



Bring the peoples of Europe 'Together in diversity!' Campaign launch of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

On 4 December 2007, the European Commission is launching the communication campaign for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 with the slogan 'Together in Diversity'. The event also sees the inauguration of the website www.dialogue2008.eu. The European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Training and Youth, Ján Figel', will be joined by 'European Ambassadors for Intercultural Dialogue', famous personalities of the cultural scene in Europe and beyond. The event will be animated by the presence of Brussels school pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds as a joint expression of the benefits of diversity on the eve of 2008.

The European Year aims to contribute to **mutual understanding and better living together**. It will explore the **benefits of cultural diversity, active civic participation in European affairs** and seek to **foster a sense of European belonging**. It is a joint initiative of the European Union, the Member States and European civil society. The Year has been allocated a **EUR 10 million** budget, supporting the information campaign, surveys and studies on intercultural dialogue, the co-financing of the **seven flagship European projects and 27 national projects** – one per each member state - on intercultural dialogue across the EU.

On the eve of the campaign launch, the Commissioner **Ján Figel'** said: *"Europe clearly faces significant challenges that have their roots in intercultural relations. The European Year 2008 gives us a valuable opportunity to explore ways to improve our intercultural dialogue, and our intercultural relations. This may seem to be an extremely difficult task. But 50 years ago the idea of bringing our continent's diverse populations together under one umbrella, the European Union, also seemed to be beyond reach. Now we can see the achievement of the European Union, and its remarkable success in uniting Europe's countries. Therefore, we can and should face up to the challenges of our continent's cultural and religious mix. That is why we have chosen the slogan 'Together in diversity' for the Year."*

The European Commission is inviting to the campaign launch event a number of personalities from the cultural scene from across Europe and beyond who have offered their services as **'European Ambassadors for Intercultural Dialogue'**. The European Ambassadors include Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho, Slovak conductor Jack Martin Händler, Romanian film director Radu Mihăileanu, Slovenian conceptual artist Marko Peljhan, Catalan bass viola player Jordi Savall, Turkish piano player Fazıl Say, and Serbian Eurovision champion Marija Šerifović.

Also present at the event will be the promoters and representatives of the **seven flagship projects** which were recently selected to receive Community funding support following an open call for proposals earlier this year. The projects cover the areas of urban culture, popular arts, participation of young people, migration, media, exchange of local initiatives, video project or activities of immigrant communities. All include participants from several member states. The results of the projects will be presented in the second half of the year.

The campaign website www.dialogue2008.eu, which has been developed together with civil society organizations, aims to promote a joint European space for intercultural dialogue. It includes a **partner section**, aimed at stimulating networking and exchanges of best practices at EU level. Already prior to the launch, it hosts **more than 500 profiles** of individuals and organisations working within the field of intercultural dialogue.

The European Year 2008 aims to establish a foundation for sustained European policy initiatives in the field of intercultural dialogue beyond 2008. It is also an active expression of the impact of the new **European agenda for culture in a globalizing world**, in which promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are one of three key objectives.

In this respect, among other activities, **six Brussels debates** (one every two months) will be organized during 2008. Each debate takes a specific sectoral view on intercultural dialogue, and will cover such topics as media, arts and heritage, the workplace, inter-religious dialogue, education and youth, migration and integration.

More information:

www.dialogue2008.eu