



PLATFORM FOR  
INTERCULTURAL EUROPE

## 2008 Activity Report

to the *European Cultural Foundation* and  
the *Network of European Foundation's Culture Cluster*

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### Introduction

“Worthwhile philanthropy?” “A contribution to our strategic objectives?” This annual report will hopefully answer your, the funders’, questions of this kind with regard to the *Platform for Intercultural Europe*.

You first began investing in the *Platform for Intercultural Europe* in the autumn of 2006. You thought that the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 (EYID) merited a concerted civil society response and that a platform for practice exchange and joint policy formulation would be a good common project to bring a group of like-minded European foundations together.

The European Year for Intercultural Dialogue is over. What contribution has the Platform made to it in 2008? Is it a contribution which will last? What has a two-person secretariat – a coordinator and her part-time assistant – been able to foment?

Find core answers to these questions in this report and follow the links to find underpinning information.

### **1. A cutting-edge participation and consultation process to create a coalition for change to the way we live Europe’s cultural diversity**

The Platform for Intercultural Europe today counts 382 organisations and 176 individuals who have participated in its work programme at one or several points, including 226 organisations and 170 individuals who have endorsed its “*Rainbow Paper: Intercultural Dialogue – From Practice to Policy and Back*”. How has this mobilisation been achieved?

From the common viewpoints on intercultural dialogue, which we had elaborated in 2007 (Rainbow Paper I) and presented to a large public at the EYID opening event in Ljubljana in January 2008, we proceeded with a core group of participants to formulate a **vision for interculturalism** and to outline **priority areas for change in dealing with cultural diversity in Europe constructively**. The recommendations were going to be carried by a cross-sectoral coalition of civil society organisations and addressed to a range of relevant policy fields.

This resulting vision and recommendations paper was put to the test for nearly two months in an **on-line consultation process** designed in excellent collaboration with and hosted by *LabForCulture*. Anybody interested had the chance to comment on-line or to shape the text directly by means of wiki-editing. The consultation text was available in English, French and German and participation was also possible in these three languages. The conception and technical design for this process were complex and challenging, but also thrilling and rewarding. Much thought and effort went into the communications' actions to bring participants to the on-line consultation. Imagine the complex Excel planning documents setting out the many stages and involvements of various people to the drafting, translating, posting, and advertising of the paper! Team work par excellence...

In order to leave nobody behind with our avant-garde virtual consultation, we supplemented it with a **consultation meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> of June**: 72 organisations came together in Brussels (at the Centre Culturel 'Flagey') to discuss the virtue of the contributions made and make yet more. Participants represented partly European level organisations, partly national, regional or local organisations. Four workshops worthy of their name benefited from skilled moderators and experimentation with the 'fishbowl meeting method' to draw out the essence of our forward thinking on intercultural dialogue. A congenial spirit persisted to the end of the plenary session afterwards. Thoughtful preparation (venue selection and set-up, conducive practical arrangements and thorough briefing of everybody concerned) paid off.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/pa-fourth%20of%20june.html>

Just a few weeks later, we discussed in a four-person **expert seminar** how the structure of our policy paper would have to be adapted following the discussions at the meeting: It had become clear, for example, that the fundamental distinction between recommendations to civil society organisations on the one hand and those to policy-makers on the other could not be maintained. Rather, an organisation of the paper by subject areas seemed more appropriate now.

Our Rainbow Paper then underwent some more weeks of rewriting. A small group of experienced commentators and generous advisers helped the process along. The Platform's steering group took a last critical look at the result at the beginning of September. From there we proceeded to the **on-line endorsement process of the paper on LabforCulture**. In its final shape, the paper contains 22 recommendations organized in five areas: education, capacity-building of organisations, monitoring for sustained policies, mobilization across boundaries, and resourcing of intercultural dialogue.



<http://rainbowpaper.labforculture.org>

The endorsement of the Rainbow Paper is on-going on a site specially designed in rewarding collaboration with *LabForCulture*. The text is once more available in three languages. Both organisations and individuals can register their support of the recommendations, and a space for comments is also provided. Since the launch of the

site on 6<sup>th</sup> October, various **communication actions** by the Platform as well as its initiating organisations, the *European Cultural Foundation* and *Culture Action Europe*, have alerted people to the sign-up process. The coordinator has presented the Rainbow Paper at a series of conferences in the course of the autumn with a view to mobilising support. We have tracked all promotion activities against traffic on the endorsement site and see clear connections between the two.

The drafting, consultation and endorsement process of the Rainbow Paper was crowned with its **presentation at the closing colloquium of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue under the French Presidency**. Selection for the programme of this event was subject to participation in a call for proposals in April. We were given a key moment in a plenary session early on in the prestigious two-day event to present our recommendations and demonstrate their broad civil society support. We symbolised the cross-sectoral nature of our Platform and its concern with diversity with a bi-lingual, state-of-the-art Powerpoint presentation by the coordinator and the steering group member Michael Privot of the *European Network Against Racism* in tandem. We were ready to reinforce our presentation by handing out promotional materials such as print versions of the Rainbow Paper in three languages and flyers on the Platform. The work of our Platform received explicit acclaim by representative of the European Commission speaking at the event – Commissioner Jan Figel and Director-General Odile Quintin. Several requests for interviews by the media present at the event followed our presentation.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/pa-eyid-closing-event.html>

By signing up to the Rainbow Paper, organisations do not just support our call for action to policy-makers, but also committed to change themselves. They will not be left alone with this task. A further element in the platform's work will soon be at their disposal to support them in their endeavour: **“Panorama: an online resource collection for intercultural dialogue”**.

At the beginning of March 2009, a collection of sources of information on the subject of intercultural dialogue - collated by independent cultural policy expert Lidia Varbanova - will be launched online at:



<http://panorama.intercultural-europe.org>

The collection ranges from a comprehensive web survey of definitions and key resources on intercultural dialogue (official documents, articles, books, research studies, virtual libraries and action-oriented intercultural dialogue projects) to an overview of resources on cultural diversity and cultural competence. The resource collection is complemented by extensive bibliographies on specific specialised themes linked to intercultural dialogue.

“Panorama” contains a wealth of information - over 74 A4 pages of links with short explanations, which required a functional and clear text-only approach. This functionality is however enlivened and complemented by a gallery of photographs by Valery Klamm and cartoons by Oleg Dergachov. The pictures provide vivid borders to “Panorama” and can be revealed at full size with a simple click. The user can then stretch her or his imagination for a few seconds before returning to browsing in the resource collection.

An on-line consultation, participative workshops with an innovative discussion method, an online resource collection, the online endorsement process - with limited resources but lots of creativity, we brought about quality participation and a respectable collaborative outcome in the form of the Rainbow Paper.

## **2. A trail blazed for Structured Dialogue between Civil Society and the European Institutions**

The work and outcomes of our Platform have encouraged the European Commission to invest more heavily in the relationship between civil society organisations and the EU institutions in the field of European cultural policy development. It has taken our platform as a model for structuring the dialogue between the two sides!

Following on from the adoption of the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* by the EU Council in December 2007, in which our Platform was mentioned as an example of civil society’s self-organisations as a European political interlocutor, the coordinator was invited to provide testimony of the Platform experience to a large audience of cultural organisations at the European Commission’s information meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

The European Commission proceeded from the information meeting to issuing an open call in April for participation in two further thematic platforms: platforms on ‘Cultural and Creative industries’ and ‘Access to Culture’ with 30-40 representative organisations each were subsequently established. The *Platform for Intercultural Europe* was officially elevated to one of three formal Structured Dialogue partners!

The two new platforms held their constitutive meetings on the two days following our consultation meeting (see above). The series of three meetings (4-6<sup>th</sup> June) was sponsored by the European Commission (in our case with assistance in invitation and registration management by a Commission contracted agency).

The European Commission further underlined its commitment to the three platforms by creating a new funding line for “policy support structures” within the EU Culture Programme. The *Platform for Intercultural Europe* has taken up this opportunity and submitted an application for an operating grant for 2009 in this context.

Besides our Platform’s dynamic engagement with the European Commission over the longer term structuring of civic-institutional relationships in the field of culture, we have played our full part during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue: we featured as a partner on the EYID website, exchanged information and advised the European Commission in meetings of the EYID contact group, and were a content-partner for one of the ‘Brussels debates’ on Intercultural Dialogue. Other platform participating

organisations were content partners for other debates in the series and we exchanged experience in the execution of the content-partner role.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/pa-brussels-debate-eyid.html>

### **3. A Platform set up for continuation**

Let us recall that our platform was set up as an informal initiative with an initial timeframe of two years. It is now legally established as an international not-for-profit organisation under Belgian law and is set to transform the principle of informal participation to association membership!

This development is in part due to the fact that our work on intercultural dialogue is not completed, but only laid out with the Rainbow Paper. The implementation and advocacy work of our recommendations clearly still is the work of generations and needs a driving organisation. However, our move from an informal initiative to an international association in its own right has also been motivated by the need to fulfil the eligibility criteria for an EU operating grant.

In October, we drafted the statutes of our association and went through the notarial act of establishments. All steering group members and the coordinator become founding members.

In November we held a first (prospective) members' meeting in Stockholm, where we discussed the characteristics of membership, deliberated on the 2009 work plan and called in first participation commitments for the next year.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/pa-members-meeting-stockholm-nov08.html>

Moreover, five new people with fresh enthusiasm and experience from different sectors and different corners of Europe presented their candidacies for steering group positions and were then invited to join.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/how-it-works.html>

As you can gather from the web references in this report, the Platform for Intercultural Europe's concept, its history and prospects are well documented on its website.

All in all, the platform is firmly founded to continue its work in 2009 and beyond.

### **4. Financial report**

The Platform's 2008 budget was made up of contributions from six European Foundations. We acknowledge their generosity and commitment. However, it must be recalled that only two foundations had announced their support in January. A second

followed in February, a further two followed suit in March, and the last one offered the good news of further funding only at the beginning of June. In terms of activity planning and the making of actual expenditure commitments, this piecemeal fundraising caused some uncertainty.

In terms of projected versus real spending, two significant discrepancies can be noted: Considerable under-spending occurred on the expert seminar and our meeting in Stockholm. The first is due to the fact that the seminar was held with a much smaller group than anticipated. The second is due to the facts that our meeting was hosted on preferential terms by *Intercult*, a key Platform participating organisation, and that we were able to hold our meeting in conjunction with the *Nordic Forum On Interculture* organised by the Swedish Ministry of Culture, which covered the cost of a number of our participants. On the other hand overspending occurred on publication cost and the resource collection. However, these had originally been budgeted very conservatively; and the spending increases were cleared with Isabelle Schwarz prior to making commitments.

As a result of uncertainties about the final budget available on the one hand and prudent spending policy on the other, the *Platform for Intercultural Europe* closed 2008 with a surplus of 27,939.00 €, which ECF and NEF have already most kindly agreed to convert into a 2009 payment.

The summary 2008 accounts spreadsheet is attached to this report (as an electronically separate document). Detailed accounting sheets per budget item are available on request.

## Conclusion and perspective

2008 was a high profile, work intensive year for the *Platform for Intercultural Europe*. Under democratic leadership, as befits a project dedicated to ‘intercultural dialogue’, the seeds sown in 2007 were nurtured into hardy seedlings. These are:

- The Rainbow Paper as a tool for self-commitment as well as a guide for policy-makers;
- A strong gathering of arts & culture organisations and established relationships of trust with organisations in other sectors;
- Synergies in the creation of participative processes with *LabforCulture* - another project supported by some of our funders (ECF, Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, Compagnia di San Paolo);
- An established political role in the Structured Dialogue with the EU institutions in the field of culture;
- A legally established membership association with prospects of EU operational support.

The Platform for Intercultural Europe entered 2009 with the following tasks in view:

- Carrying out activities which help implement the objectives set out in The Rainbow Paper;
- Developing its membership as a source of experience and legitimacy;
- And giving substance to its political relationships in the framework of the European Union’s Structured Dialogue with civil society.

Against the backdrop of its work in 2008, it goes ahead with confidence.

Sabine Frank,  
Coordinator/Secretary General  
24<sup>th</sup> February 2009