

Press Release

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Council of Europe launches process for a “White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue”

Strasbourg, 07.04.2006 – “Diversity is the stuff of life. Diversity is something to enjoy and celebrate. It makes life much more interesting and this enjoyment facilitates mutual respect”, said Terry Davis, Secretary General on the occasion of the launch of a process to prepare a Council of Europe White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue.

The Committee of Ministers decided to immediately launch the White Paper consultation process, involving the governments of member states, experts, parliamentarians, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations and various ethnic and religious communities across the continent.

Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Coordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe, who is responsible for the White Paper, emphasised that a broad consultation is essential for a meaningful policy document. She said, “The White Paper will be the end-product of a dynamic process. We must pool the expertise and creativity of as many stakeholders as possible to identify ways to manage cultural diversity in a positive, forward-looking way. We will make a convincing case that diversity is an enriching experience, not a threat.”

The European Union, the OSCE, UNESCO and other international partners with experience in the area of intercultural dialogue, including the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALECSO) and the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures, will be invited to contribute to the project.

The White Paper is part of the strategy of the Council of Europe to promote intercultural dialogue, set as a priority by the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, May 2005). In autumn 2005, the Organisation adopted the “[Faro Strategy](#)” (*), which defined in detail the political bases, the aims and instruments of its policy, which is now entering the operational phase.

The Council of Europe web site www.coe.int will soon provide further details of the White Paper process.

(*)<http://www.coe.int/T/DG4/CulturalConvention/>

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