by a speaker from outside of Europe and by a European speaker from a country that has recently issued a White Paper on internationalization of education in which the need for intercultural dialogue is explicitly invoked.

At the level of higher education institutions we shall look at the roles which can be played both by university management and their staff. A student perspective should provide a refreshing look at the reality of intercultural dialogue and disclose any problems or outstanding issues, which should be tackled in this respect.

Universities in Europe reach out to one another and often form stable networks. We shall further explore how active such networks are in bringing forward intercultural dialogue to the national and international higher education landscapes. The panel on the second day will seek to wrap up the debate by questioning the best ways to promote intercultural dialogue. Should this be a 'top-down' or 'bottom-up' approach? Where do universities stand in this context? Should public authorities 'impose' intercultural dialogue? Is it realistic to have strong European policies on this subject and put intercultural dialogue firmly on the

busy European higher education's agenda? Answering these and other questions should provoke deep reflection process and show the way forward.

2 June 2009

08 30 – 09 00 Registration

09 00 – 09 30 Opening of the meeting

Prof. Vladimir Filippov, Rector of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia

Ms. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sports and Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue and for the Anti-Discrimination Campaign

09 30 – 10 00 Presentation of the Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue

Ms. Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sports and Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue and for the Anti-Discrimination Campaign

10 00 – 11 00 Intercultural Dialogue as an Element of the internationalization of higher education: view from inside and outside Europe

Mr. Alf Rasmussen, Senior Adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, Department of Higher Education

Dr. Samuel Isaacs, Executive Officer, South African Qualifications Authority (to be confirmed)

11 00 – 11 30 Coffee break

First session

11 30 – 13 00 How can the leadership of the universities promote intercultural dialogue?

Mr. Lars Ekholm, European University Association (EUA)

Case studies

Russia

Prof. Barasbi Suleimanovich Karamurzov, Rector of the Kabardino-Balkarian State University, President of the Association of Russian HEIs

Kazakhstan Prof. Zh. Bakhizhan Abdraimov, Rector of
the L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National
University (ENU)

Lebanon Prof. René Chamussy, SJ, Rector of the
Saint-Joseph University of Beirut

Discussion

13 00 – 14 30 Lunch break

Second session

14 30 – 16 00 Intercultural Dialogue through the Eyes of Students

Mr. Olav Øye, Member of the Executive Committee of ESU -
European Students' Union

Case studies

16 00 – 16 30 Coffee break

Third session

16 30 – 18 00 University networks: can they dynamise intercultural dialogue?

Prof. Joseph Mifsud, President of the Euromediterranean University
(EMUNI)

Ms. Marijke Wahlers, Head of International Department, German
Rectors' Conference (HRK)

Discussion

3 June 2009

**09 30 – 10 15 The role of public authorities in promoting intercultural
dialogue**

Mr. Germain Dondelinger, Premier Conseiller de Gouvernement,
Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research, Luxembourg

Discussion

10 15 – 10 45 Coffee break

**10 45 – 12 15 Panel discussion 'Intercultural dialogue: top-down or bottom-
up approach'?**

- Can intercultural dialogue be imposed 'from the top'?
- What role should public authorities play in promoting intercultural dialogue?
- Intercultural dialogue as a European policy: myth or reality?
- How can university staff and students promote intercultural dialogue?

Prof. Radu Damian, Chair of the CDESR, President of the National Higher Education Funding Council of Romania

Mr. Lars Lynge Nielsen, President of the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE)

Mr. Olav Øye, Member of the Executive Committee of ESU - European Students' Union

Conclusions and recommendations by the General Rapporteur

Dr. Hilligje van't Land, International Association of Universities (IAU)