



ALL PART OF THE SAME RACE: THE HUMAN RACE

UNITED IN DIVERSITY!

Europe has changed dramatically over the last century: borders have changed and people move around more so the balances between different cultures have changed. A culture is a group of people's shared traditions and ways of living. People all over the world have different ways of cooking, dressing, speaking, playing music, etc. Discovering these differences is what celebrating **CULTURAL DIVERSITY** is all about. Unfortunately some people see the arrival of a new culture as a threat.

The Council of Europe's response to all this is to try to get different cultures to live in harmony together. The Council hopes to achieve this through campaigns and official documents for governments and local authorities to follow, as well as teaching programmes. Here we highlight several main areas.

PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING!

Intercultural education is used to create a better understanding of one's own culture and around the world, in order to encourage the development of more tolerance and understanding. This can be particularly important in places where there is conflict between different cultures. The Council of Europe aims to improve harmony between cultures by making communication between them easier, developing training and giving out informative materials. The Council played an essential part in helping to shift the focus of intercultural education away from

the families of migrant workers, as was previously the trend, instead showing that there has to be effort from all sides. Since 2002, programmes by the Council on intercultural education have also placed emphasis on working with religious differences.

www.coe.int/dialogue

NO TO RACISM AND INTOLERANCE!

Racism and intolerance are harmful to individuals and to society. When people practise racism or intolerance, the result can be anything from discrimination at work or at school, to violence and conflicts.

The Council of Europe works to combat racism and intolerance of all kinds. During a special summit in 1993, a Plan of Action against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance was agreed by the member states. This included the **"All Different - All Equal" youth campaign**, which encouraged thousands of people all over Europe to take action and resulted in demonstrations, training courses for minorities, and the production of education materials. A follow-up campaign encouraged young people to participate actively in building peaceful societies based on diversity, inclusion and respect.



The work of the **European Commission against Racism and Intolerance** (ECRI) lies mainly in examining legal frameworks for combating racism and intolerance and, importantly,



→ "We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race."

Kofi Annan



COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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making recommendations to national governments about improving their legislation and practice.

➤ www.alldifferent-allegal.info

➤ www.coe.int/ecri

PROTECT NATIONAL MINORITIES!

Labelling a group of people as a “minority” can sometimes pose a risk that they will be segregated even more; on the other hand, it can also lead to increased awareness and understanding of that group, as well as greater protection of their rights and both parties recognising the responsibilities that they have.

The Roma people

*In March 2006, as part of its efforts to protect the rights of national minorities, the Council of Europe launched an awareness-raising campaign called “Dosta!” (a **ROMANI** **2** word meaning “enough!”), with the goal not only of denouncing prejudices and stereotypes, but of bringing non-Roma closer to Roma people (see fact sheet 9).*

➤ www.dosta.org/

The Council of Europe has studied the situation of “national minorities” since its creation in 1949. In 1994 its member states agreed to a framework convention to protect national minorities. This convention commits the states which sign and ratify it to enable national minorities to preserve the essential elements of their identity, in particular their religion, language, traditions and

cultural heritage (see fact sheet 6).

➤ www.coe.int/Minorities

1 **CULTURAL DIVERSITY** is the variety of backgrounds, experiences, styles, perceptions, values and beliefs that people have.

2 **ROMANI** is a language spoken by 4-5 million people. It comes in lots of different varieties.

➤ MORE TO DISCOVER!

➤ www.coe.int/dialogue

➤ www.alldifferent-allegal.info

➤ www.coe.int/ecri

➤ www.coe.int/Minorities

➤ www.dosta.org/

➤ www.coe.int/antidiscrimination

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ACTIVITIES SHEET



Intercultural education with children and young people works in two major ways:

- To help them gain the **capacity to recognise** inequality, injustice, racism, stereotypes and prejudices.
- To give them the **knowledge and the abilities** that will help them to challenge these mechanisms whenever they have to face them in society.

Intercultural education involves working with aspects of human nature such as attitudes, feelings, perceptions, values and experiences. These aspects cannot be reached solely from an intellectual approach, they also require an experimental dimension. The Council has produced a number of relevant publications which can help you to work further on these issues.

WHERE DO WE COME FROM?

“The discovery of others is the discovery of a relationship, not a barrier” (Claude Lévi-Strauss)

It is very rare indeed to meet anyone with relatives going back four generations who have all been born and remained in the same town or village. This activity helps school students to explore and share their cultural backgrounds and aims to promote empathy with foreigners and minorities.

Ask your school students to prepare a family tree going back three or four generations, trying to include as many relations as possible. They should pay particular attention to relatives who have emigrated or immigrated.

Depending on the size of the class, school students can either share their findings within groups or all together. This is a delicate exercise and care should be taken

to see that school students only disclose facts with which they feel comfortable.

Questions for discussion can include:

- Why did some relatives emigrate/immigrate?
- What did they find when they arrived?
- What did they take with them?
- Have you ever thought of moving abroad?
- How would you like to be treated?

HOW MULTICULTURAL IS YOUR REGION?

Investigate with your school students how many different cultures are represented in your region. Discuss how cultures make their presence felt in a locality. What efforts are made to promote contact and dialogue between people from different cultures?

MAJORITIES AND MINORITIES

In many democratic systems it is accepted that the voice of the majority should have the most power - as long as this power is not abused.

Ask your school students to think of situations when they felt themselves to be a) in the majority and b) in the minority. How did this feel?

What types of minorities can they identify in their society?

Study the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and compare its provisions with the rights of minorities in your country.

WHICH FIGURE IS BEHIND THIS QUOTE? →

“We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we all belong to one human race.”

Answer on the back *



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SOURCES

- * **Kofi Annan:** Extract from address by Kofi Annan, 7th Secretary General of the United Nations, (1997-2006), at the Children's World Festival, Basle, Switzerland, 24 June 2000