

“The essential role of higher education in intercultural dialogue today”

Resolution adopted by the EPP Political Assembly of 9th June 2017



Intercultural dialogue is the equitable exchange and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples. Based on mutual understanding, respect and the equal dignity of all cultures and religions, it is the essential prerequisite for social cohesion, reconciliation among peoples and peace among nations. Among its aims are: to develop a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives and practices; to increase participation; to foster equality; and to enhance creative processes.

Unlike multiculturalism, whose aim is the preservation of cultures through separate and isolated coexistence, intercultural dialogue seeks to establish linkages and common ground between different cultures, communities, and people, promoting understanding and interaction.

Our cultural environment is changing quickly and becoming increasingly diversified. Cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society, brought about by cross-border migration, the claim of national and other minorities to a distinct cultural identity, the cultural effects of globalisation, the growing interdependence between all world regions, and the recent advances of information and communications technology. More and more individuals are living in a “multicultural” reality in which they have learnt to manage their own multiple cultural affiliations. We must consider the best practices around the world.

Dialogue between cultures, the oldest and most fundamental mode of democratic conversation, is an antidote to rejection, violence, and populism. Its objective is to enable us to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world and to develop a sense of community and belonging. The development of dialogue between people(s) is a prerequisite to prevent the mistakes of the past from ever being repeated again.

In training future teachers and other professionals in a range of academic disciplines, as well as granting them an understanding of the role of higher education institutions, their students, and their staff in forming public opinion, tools are created to ensure that attitudes and values gained through higher education can be transmitted to society more broadly. International dialogue can thus be fostered through higher education.

Through higher education institutions and the promotion of intercultural dialogue, it is possible to have a positive influence on students and teachers, empowering them to reject populism and other toxic ideologies.

We, the European People’s Party:

- Underlining the importance of intercultural dialogue to achieve respect for cultural diversity in societies of today;
- Acknowledging the role of dialogue and greater mutual understanding in developing equal opportunities for all;
- Aware of the universal character of higher education and its cross-border nature;
- Recognising that being “united in diversity” is the only way to preserve and develop the unity of Europe, as well as to promote a free, open, and modern society and European cultural diversity;
- Believing that intercultural dialogue can help create a sense of European identity and European citizenship;

Call on the EU institutions and all Member States to:

- Consider the dialogue between cultures within higher education not only as a country- specific issue, but as a European cross-border reality;
- Focus on encouraging academic mobility and cultural dialogue between universities across Europe, including partner states in non-EU and European neighbouring states, and facilitate their access to the European Union network of education services and culture;
- Prioritise European-wide cross border cultural events as key tools for encouraging cultural exchanges and cooperation through dialogue in the fields of culture, education, science and creative economy;
- Make the European education more inclusive and provide mobility opportunities for students and staff from conflict areas;
- Raise the importance of intercultural dialogue via higher education during the upcoming Bologna Process Ministerial Conference in Paris in May 2018.

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**If you have any question
you would like to ask
please contact us.**