

The Story of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 (EYID)

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc415_en.htm

EYID 2008 was a year of projects, festivals, debates, information campaigns, competitions, articles, speeches, networking and reflection all aimed at:

1. raising public awareness in Europe and beyond of the need for intercultural dialogue to help us adapt to an increasingly mixed and complex world.
2. involving many people in exploring what intercultural dialogue means in their daily life
3. promoting the role of intercultural dialogue in:
 - increasing mutual understanding
 - exploring the benefits of cultural diversity
 - fostering active European citizenship and a sense of European belonging

Who was involved?

One of the striking features of the Year was the active involvement of a wide array of local, regional and national associations and other representatives of civil society – in keeping with the bottom-up, participatory approach, involving:

1. European Commission (coordinator) and other EU institutions
2. national coordinating bodies – responsible for implementation in EU countries
3. national governments, regional and local authorities in EU countries
4. 1200 civil society partners – associations and networks that spread key messages, engaged people in debate and shared the results of their work on intercultural dialogue
5. specially appointed ambassadors – European and national cultural figures – tasked with raising awareness of the importance and benefits of intercultural dialogue
6. pan-European media partners

EU funding and support

The Year had a dedicated budget of €10m, for:

1. 7 flagship EU projects
2. A national project in each EU country
3. Other EU initiatives

Hundreds of other projects received – and continue to receive – funding through other EU programmes, e.g. Culture, Lifelong Learning, Youth in action, Europe for citizens, Progress, European Integration Fund.

The seven pan European projects cofunded with 2.4 million € from the Year's budget

- Diversidad! Promoting Dialogue and Exchange through European Urban Culture, coordinated by the European Music Office

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, United Kingdom

The project aimed to promote and encourage intercultural dialogue in the long term through the organisation of artistic events and panels of discussion about urban culture and hip-hop. Diversidad! brought together artists and fans on a new digital platform that encourages cross-border musical exchange. A hip-hop single was produced with well known artists, among them Abd Al Malik, the French slammer and rapper of Congolese origin and European Ambassador of the Year. During the Euro2008 football competition, urban culture events were organised, including graffiti workshops and DJ contests.

- Stranger, coordinated by the European Cultural Foundation with partners in 18 Member States.

This project encouraged young people to share their view of "the other" by making their own short videos. One highlight was the Stranger Festival in Amsterdam in July, bringing together over 250 young video makers from all over Europe and beyond.

The resulting videos give an extensive picture of the young generation, its hopes and fears, its vision of itself and of others. A DVD with selected videos and other pedagogical tools was distributed to 20,000 schools in Europe, reaching many more people than those who could take part directly.

- iyouwe –SHARE THE WORLD, coordinated by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation

Countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom and Portugal

This project supported interactive work between story tellers, visual artists, musicians and primary school children, many from disadvantaged backgrounds, in order to share and learn through an imaginary world. The children wrote a tale about how the world was born and exchanged it with another class from another country, which in turn reflected this tale through painting, theatre or dance. A closing event and concert with the support of world-famous musicians took place at the Cirque Royal in Brussels in December 2008.

- Cultures from around the block: Creating a European Network for intercultural community activities, coordinated by Multikulturní centrum Praha

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, United Kingdom

The urban setting is both a place of integration and division. Dialogue between divided groups can play an important part in overcoming the problems that often persist in ethnically diverse cities. The project brought together young people from different ethnic groups living in the same city, through workshops where they documented their surroundings with various media. This facilitated intercultural dialogue and helped build long-lasting ties between different communities.

- Alter Ego, coordinated by the European Union National Institutes for Culture Brussels – EUNIC

Countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia and United Kingdom

The project focused on young people and aimed to contribute to intercultural dialogue and cross-cultural understanding and promote active European citizenship. The participants reached beyond their usual social circles through collaborative art projects.

- Tatapume - Intercultural Dialogue Radio Campaign, coordinated by ERREPI S.p.A. – Radio Popolare

Countries: Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Ireland, Italy, Spain, France

The radio campaign informed the public about the intercultural dialogue which European populations have engaged in throughout a history of migration and cross-border influences. Local campaigns were run in seven different countries through a European network of five local radio stations and two production centres. The project aimed to depict Europe's migratory history from a new perspective, via a linguistic, philological approach.

- Meeting the other: borders, identity and cultures in Europe, coordinated by Associazione culturale Babelmed

Countries: Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Spain

The main objective of this project was to reflect on intercultural dialogue through cultural expressions and artistic creations produced by immigration. Through a multidisciplinary approach covering several areas including journalism, research and design, the project aimed to contribute to improved mutual understanding, particularly among young people.

National initiatives on intercultural dialogue

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was brought to life in every EU country by National Coordinating Bodies (NCBs), usually government Ministries or cultural institutions with experience and a role to play in intercultural dialogue.

Each country's national strategy for the Year responded to specific needs.

The European Year provided a new impulse for policy developments regarding the promotion of intercultural dialogue at national level.

At the same time, NCBs working with national partners drove the communication campaign, attracting media and public attention.

Knowledge generated during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue was substantial, including at national level. National ministries or departments, as well as civil society representatives prepared a list of tools and publications during the Year.

Other EYID initiatives of the European Commission

- The Year featured seven "Brussels Debates"
- The European Year photo competition "Cultures on my street" reached out to a wide public.
- The Special Olympics initiative "Football in the Park – Football for Diversity" brought together Special Olympics athletes, young talents of RSC Anderlecht, MEPs and staff of the European Commission.
- A seminar on "Intercultural Dialogue: a Challenge for Faiths and Convictions?" was held in November 2008

- The European Commission, UEFA and FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) kicked off the 2008-2009 football season with a joint TV spot "Different languages, one goal" showing football fans "together in diversity".
- Seven of the Ambassadors came together - around concerts, workshops, film screenings and debates - at the European Festival of Intercultural Dialogue, organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the Flagey Arts Centre.
- The European Commission Representations in EU Member States, as well as the Delegations in non EU countries, spread the message of the European Year at national level and beyond EU borders

EYID initiatives of other European institutions

Through numerous events and debates in 2008, the European Parliament gave a special focus to the topic of intercultural dialogue:

- Two thematic weeks (the Arab and the African Weeks),
- Film festival exploring cultural diversity in partnership with the European Union Institutes for Culture (EUNIC),
- The Festival of Europe during the Open Days of the EU institutions and many other events gave a festive flavour to the concept of "better living together".
- Thought-provoking debates on peace, interfaith dialogue and external relations, with invited personalities such as Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, Asma Jahangir, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal and currently High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations, and Ahmad Badr Al-Din Hassoun, Grand Mufti of Syria.

The work of the Committee of the Regions focused on the concept of intercultural dialogue in 2008. The Committee organised also specific events:

- a major "*Forum on intercultural dialogue at the heart of Europe's cities and regions*"
- a photo competition and a summer university.

The Economic and Social Committee showed its commitment to the Year through the organisation of a series of conferences such as:

- "The European Way to Integration: Intercultural Dialogue and Mutual Respect"
- "Organised civil society as an engine for Intercultural Dialogue"
- "Immigrant Literature: Writing in Adopted Languages" organised in cooperation with EUNIC.