



2009 Activity Report

Introduction

What has the Platform for Intercultural Europe achieved in 2009 and where does its journey lead?

Funders, members and political partners alike have placed trust in the Platform. This report is intended to demonstrate that the Platform's staff of two together with the steering group and external support have worked successfully to earn and maintain this trust.

One year on from the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, we have begun to build 'normality' for our organisation and to make our way as one of many civil society endeavours at European level.

Read on to find out how we have approached this task and make up your mind on how well we have done. We hope this will make you want to continue the journey with us.

(2) “From Practice to Policy and Back”: Making a reality of the principles established with our 2008 Rainbow Paper

The endorsement process of our 2008 manifesto “The Rainbow Paper: From Practice to Policy and Back” is ongoing - **an additional 124 organisations and 130 individuals committed** with their signature (bringing the totals up to 350 and 300 respectively). To make the paper yet more widely accessible, we have added **Greek, Italian and Spanish translations** to the English, French and German versions of 2008.



<http://rainbowpaper.labforculture.org>

Our ambition in 2009 was to go beyond the declared endorsements to implementation. We have therefore devised and experimented with the activity format “Regional Practice Exchange” in order to engage with current and potential future signatories and build on the Rainbow Paper's Chapter II (capacity-building in organisations) in particular. The idea of the Practice Exchanges was to examine questions of reviewing staff compositions and governance structures, serving constituencies, growing intellectual resources and advancing through comparison in a European perspective. For one to two days participants from civil society organisations exchange experiences, practice and methods on intercultural strategies, policies and possibilities. Central to the concept is the presentation of case studies or practice examples, which are then discussed.

The first **Regional Practice Exchange** took place in **Malmö**, southern Sweden, on 15/16th July 2009 and brought together professionals from artistic and cultural organisations from across the Nordic region. It was hosted by the Nordic Forum for Interculture in collaboration with Spiritus Mundi. The Malmö Practice Exchange focused on the work of individual cultural organisations to advance intercultural dialogue. The first day was structured around case studies and the second day used these experiences as the basis for considering what action could be taken by cultural organisations and what policy provisions might be made at national level to support their engagement in and commitment to intercultural

dialogue. We looked in depth at ways of diversifying the recruitment to governance positions in cultural institutions, cultural institutions broadening the constituencies they work with and include in their workforce and opening established cultural spaces to a greater variety of cultural groups etc. To read the full report:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=pa-malmoe>

The second **Regional Practice Exchange** covered Austria and its eastern neighbouring countries and took place **in Vienna** on 20/21 November. It brought together professionals from civil rights and minority organisations and some from the arts and culture sector. It was hosted by our member organisation IG Kultur Österreich. During the Vienna Practice Exchange the partners examined theoretical and practical policy frameworks shaping approaches to the issue. The first day was structured around presentations from experts working in cultural organisations, migrant people's groups and institutions, including the Austrian government. Two workshops in the afternoon focused on the visibility of migrants and the historical development of migrants' associations in Austria. The second day used the 'Open Space Technology' to encourage the discussion. To read the full report:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=pa-vienna>

A bigger space for discussion and coming together of practitioners and policy makers was our **European Forum on "The Role of the Arts in Intercultural Dialogue: A Perspective from and on the Arts"**. It took place on 8 June in Brussels, on the premises of the EC, in connection with the First General Members Assembly. The meeting brought together 75 participants from 18 countries. The day was structured around four platform interventions addressing questions about the role of the arts in Intercultural Dialogue from different perspectives, including the arts, social action, the media and academia. Workshops additional to the plenary discussion gave all the participants a chance to contribute their experiences and ideas. Participants of the event gained a broad overview of the landscape of how the arts currently support intercultural dialogue and how they might do so in future. To read the full report:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=pa-european-forum>

We have further supported the implementation of the Rainbow Paper with "**Panorama on Intercultural Dialogue**", the **on-line resource collection** established in 2008. It was given a boost with a second content development phase carried out by external experts Lidia Varbanova, independent consultant, and Uta Staiger, research coordinator at London University College. This led to an additional 300 abstract entries and the revision of the previous 300. Panorama's technological development was advanced by Pierre de Gelder and involved a change from the previous static database to a fully-fledged multi-user content management system and user interface featuring latest flash technology. The results are due to be visible at the end of March 2010. A plan has been formulated to turn Panorama into a continuously updated resource collection maintained by a panel of selected experts in 2010. To see Panorama in its current state:



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

An additional step in building on the Rainbow Paper was taken by undertaking **research on the implementation of the Intercultural Dialogue objective in the EU Culture Programme** (in collaboration with Culture Action Europe with whom the Platform signed a Cooperation Agreement in 2009). This strikes a link with chapter 5 of the Rainbow Paper on resourcing Intercultural Dialogue, and sow a seed for EU advocacy in 2010. Bianca Floarea, expert on culture policy at the Culture Contact Point in Romania, conducts the study with the help of Ewa Majczak from Culture Action Europe and the European Culture Contact Point network. The promotion of intercultural dialogue is one of the three specific objectives of the EU Culture Programme and this is reflected in the award criteria the proposals must fulfil in order to obtain financing. However, it is so far poorly understood how intercultural dialogue has been interpreted and implemented in the European cooperation projects funded through strand 1 as well as in the work programmes of the organisations financed via strand 2. The ultimate purpose of the study is a series of policy recommendations for the next framework programme beginning in 2014. The results of the study will be available in April 2010.

In everything we did, we have taken care to report and document. Our website provides full transparency of our activities. Four issues of our **Newsbulletin** have been sent out to of distribution list of nearly 1000 recipients. The Newsbulletin sets out our activities and ways for the readership to get involved, explains the EU's role in intercultural dialogue politics and profiles our members' activities.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=newsbulletin>

(2) EU level advocacy

Our two Regional Practice Exchanges in Malmoe and Vienna, our European Forum as well as our parallel conceptual and research work, have informed our **EU advocacy**. We drew knowledge from our activities and presented it to the institutions. 'From practice to policy and back' proves to be the right way to act both knowledgeably and legitimately.

Our EU level advocacy work has entailed participation in bi- and multilateral meetings under the Structured Dialogue in the field of culture throughout the year, involving the EC, the Council working groups under the Open Method of Coordination, and the other two recognised civil society platforms in the culture domain. The highlights of this process have been:

The presentation of our work and political demands during the high-level **EU Culture Forum** on 29/30th September in a "Flash Info" session on the second day. Our members turned out in strength for this event, and many others of the more than 900 people, who came to Brussels for the Forum made their acquaintance with our Platform and explored opportunities to get involved.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=pa-cultureforum>

The second highlight was our presentation to the **Cultural Affairs Committee** on 23 October together with the two other Structured Dialogue Platforms in the field of culture. On this occasion, our demand for the setting up of an OMC working group on Intercultural Dialogue was spontaneously supported by two national delegations.

We have also extended our **advocacy to the European Parliament** with an action around the Culture Forum involving personalised letters to key MEPs and with our participation in an NGO Fair in the EP during the week of 5th October. During the fair our Rainbow Paper was eagerly picked up; our conversations took place with MEPs' assistants and staff of the Parliament's secretariats and services. EP lobby is an effort to keep up and reinforce.



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=pa-ngofair>

Moreover, honouring our cross-sectoral approach, we have reached out to other policy domains, in particular to the field of EU integration policy:

We took part in events such as the **seminar on Integration and Immigration** in Tallinn, Estonia, 19-20 February, organised by the Migration Policy Group for the EC, the two 2009 meetings of the **EU Integration Forum** (April and November), hosted by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social committee, and the **Eurofound high-level Conference: Intercultural approaches to community-building and cohesion in European cities**, Brussels, 30th November/1st December. For a full account of the platform's public engagements, go to:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=past-activities>

(3) Organisational consolidation

All of the above happened in the framework of the Platform's **organisational consolidation**. 2009 was its first year as an independent administrative structure under Belgian law. This led to the following consolidation work in 2009:

Systems were put in place with a payroll agency, social security office, work insurance etc, and the two employees were successively taken under contract by the Platform. Moreover, the Platform's separate accounting systems were set up, including regular visits of an external accountant, ready for a formal audit of its budget.

The operating rules for the **steering group** were also formalised in 2009 and its working practices improved. Four full steering group meetings were held, and each steering group member now works in one or two of the following working groups: advocacy and institutional relations; Rainbow Paper implementation activities; membership development and communications; finances, fundraising and administrative support. Communication and collaboration by virtual means have also been enhanced. Towards the end of the year operational concept development advice was commissioned from external experts Sukhvinder Kaur, independent consultant and ex chief-executive of the Barrow Cadbury Trust, and Joel Anderson, research lecturer in "philosophical anthropology" at the University Utrecht (due to be delivered early in 2010). For details of the steering group members:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=hiw-steering-group>

Our **membership admission process** started in May 2009. Following the formulation and adoption by the Steering Group of a vision and mission statement, we outlined the membership proposition, eligibility criteria and ways of joining. We succeeded in interesting the most active former informal participants in becoming our first official members and have attracted new

organisations as members since. In 2009 the Platform gained 35 member organisations, which are active in the arts and culture, education, youth, anti-discrimination, migration and religious affairs, and work on the local, national, regional and European level. For details on our members:



<http://www.intercultural-europe.org/template.php?page=members>

In June we conducted our First General Members Assembly, which included the adoption of the work programme and budget and the election of the steering group.

(4) Financial report

Financially 2009 has also been a year of transition for the Platform. While some funding from the Network of European Foundations was maintained, we moved to core funding from the EU Culture programme (Strand 2d Policy Support Structures for the Cultural Agenda), with co-financing from the European Cultural Foundation.

The total financial and human resource base remained roughly the same as in 2008. Planning for the year had to take account of long uncertainties over the funding and of considerable cash flow challenges.

While the EU Grant was awarded at the end of March, the first payment was only received at the end of October. Given that the Platform had no previous independent financial history, a guarantor for the proportion of "pre-financing" of the EU operational grant was needed – the ECF kindly stepped into this role, and also provided the Platform with a cash-flow loan without which it would not have survived. Nevertheless, the Platform was impeded in making the contractual arrangements for its activities, had to delay and finally cancel one of them (third Practice Exchange).

Despite the difficulties, the finances of the Platform were managed efficiently, and prudence led very close to the zero balance required from an EU-financed NGO (closing balance of € 129). Total income amounted to € 182.632 and total expenditure to € 182.503. A 'social reserve' of € 5.515,71 is being carried into 2010.

For details please see attached budget (an electronically separate document). Please note that this budget is not yet approved by EU authorities.

Conclusion and outlook

2009 provided the challenge of consolidating to the Platform for Intercultural Europe - beyond its time in the limelight of an EU thematic year (Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008). We have risen to it by:

- Going to the grass-roots with our Malmö and Vienna Practice Exchanges in order to test our Manifesto and to be able to reiterate its demands in political fora with fresh evidence
- Using the channels of the Structured Dialogue in the field of culture to the full and extending our advocacy work into the European Parliament
- Preparing advocacy on EU programmes in 2010 by setting up a study on ICD in the EU Culture programme

- Extending our policy involvement into the field of EU integration policy thereby entering a new network
- Increasing the potential impact of the Rainbow Paper by further investing in Panorama, the resource collection on Intercultural Dialogue that goes with it
- Conducting constructive discussions in the steering group on organisational development and commissioning external experts to present advice on sharpening the platform's rationale
- Consolidating the organisation in terms of its administration, governance and membership
- Underpinning the Platform's activity portfolio with clear and concise reporting and communications.

The tasks in view for 2010 are:

- Refining the concept for our Regional Practice Exchanges
- Enhancing the specificity and efficacy of our advocacy activities while seeking synergies with broader alliances and campaigns
- Growing and strengthening the membership base
- Developing the Platform's activity profile including propositions against which fundraising is possible so as to increase the Platform's financial and eventually human resources.

The track points are set for the Platform to match its 2009 progress in 2010 and to bring its work and contribution to society to a yet higher qualitative level.

Sabine Frank
Secretary General
24th March 2010