



Europäisches Jahr des  
interkulturellen Dialogs 2008

**National Strategy for the implementation of the  
European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008**

**AUSTRIA**

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**[www.interkultureller-dialog-2008.at](http://www.interkultureller-dialog-2008.at)**

## National Strategy for the implementation of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 - AUSTRIA

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## 1 Preliminary remark

The Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament have declared 2008 as European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. In Austria, the Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture acts as National Coordination Body.

The involvement of stakeholders is a prerequisite for successful awareness-raising. Austria therefore attaches great importance to a bottom-up process with regard to the elaboration and implementation of the National Strategy for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The Minister for Education, the Arts and Culture has invited the relevant ministries, the social partners and other actors at national and regional level to cooperate in the implementation of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue and has established a National Committee in order to ensure a participative process.

The Austrian strategy for the Year 2008 was elaborated jointly with the National Committee between June 2007 and December 2007 (see Annex 1: Members of the National Committee).

Austria's National Strategy is based on a definition of culture which emphasizes the universal aspects of the concept rather than its particularism. Part of this understanding is the focus on culture as a permanent process of creation, which implies that not only the products of culture but also the making of culture by people and the making of people by culture must be considered. Therefore it is the interactive and communicative aspect of culture that will be highlighted by the activities of this Year. This approach to culture embraces both culture as a fine art and culture as the mental software of everyday interaction. Since our interest lies in the dynamic and interactive nature of this concept of culture, we will encourage and promote projects and activities which are in line with this philosophy, the ultimate goal of which is the creation of a **European citizenship** which is built on **cross-cultural interaction and communication**. Or, in other words, which is inclusive rather than exclusive.

## **2 National context – Challenges to be met**

EU enlargement, increased mobility and the necessity of citizens to understand rapidly changing and highly interconnected contexts – and to act accordingly – confronts Austria with new challenges. The dialogue between cultures, linguistic diversity and common experiences of cultural diversity and traditions thus become more and more important. Intercultural dialogue is not only a precondition for mutual understanding, respect and social cohesion but also for the active participation of citizens, as well as for innovative ideas and economic success.

The situation in Austria is complex. On the one hand there are very committed efforts on the part of public institutions, cultural professionals and numerous NGOs to promote this dialogue and to make interculturality in everyday life a matter of course. Austrian citizens are generally well aware of the scope and significance of intercultural dialogue in civil society, in education and culture, and in the media. In the business world, intercultural competence is increasingly seen as an important prerequisite for entrepreneurial success.

Intercultural dialogue has thus already been practised for a long time now in the urban areas of Austria, in spite of unavoidable misunderstandings and minor conflicts. In the places where it functions it has led to positive experiences for all those involved.

On the other hand, however, there are – as in other European countries – populist tendencies in the public discourse which raise fears of ‘all things foreign’ in connection with globalisation. Migrants and asylum seekers, who are the most important representatives of these cultures when it comes to everyday interculturality, are often the focus of this discussion. The increased fear of terrorism in the wake of 9/11 has intensified the negatively charged emotions present in the discourse.

Even though there is a multitude of actors committed to intercultural dialogue and numerous projects and measures are implemented every year, further action is desirable in order to inform and actively involve all citizens in a mutually enriching dialogue between cultures.

Policy measures for equal opportunities, integration and social inclusion, participation, active democratic citizenship and empowerment, enhanced quality in the education system and the promotion of lifelong learning, as well as measures to improve cultural education, are set down as leading principles in the Austrian governmental programme. As a driving force for new initiatives, the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 could contribute significantly towards reaching these goals.

Interreligious dialogue is part of intercultural dialogue. The Austrian government regularly consults with officially recognized religious communities on issues of integration, social cohesion and international dialogue activities. The government also supports a series of interfaith projects. As part of the EU Year 2008, further initiatives will be taken to promote mutual understanding and tolerance between people of different faiths (see the contribution of the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs and the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research).

### **Challenges to be met:**

- involvement of all relevant stakeholders
- a participative bottom-up process
- broad awareness-raising through close cooperation with the media
- achieving a critical mass of activities through synergies between education, youth and culture
- stressing aspects of creativity and innovation as a guiding principle for activities
- cooperation with the Austrian UNESCO Commission in order to create synergies with the UN Year of Languages 2008, the UN Decade of Sustainable Development 2004-2015 and the UN Decade of a Culture of Peace 2001-2010.

### **3 Consultation of civil society and stakeholders**

Cooperation with numerous partner institutions is a prerequisite for a wide-reaching geographic and social impact and the sustainability of the EU Year 2008. The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture has thus invited key institutions from different areas, i.e. ministries, social partners, civil society and media, to actively participate in the planning and implementation of this Year.

Representatives from these institutions are part of the National Committee established in June 2007 (see Annex 1: Members of the National Committee). The priorities and contributions of the institutions of the National Committee are included in the National Strategy for the implementation of the EU Year 2008. (see Chapter 6: "National Committee: Contributions of partner institutions").

### **Considerations on possible measures in the fields of education, culture and youth**

#### **Preparation 2007:**

- Ø National Committee: Thematic coordination and planning with all relevant stakeholders, information on the EU Year, motivating a large number of institutions to participate
- Ø Setting up an organisation office
- Ø Preparing a website and a calendar of events
- Ø Planning a media campaign
- Ø Planning thematic weeks and main activities

#### **Implementation 2008:**

- Ø National launch event: 28 February 2008 (Concert "Be a Mensch")
- Ø Implementation of projects and events: Jan. - Dec. 2008
- Ø Dialogue-Tour throughout all Austrian provinces: Information and awareness-raising campaign, together with the National Committee, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation, community radio stations and print and online media: April-May 2008
- Ø Information and calendar of events on the website [www.interkultureller-dialog-](http://www.interkultureller-dialog-)

2008.at

- Ø PR work by means of goodwill ambassadors
- Ø Presenting and networking existing projects
- Ø High-visibility events in the public sphere, e.g. markets, local festivals, etc.
- Ø Activities related to European Days, e.g. the European Day of Languages, Europe Day May 9<sup>th</sup>, the European Day of Monuments, European Spring Days, etc.
- Ø Promoting gatherings of young people and exchanges
- Ø Realising school projects on intercultural dialogue e.g. “EDC Action Days (Aktionstage Politische Bildung)”, Global Education Weeks, “Europe at School”, etc.
- Ø Opening up new cooperation fields together with the National Committee
- Ø Joint projects with artists and cultural institutions
- Ø National final event at the end of 2008

#### 4 National priorities for the Year

The aim of the European Year is to raise peoples’ awareness for the significance of intercultural dialogue in everyday life and to strengthen their ability to move successfully within a complex cultural setting. The activities of the Year should contribute to making cultural diversity a tangible enrichment for society as a whole, to awaken interest in other cultures and to reflect on existing values.

In order to achieve these aims **existing activities** aimed at strengthening intercultural dialogue will be given broad **visibility and additional funding**. Furthermore, **new initiatives will be encouraged**. Peer learning and mutual exchange of experience will contribute towards the integration of good practice.

“Dialogue” strategies in the context of foreign policy-making often include only specific target groups, namely political, social and economic elites. It is, however, of equal importance to strengthen dialogue activities with all groups and levels of society, giving special importance to groups of public life which are often underrepresented, such as youth and women. Women’s experiences and expertise must be effectively integrated into dialogue-based activities and into social and political initiatives of conflict prevention and resolution on all levels. Hence, a **gender perspective** on all dialogue initiatives is crucial.

Sustainability and synergies are also created by linking **the Year of Equal Opportunities 2007, the Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and a possible European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009**. Creativity in both cultural education, as well as self-expression, will contribute to raising educational standards by offering a way of developing the full potential of the individual and their understanding of a diverse and complex world.

An important **added benefit** of this year is the networking of institutions in the fields of **education, culture and youth to create synergies** that will also extend beyond the EU Year.

There are three areas which, according to the Austrian definition of the goals and aims of this Year, take on outstanding roles and responsibility: education, culture and youth.

## 4.1 Education

(Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture) [www.bmukk.gv.at](http://www.bmukk.gv.at)

The education sector - which has a particular responsibility for promoting intercultural dialogue - takes the lead in organizing the EU Year in Austria. The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture is National Coordination Body for the EU Year 2008. Education is, on the one hand, the key to knowledge of other cultures, on the other hand it provides opportunities for joint learning, understanding, experiencing and shaping cultural values. This is the basis for mutual understanding and respect, for recognizing commonalities and reducing prejudices.

Intercultural dialogue is set down as a general goal and a cross-cutting issue in the new **Lifelong Learning Programme 2007 – 2013** and will be translated into numerous projects with Austrian participation. **At national level** intercultural learning has been anchored in the curricula of Austrian schools since 1992, both as a teaching principle and as a general educational objective. The **Principles of Intercultural Learning** represent an important framework for events and projects in schools (also see “Intercultural Learning” page 7).

The intercultural dimension also forms an integral part of the development of the **National Strategy for Lifelong Learning**.

In the field of education, the EU-Year will focus on the following priorities:

### ✓ **Education for sustainable development and global education**

Global education makes sense only if it can make visible in how far the local and the global are related and interwoven culturally, economically and politically. In the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue it is obvious that special emphasis must be laid on the intercultural nature of this process so as to initiate and coordinate grassroots activities in this field. Strengthening individual and organizational competence requires intercultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue in order to contribute actively to the development of global citizenship.

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue is intended to create synergies with existing strategies, such as the UN Decade 2005-2014 “Education for Sustainable Development”, in which Intercultural Understanding and Peace, as well as Cultural and Linguistic Diversity were defined as two of ten key action themes. The revised EU Strategy for Sustainable Development (June 2006) also emphasizes education as a basic prerequisite for active citizenship and behavioural change. Global education, in the sense of education for responsible global citizenship, is therefore also an important contribution to education for sustainable development.

### ✓ **Promotion of multilingualism**

Languages are an essential constituent part of the self-confidence and identity of individuals and societies and a prerequisite for the creation, processing and transmission of knowledge. Social inclusion and individual empowerment are to a certain extent determined by linguistic choices and strategies. In particular, less widely spoken languages are still not sufficiently represented in education, the media and cyberspace. Austria is interested in further exploring the economic and social benefits of linguistic and cultural diversity, as a factor of social cohesion and economic growth and as a stimulus for sustainable development.

Intercultural dialogue requires intensified efforts from all people involved to improve their communicative skills in more than one language. However, the underlying concept of language differs somewhat from that of modern language learning in so far as it focuses on the speakers' competence for negotiating meaning rather than on his or her linguistic perfection. It is based on the linguistic diversity present in society and on the respect for the languages of minorities (including sign languages), of migrants and neighbouring regions.

#### ✓ **Key competences and cultural education**

A key element of intercultural dialogue is international exchange, i.e. the opportunity for many people to get to know the culture and lifestyle of other people.

Cultural education was an important priority of the Austrian EU Presidency and will continue to be a key issue during the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue will make a concrete contribution to promoting "**cultural awareness and expression**", which is identified as one of the **key competences** in the Recommendation adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 18 December 2006. Cultural awareness includes both the ability to express one's own creativity as well as the appreciation of works of art and artistic performance. The way in which music, the arts, etc. are received and created also strengthens the citizens' ability to flexibly adapt to a rapidly changing world.

This also enhances openness and an understanding of cultural diversity, as well as the willingness to engage in critical and constructive dialogue.

#### ✓ **Intercultural Learning**

Linguistic and cultural diversity gives the chance of widening the horizon, of promoting the mutual cultural understanding and greater tolerance of other cultures and to support integration. Therefore intercultural learning was introduced as one of the 14 fundamental educational principles. These principles do not only apply to one subject but affect all subjects taught.

Based on the needs and experiences made on integration of pupils with migration background several initiatives have been set. The so called "three pillars model" shall support a wise educational system in introducing:

- The educational principle of intercultural learning as symbol for a communication including everyone;
- The promotion of the foreign language through lessons in the mother tongue;
- Measures to acquire and improve the foreign language

In this context the "Fairness Award" was introduced as a prize for innovative projects that promote intercultural dialogue, respect and responsibility within the school partnership. Several other projects and measures in schools will promote intercultural dialogue, multilingualism and a multicultural environment.

### ✓ **Intercultural Dimension in Adult Learning**

Adult learning plays an important role for intercultural dialogue and helps to ensure that immigration can take place in a way that is beneficial to both migrants and the host country. Ongoing measures and information strengthen the motivation for and the awareness of intercultural dialogue. Better access to Lifelong Learning for disadvantaged persons, especially for migrants, is still a great challenge. Offers for basic education and literacy programmes as well as access to higher education need to be further expanded.

### ✓ **Intercultural Dialogue and Sports**

The European Football Championship will take place in Austria and Switzerland in June 2008. Two essential measures are strongly supported by the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. Within the Project "EuroSchools 2008" pupils will have the possibility to appear as Ambassadors for Fair Play and international communication. Schools will organize a project day and a fairplay football game to make the school landscape aware of Intercultural dialogue.

An additional measure related to Fair Play is the project "Kick Kultur" which enables pupils to involve themselves in cultural projects focussed on values and connected to societal issues. The world of schools and the world of artists will be closely related. This creative dialogue will show the connection between football and living conditions. Football becomes a part of our social identity.

### ✓ **Intercultural dialogue and cyberspace**

New technologies promote dialogue across borders. Many young people already communicate across and outside Europe's borders. Moreover, the use of new technologies can contribute significantly to critical thinking, creativity and innovation, as it requires a critical and reflective attitude towards available information and a responsible use of interactive media.

### ✓ **Intercultural dialogue with a focus on the Western Balkans**

Integration of the countries of the Western Balkan into the European Area of Education was a priority of the Austrian EU Presidency which will be continued throughout the Year 2008. A first conference on this issue, *The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 - A dialogue among cultures in a new Europe. Expectations – aims – challenges*, with participants from South-Eastern Europe, already took place in December 2006 in Vienna, and a follow-up is planned.

## **4.2 Culture**

(Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture) [www.bmukk.gv.at](http://www.bmukk.gv.at)

Traditionally the fine arts have been regarded as one of the cornerstones of national identity. Dramatic changes in global world order, such as the implosion of the Communist Empire and the increasingly efficient global economy and technology, have contributed to the deconstruction of the traditional role and function of the fine arts as national identity markers. In the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue the emphasis must shift from the concept of art as a territorial landmark to that of a cross-cultural link.

One of the main objectives of the European Year 2008 is to help European citizens to cope with their increasingly multicultural lives and to promote tolerance and mutual respect. Even though the arts and culture cannot solve social problems, such as discrimination and social exclusion, they can make a valuable contribution towards strengthening social cohesion and offer new forms of interaction. In this respect two different aspects of intercultural dialogue should be considered: cross-border dialogue with people from other countries and dialogue between people of different geographical, cultural and religious backgrounds living together in a country.

Regarding initiatives at European level, Austria seeks to make the best possible use of existing Community programmes: “Culture” (2007-2013), “Europe for Citizens” (2007-2013), and “Linz - European Capital of Culture 2009”. Special attention will be paid to the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. In addition, cultural agreements on a bilateral level will also be taken into account.

Regarding initiatives at national level, it has to be pointed out that cultural projects are not the main focus as such, they are rather regarded as a tool to promote intercultural dialogue in everyday life. While it is true that this topic concerns all age groups and all social groups, it should be borne in mind that convincing some target groups requires far more effort than, for example, approaching the more aware elite. Another key issue is the sustainability of measures to support intercultural dialogue, which is often hard to achieve by means of individual, specific projects. Best practice examples can be found in architecture and urban planning (e.g. venues where people of different backgrounds come together). Furthermore, case studies and impact studies in the field of culture should complement these activities.

For further priorities in the field of culture: see Chapter 6: “National Committee: Contributions of partner institutions“).

### **4.3 Youth**

(Ministry of Health, Family and Youth) [www.bmgfi.gv.at](http://www.bmgfi.gv.at)

Youth is a privileged target group that we have to make respond actively and positively to the responsibilities in our societies and to strengthen its commitment to the development of democratic, pluralistic and prosperous societies.

Austria will therefore make it one of its priorities to promote a number of selected projects that best fulfil the criteria of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue as defined by the European Parliament and the Council in their Decision of December 2006.

#### **▼ Mobility and intercultural learning**

The programme Youth in Action 2007-2013 provides an excellent framework within which to promote active citizenship and intercultural learning for young people, especially for those with fewer opportunities. Youth organizations and those active in the field of youth work are the main partners in this context.

The implementation of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is the priority issue for youth activities and projects in the context of **Youth in Action** for 2008.

### ✓ **Active participation of young people in society**

Participation of young people at all levels is necessary for the future of Europe. The **participation of young people in decision making processes** and in the implementation of policy measures is therefore essential. The potential of youth organizations and young people in this respect is often underestimated.

Horizontal policy measures aimed at young people are the answer to the demographic development in Europe which sees youth as a rare resource in the near future.

Social inclusion, active citizenship, participation, information, employment, education, well-being and freedom of all forms of cultural expression and life style are some of the areas where synergies between the fields of education, youth and culture can be identified. (See also the Austrian Youth Council contribution under “National Committee: Contributions of partner institutions”)

## **5 National Committee: Contributions of partner institutions**

**34 institutions** from different areas, i.e. ministries, social partners, civil society and media, are part of the National Committee. They actively participate in the planning and implementation of the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue. (see Annex 1: Members of the National Committee).

### **5.1 Office of the Austrian Federal President**

[www.hofburg.at](http://www.hofburg.at)

The **president of the Republic of Austria**, Mr. Heinz Fischer, has agreed to the **patronage** of the European Year 2008.

### **5.2 Austrian Parliament**

[www.parlament.gv.at](http://www.parlament.gv.at)

The President of the Austrian Parliament, Ms Barbara Prammer, will assume the patronage for some selected events (campaigns).

An important target group of the European Year 2008, young people, should also be reached by the project Democracy Workshop. The theme of intercultural dialogue will therefore also be dealt with as part of this Parliament project.

### **5.3 Austrian Federal Chancellery (BKA)**

[www.austria.gv.at](http://www.austria.gv.at)

The Austrian Federal Chancellery, in its role as the coordinating body for general government policy, welcomes the EU initiative of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. Within the context of the Chancellery’s special areas of responsibility – particularly jurisprudence, as well as its competence for certain policy areas – intercultural issues are already enshrined in law in all appropriate areas and constitute a political principle, in exactly the same way as gender issues. In particular, the Federal Chancellery considers the integration of intercultural dialogue in the fields of sport,

women, the promotion of ethnic groups and administrative reform to either already have been implemented for the most part, or it plans to increase the visibility of intercultural dialogue in these areas even further by means of additional specific projects to this end. Especially in the field of administrative reform, the Chancellery's e-government project aims at improving the way in which cultural differences in the needs of those people who use public administration are taken into account. This project will continue to be regularly evaluated over the coming year and the findings will be applied to new projects.

In the coming year the Federal Chancellery will also be responsible for coordinating the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the proclamation of the Republic of Austria. In accordance with the theme of the EU Year, instead of focusing solely on Austrian national history, these celebrations will focus on historical interdependency and relations with neighbouring states during the founding years of the Republic and in the decades that followed. Projects to this end are already being carried out or will receive support as part of the anniversary year.

## **Synergies with the EURO 2008**

[www.sport.austria.gv.at](http://www.sport.austria.gv.at)

One of the three most significant sport events in the world, the European Football Championship, UEFA EURO 8<sup>tm</sup>, will take place in Austria and Switzerland between 7-29 June 2008. It will be the largest event that has ever taken place in Austria. As a result, Austria will be the focus of worldwide media attention during the Championship, with 8-10 billion viewers throughout the world watching the matches on television. The **synergies that EURO 2008 and the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue** create, provide an opportunity to sensitise the wider public towards values **inherent in both football and intercultural dialogue**: fair play, team spirit, mutual respect, tolerance, learning how to lose or to win, etc.

The initiative "FairPlay. Different Colours. One Game." was launched in 1997 by the Vienna Institute of Development and Cooperation (VIDC) within the framework of the European Year Against Racism. Since then FairPlay-VIDC has been carrying out intercultural activities in the field of football and sport, together with sport associations, fan clubs, schools, and organisations representing migrants. FairPlay-VIDC's activities within the context of the UEFA EURO 2008<sup>TM</sup> (<http://de.uefa.com/competitions/euro>) are supported by the Austrian Federal Government and UEFA, providing an opportunity for the issues of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 to take centre stage.

An action programme relating to the issues of intercultural dialogue is to be carried out with financial support from the Austrian Federal Chancellery as follows:

In addition to the support for fans provided by the static "fan embassies" which will serve as central meeting points, service centres and information exchange points run by fans for fans, there will also be mobile, international "fan embassies" and "consulates". A fan guide and webpage will also provide further orientation support.

Anti-discrimination campaigns to be carried out inside the EURO stadiums will be presented to the media in the run-up to the event. Outside the stadiums, fair play will be propagated by means of Streetkicks and other pro-active measures. Public relations work will include an anti-racism fanzine and an exhibition on anti-discrimination in football.

As part of the project *Euro Schools 2008*, participating schools have been allocated in a draw a particular UEFA member nation with which pupils are to concern themselves throughout the coming school year and, in doing so, take on the role of “ambassadors” for their adopted country. Independently organised football tournaments and supra-regional “Host City Cups” will build up to the opportunity of participating in the international final of the EURO schools tournament. All of the 53 UEFA nations will be represented at this event – “ambassadors” from Austria and Switzerland, as well as pupils from each member nation.

Within this project and in close cooperation with the BMUKK Austrian schools will organize a project day and a fairplay football game to make the school landscape aware of Intercultural dialogue.

## **5.4 Federal Ministry of European und International Affairs (BMeiA)**

[www.bmeia.gv.at](http://www.bmeia.gv.at)

### **Priorities for Austria’s foreign policy making**

Dialogue and the management of diversity are of utmost priority in Austria’s foreign policy making. They represent a major challenge on the national, European and global level. Diversity with regard to minorities, religious and immigrant communities is both a fact and a core value. “Dialogue” activities have been an integral part of Austrian foreign policy-making worldwide, be it in an inter-religious or an inter-cultural context, with special emphasis on Central Europe, the Balkans, on the Middle East and the Mediterranean partner countries. Austria’s foreign policy reaches out to our partners in the Muslim world and to our Muslim co-citizens within Europe and underlines the key role European Muslims can play in this respect. Austria is committed to protect and promote cultural diversity in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance.

### **No “culturalisation” of conflicts**

“Dialogue” strategies with Muslim communities in Europe and the Muslim world have gained priority due to developments suggesting that “religious identity” has become increasingly important or even a “core issue” when talking about political, social or economic problems today. “Dialogue” strategies’ overall objective, however, is the prevention of a “culturalisation of conflicts”. Political and social conflicts and conflicts of interest must not be loaded with cultural values and differences. This holds true for conflicts within states or within Europe as much as for global ones. “Dialogue” strategies must overcome the dichotomy of “the West/ Europe vs. the Muslim world” that underlies many initiatives to date that might even have found themselves reinforcing the gap they were actually intended to close. These strategies must also integrate the perspective of and the necessity for “inner-cultural” dialogue, focussing on the need for social, religious, ideological and other “diversities” to be managed peacefully. The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 should make the many dimensions of “dialogue” clearly visible and will be an occasion to better prevent misunderstanding and enhance people’s knowledge in order to increase mutual tolerance and understanding.

“Dialogue” strategies are also regarded as one of the tools for preventing political and social radicalisation on all sides, thereby strengthening moderate forces and increasing their visibility against radical and extremist positions. “Dialogue” strategies must be seen as an integral part of conflict prevention, conflict management and peace-building and, finally, as an integral part of development policies.

### **Joint praxis**

Enlarging the dialogue spectrum to include civil society must also entail the question of how we implement “dialogue” strategies. It is crucial to shift emphasis from “dialogue” to “diapraxis”, i.e. “joint praxis”, from debate and discourse to joint activities and concrete co-operation. “Dialogue” strategies often focus on abstract issues (values, perceptions, et al) and on the merits of dialogues of cultures/religions itself. The current challenge in this context is to develop an agenda for discussing and working on political and social issues, and to develop a common praxis, focussing on interactive activities. The active participation of citizens in their respective societies and across borders will increase their awareness of common global challenges and necessary (global) solutions. This should foster the idea that “dialogue” is less a discourse about differences but rather a form of “joint action” on common problems.

The Austrian Foreign Ministry therefore seeks to intensify its activities during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 in the following fields:

#### **“Islam in Europe – European Islam”:**

- Muslim Women in Europe – Identity, religion and politics [trends in modern Islamic thinking; rights, roles and rules of participation for women in Muslim organisations in Europe and in Muslim political organisations abroad]; a series of lectures.
- Muslim Youth in Europe – Local identities and global ideas [Inter-cultural dialogue of Muslim youth within Europe; role and use of the Internet in shaping Muslim discourse Muslim youth and religious authorities; developing a common agenda with other, non-Muslim youth organisations in Europe]; a series of seminars.
- Muslims in the Balkans – Austria intends to integrate the Balkans and its Muslim communities more intensively in inter-cultural discourse and co-operation; a conference on developing the intercultural dimension of future EU foreign policy is being organised by the Austrian EUNIC Presidency (Austrian Foreign Ministry) , in cooperation with the European Cultural Foundation (EFC) and the Slovenian Foreign Ministry. The third sector, artists and intellectuals will all play an important role within the conference, which is to take place in 2008 during the Slovenian European Council Presidency.
- Religions and European identity; a conference or lecture series.
- Inter-faith dialogue between religious primary and secondary school teachers as multipliers; a conference.

#### **Co-operation with EuroMed partners:**

- Dialogue projects within the context of EuroMed/Anna Lindh Foundation to raise awareness of common traditions and goals by means of scientific and arts events.

### **“Dialogue” strategy and conflict resolution:**

- Supporting dialogue strategies for conflict resolution and peace building in the Middle East with particular emphasis on the role of women (a follow-up to the international conference “Women Leaders – Networking for Peace and Security in the Middle East, 30-31 May, Vienna);
- Media training and confidence-building measures for women journalists from the Middle East and Europe.
- “Reformist Islam” - A network (data collection) of reformist Islamic teachers, academics and publishers which can be referred to when such issues become topical (cartoon crises, 9/11)

### **EUNIC/ European National Institutes for Culture:**

- Under the Austrian EUNIC Presidency, the EUNIC Project Proposal “miss understanding” for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 was elaborated and submitted to the European Commission in July 2007. A short-film competition about intercultural misunderstandings entitled “miss understanding” is to be launched in early 2008 in as many European countries as possible. Winners will be chosen on a national basis and will receive the opportunity to produce a DVD. Selected productions will be used to produce pedagogical material on intercultural dialogue.

## **5.5 Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI)**

[www.bmi.gv.at](http://www.bmi.gv.at)

### **Activities of the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Austria**

#### **1. Integration Platform - Integration Report - Activities**

On the basis of the current government programme for 2007 to 2010 an “integration platform” was presented in October 2007, which is coordinated by the Federal Minister of the Interior. The Ministry of the Interior has already drawn up a report on the current situation in cooperation with external experts. This report comprises eight chapters, including one on the topic of “Culture and Media” focusing, in particular, on “intercultural dialogue”.

The presentation is followed by a broad public discussion of the report via the Internet and within the framework of public events. This process is to result in an “integration strategy for Austria”, which will also serve to promote “intercultural dialogue”. In this context, a broad range of activities is being planned by the Ministry of the Interior, including an integration symposium, panel discussions, a series of information events throughout Austria, etc.

#### **2. The European Integration Fund (EIF)**

Within the framework of the general programme on “**Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows**”, the “**European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals**” was set up by Council Decision 2007/435/EC of 25 June 2007 for the period 2007 to 2013.

In its multi-annual programme, Austria has identified intercultural dialogue as a special priority. The Year of Intercultural Dialogue will provide an opportunity for the implementation of first projects in this area. Special emphasis will be placed on promoting intercultural dialogue at the local level and in everyday life.

### **3. A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE – Awareness Training for the Austrian Police**

In 2001, a first cooperation agreement was concluded between the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which was aimed at creating a network of trainers and implementing a range of initial and further training measures (A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Programme) to emphasise the importance of an unprejudiced attitude among the Austrian police. The programme was designed to enable police to meet the special demands encountered in their daily work in a world of social and intercultural diversity. Thus, their ability to interact sensitively and professionally on a basis of respect and understanding is to be strengthened.

Within the framework of Federal Minister Günther Platter's visit to the United States in the autumn of 2007, the programme was evaluated and a strategic plan was drawn up for its further implementation until 2009. A total of 30 seminars/training courses, co-organised by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and ADL, are to be held each year in 2008 and 2009. The seminars were originally scheduled for two days each, but have now been extended to three days.

#### **4. "Intercultural Communication" Seminar**

Under the heading of "Intercultural Communication – An Encounter with Different Cultures", the Security Academy of the Federal Ministry of the Interior will organise two seminars in 2008 (30 June – 4 July 2008 and 20 – 24 October 2008) targeted at civil servants working in areas which involve frequent contacts with ethnic minorities and/or refugees.

#### **5. Course on "Intercultural Conflict Management"**

The Federal Ministry of the Interior also supports the course on "Intercultural Conflict Management" organised by the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF).

## **Activities of the Federal Ministry of the Interior at European Level**

### **1. Intercultural Dialogue within the Framework of the Brdo Process**

For 2008, the Ministry of the Interior is planning an "Intercultural Dialogue and Security" project within the framework of the Brdo Process (Albania, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FYROM, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey). The countries of the Brdo Process cooperate in different areas, which also include the fight against international terrorism. In this context, intercultural dialogue is regarded as an essential instrument to prevent radicalisation and recruitment for terrorist organisations.

Within the framework of the “Intercultural Dialogue and Internal Security” project, the Ministers of the Interior of the Brdo Region are pursuing the following objectives:

- promoting intercultural dialogue in their countries, the region of the Brdo Process and beyond,
- exchanging national experience,
- developing an “Intercultural Dialogue and Internal Security” concept for the 2008 Brdo Conference,
- and thus making a joint contribution to the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008.

## **2. Western Balkans Conference 2008**

Another major event to be held in Austria in 2008 is the Western Balkans Security Conference. Intercultural dialogue and the conclusions to be drafted on this topic will be a major item on the agenda. The Ministers of the region, Vice-President of the European Commission Franco Frattini, the Ministers of the “Salzburg Forum” (besides Austria, the Forum comprises Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) as well as US Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff will be invited to the conference.

## **5.6 Federal Ministry of Science and Research (BMWF)**

[www.bmwf.gv.at](http://www.bmwf.gv.at)

As agents of innovative and critical thinking, higher education institutions play an important role in strengthening intercultural dialogue. Research provides the basis for an informed scholarly dialogue.

The Intercultural Competencies MA program of the Danube University Krems since 2002 takes up challenges of current developments such as the growth of the European Union, the integration of immigrants and the consequences of a globalizing economy. The two-year program presents theoretical insights and methods of analysing and interpreting these changes, reflects upon its impact, offers orientation in ongoing processes of change, and provides skills and expertise in navigating in an increasingly interconnected world.

In the area of research the focus during the Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 will be on expert meetings and academic debate between students, graduates and researchers.

The Ministry of Science and Research will support the project "Vienna International Christian Islamic Summer University" which will take place in summer 2008 at the University of Vienna. The Vienna International Christian Islamic Summer University is a three week summer programme, organised by the University of Vienna. It aims at bringing together students and graduates from a number of partner institutions in Christian and Muslim countries. It evolved from the “Vienna International Christian-Islamic Round Table”, an academic initiative launched in 2000 by academics from different fields of specialisation, such as law, theology and social sciences, in order to discuss the most important questions concerning our today’s world, from a Christian and from a Muslim perspective. Students will participate in courses offered both by senior professors and highly qualified younger lecturers in the field of law, theology and social sciences. The topics contain questions of law and morality in the modern world focusing on Christian, Islamic and secular perspectives.

The Research Cluster “Cultures in Contact” of the University of Innsbruck implements interdisciplinary research projects, seminars and lectures related to intercultural dialogue. During the academic year 2007/08 the focus lies on the reflection of stereotypes and the creative power of migration.

The exhibition project „Breaking the Stereotype“ deals with the ways Orient and Occident have been stereotyped by each other. The project consists of three subsequent work stages from 2007 to 2009/2010, each of which will end with an exhibition in Innsbruck or Istanbul.

The project “Migration Literature in France 1981-2006” aims at providing the first dictionary of “migrant authors” in France. The results of this data-based research will be disseminated in a series of educational and didactic events organised by the Innsbruck research cluster “Cultures in Contact” in 2008.

The project “Literatur-Land-Karte Tirol” is carried out by the research institute Brenner-Archiv and supported by the research cluster “Cultures in Contact”. The research focuses on the influence and the interrelations between authors from various countries and cultures who wrote about Tyrol and Tyrolean writers. In 2008 the projects results will be made accessible in internet (eTourism Competence Center Austria) and published in a book.

## **5.7 Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMSK)**

[www.bmsk.gv.at](http://www.bmsk.gv.at)

The Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection sees intercultural dialogue as an important contribution towards promoting solidarity, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, as well as towards safeguarding social justice and social participation by way of integration.

Awareness-building measures and support for constructive dialogue are to be used to promote mutual understanding, tolerance and knowledge about different cultures and values, as well as to contribute towards the avoidance of conflict.

Within the framework of lifelong learning, the Federal Ministry of Social Affairs and Consumer Protection is responsible for consumer protection and education for older people; in this context, educational measures which focus on intercultural dialogue constitute an important contribution towards improved information, integration, strengthening civil society and social participation.

Above all, professionally conducted, low-threshold projects that keep participation requirements to a minimum and are oriented to people’s surroundings and their everyday lives, should increase understanding of the actual circumstances under which people live and the needs they have, leading to improved co-existence with others.

## 5.8 Austrian Integration Fund (AIF)

[www.integrationsfonds.at](http://www.integrationsfonds.at)

The Austrian Integration Fund, as the main federal organization in charge of the integration of migrants and refugees granted asylum in Austria is through the very nature of its activities committed to intercultural dialogue. Through the practical work with migrants and refugees but also through the multi-cultural composition of the staff, intercultural communication and dialogue is an intrinsic element of the organisation. The goal of our work is the linguistic, economic, social and cultural integration of refugees and migrants into Austrian society.

Meeting the challenge of intercultural dialogue the Austrian Integration Fund is pursuing the following activities during the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008:

### - Training course for intercultural conflict management

The Diploma-course focuses on dealing with intercultural conflicts and tries to enhance the knowledge and experience of those working in multicultural environments.

### - Master of Advanced Studies in Migration Management

The MAS which has been established in cooperation with St. Virgil Salzburg and the University of Salzburg is a postgraduate MAS programme with a particular focus management, migration studies and intercultural/inter-religious communication.

### - Integration and Sports

Within this initiative the Austrian Integration Fund aimed at the integration of migrants and refugees granted asylum into established sports associations in Austria. Sport is seen as one of the most efficient ways to foster mutual cultural understanding and to reinforce language skills. Efforts to pursue the current activities as well as the development of further projects in this field are planned for 2008.

### - Public Relations

Informing the general public about realities of migration and integration is an essential part of fostering and intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. Previous activities have included the production of a DVD for schools documenting the history of migration to Austria, publication of a new quarterly magazine on migration and integration issues and organizing numerous debating-events. Within the year 2008 existing efforts are to be continued and an increased outreach to general public through various PR-campaigns is in preparation.

## 5.9 Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)

<http://wko.at>

As today's business world consolidates, and contacts between people from different cultural backgrounds throughout the world become ever closer, the call for effective intercultural dialogue becomes more important than ever. This is more than just a question of maintaining cultural identities; it is about cultural diversity causing people to understand themselves and others better, to rethink their own attitudes, and to experience the potential for new ideas that this dynamic process creates.

## Initiatives of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber

- **It's never too early to think about exporting!**

Trading in goods, services, capital and expertise is decisive factor in the economic development of small economies, such as that of Austria. The export economy provides over one million jobs in Austria. Key to its success are its innovative entrepreneurs and employees, who see globalisation as an opportunity and a challenge. The foundation for this for way of thinking is laid in the education of children and young people. It is today's schoolchildren who will be generating the success of Austria's businesses on the world market in the foreseeable future and, in doing so, securing our economic prosperity, Austria as a business location, as well as Austrian jobs.

Under the motto "Export is everybody's business", the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour have launched the initiative "**go international**", which aims to give schoolchildren of all ages and at all levels of education a better understanding of this important topic by means of informative presentations and events. Homepage: [www.go-international.at](http://www.go-international.at)

- **Publications, presentations, teacher training workshops and events** (also in foreign languages) on various topics relating to foreign trade
- **Press relations and surveys** by the Institute for Research on Qualifications and Training of the Austrian Economy (IBW), e.g. on the need for foreign language skills
- **Support for work experience schemes abroad** for students, apprentices and schoolchildren within and outside Europe.

## **5.10 Chamber of Labour (AK)**

[www.arbeiterkammer.at](http://www.arbeiterkammer.at)

Intercultural dialogue is a valuable instrument, with the aid of which the integration goals of society can be achieved. The activities of the Federal Chamber of Labour in this context include the organisation of specialist conferences and working groups, the award of commissions to carry out studies, providing funding for dissertations, the support of cultural activities and projects as well as cooperation with NGOs and migrants' own organisations.

The Federal Chamber of Labour represents the interests of 3 million employees and consumers in Austria. Together with the nine Chambers of Labour in each Austrian province, the following main tasks are fulfilled:

### **a) Fundamental research for the benefit of workers and consumers**

The Chambers of Labour employ a staff of highly qualified experts who act as a think-tank for employees' interests, conducting studies on a wide range of relevant issues. The Chambers of Labour thus always have an up-to-date scientific basis for effective policy-making on behalf of employees.

### **b) Participation in and control of legislation**

Through the Chambers of Labour, Austrian employees and consumers participate in the legislative process. The Chambers of Labour evaluate draft legislation from the point of view of employees' interests, make proposals for amendments and are subsequently involved in the implementation of these laws.

### **c) Services**

The Chambers of Labour offer a wide range of services to their members. Experts provide information and advice on different issues such as labour law, social insurance, tax law, women's and family policy, worker protection, the protection of apprentices and young workers, unemployment insurance, and consumer protection. In labour-law disputes between employees and employers the Chambers of Labour provide legal assistance ranging from oral or written interventions with employers to free representation of employees before the Labour and Social Tribunals. Furthermore, The Chambers of Labour co-finance activities in the fields of education, vocational training and adult education as well as the training of officials in the labour movement, and organise exhibitions, film screenings, theatre performances and concerts.

### **d) International presentation**

On the European level, the Chamber of Labour has delegated representatives to the European Economic Social Committee and various committees and advisory bodies dealing with issues of social and education policy.

As part of its commitment to promoting cultural activities during the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the Chamber of Labour will support a **theatre** project in the theatre *Theater Akzent* in Vienna in February 2008. Information about further activities planned within the framework of the EU Year 2008 will be published in the Chamber of Labour's **homepage and in its magazine "AK für Sie"**.

## **5.11 Federation of Austrian Industries (IV)**

[www.industriellenvereinigung.at](http://www.industriellenvereinigung.at)

The Federation of Austrian Industries not only assumes a responsibility towards industry but also towards the whole of society and has therefore traditionally addressed political, economic and social topic areas that it considers significant for the positioning Austria as a location for industry. The comprehensive educational programme "Zukunft der Bildung – Schule 2020" ("The future of education – Schools in 2020") consists of seven visions that deal with those measures that would need to be taken, from the point of view of industry, to remodel the school system in order to successfully meet the challenges of changing living conditions in Europe. This takes into consideration the – partly dramatic – changes in basic conditions in the fields of internationalisation, migration and linguistic competence, as well as in the areas of children and young people, and new media and communication. Linguistic diversity, intercultural interaction and the international character of modern life present, at the same time, enormous opportunities as well as exciting challenges.

The position paper "Creating Living Space Together – The Future of Migration and Integration in Austria", published by the Federation of Austrian Industries, constitutes an example of the extent to which the Federation pays serious attention to this topic. Austria was, and still is, a country of immigration, which has been very beneficial for

its economy and society. Integration is a reciprocal process that can only be successfully furthered by means of intercultural dialogue.

#### **Initiatives of the Federation of Austrian Industries:**

- Publications, talks, events
- Teacher training
- Studies
- Marketing and communication
- Position papers
- Grants from the Dr. Franz Josef Mayer-Gunthof Trust (grants for dissertations and/or (post-)doctoral theses on economic topics in one of the languages listed below or for students who, in the course of their studies, deal closely with one of the countries listed below and to this end learn, or have learnt, the language of that country (involving a stay or study abroad). The following countries are included: Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Rumania, Russia, Serbia & Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.

### **5.12 Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB)**

[www.oegb.at](http://www.oegb.at)

In the context of “intercultural dialogue” the main activities of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions focus on intercultural exchange in border regions as well as on further training for employees, employee representatives and full-time trade union officials in border regions. Project examples include: “Gemeinsam erweitern” (“Growing together”) and “Grenzraum aktiv” (“Active border areas”).

In addition, the Federal Provinces of Carinthia, Burgenland and Upper Austria are extremely active in individual projects that interact with border regions. The Austrian Chamber of Labour’s Campaign Unit continues to see its focus on anti-racism as being of great relevance. One particularly noteworthy highlight is the board game “Vom Wort zur Tat” (“From words to deeds”): players have to answer questions and convince their fellow players with their responses. The game serves as an introduction to the topic of anti-discrimination. Individual projects promoting communication between Austrian and foreign nationals working together is a particular priority of the trade union Vida, especially because of the high proportion of people with a migrant background working in the hotel and catering trade, as well as in the personal services sector.

In the context of trade union training in particular (run by VÖGB, the Training Association of Austrian Trade Unions), seminars for trade union representatives also address the issue of “intercultural competence”. The scope of this training ranges from anti-racism and anti-discrimination seminars to acquiring communicative skills for participating in international forums. Training materials have been developed within the framework of the VÖGB distance study programme, e.g. “Migration” and “Racism at work”. In addition to these materials, an anti-discrimination guide, “How to deal with racist and sexist comments”, has also been produced. A simulation game called “miramix” is used to make schoolchildren aware of how “being different” can lead to conflicts and to provide possible solutions for dealing with these.

Depending on the availability of EU funding, a project is planned for 2008 in connection with these issues: a web-based tutorial about the different behavioural patterns of the nationalities represented in international bodies, as well as behaviour and communication guidelines for employee representatives at company level.

Similarly, a project with a cultural focus is also planned: "The Culture Train. Central Europe on a journey of self-discovery. An ambitious project for young people and young workers". This project will visit communities throughout Austria, as well as in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Italy and Germany, with the objective of intercultural exchange.

## 5.13 City of Vienna

[www.stadt-wien.at](http://www.stadt-wien.at)

The City of Vienna regularly supports and provides a substantial amount of funding for measures designed to promote mutual understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds and to enhance how they live together. This is achieved by means of awareness-raising activities, mediation and dialogue. Such programmes and topics are also integrated into what the City has to offer by way of official cultural activities.

### Examples of sponsoring and activities provided by the City of Vienna

In the field of cultural affairs, financial support is available from the City of Vienna's Municipal Department 7, Unit for Annual Intercultural Events, as well as from Vienna's Municipal Districts. Examples of projects that have received support include: Festival World Music, Salam Orient, klezMORE, Balkan Fever, Wiener Festwochen, Aktionsradius Augarten, SoHo in Ottakring, AfriCult.

In the field of education and out-of-school youth work (including adult education), institutions that are either involved in a range of intercultural activities themselves or in providing financial support for such activities include, among others: Municipal Department 13, the Wien Xtra Association, the Vienna Youth Centres Association (e.g. Bassena 10), public libraries (book readings and other events, also in different languages), as well as the Vienna Association of Adult Education Centres (programmes, events, and courses, e.g. interculturality and communication).

The Press and Information Service of the City of Vienna (PID) provides financial support for media initiatives run by members of the immigrant community, e.g. the private TV channel OKTO.

Municipal Department 17, which is responsible for integration and diversity issues, focuses explicitly on intercultural dialogue in its wide range of activities and measures. The main emphasis of this is to be found in its community development work on the local level, i.e. in the regions, districts and neighbourhoods, and consists of numerous initiatives, platforms, forums for inter-religious dialogue, etc.

In addition, Municipal Department 17 provides financial support for numerous projects and initiatives run by non-governmental organisations and associations that promote respectful co-existence and intercultural dialogue and help people to get to know each other through conversation and joint undertakings.

## 5.14 Association of Austrian Cities and Towns

[www.staedtebund.at](http://www.staedtebund.at)

Integration constitutes a challenge for all aspects of society and, as such, will take on an even more central role for the Association of Austrian Cities and Towns over the next few years. In the interest of sustainability, the Association of Austrian Cities and Towns will also continue to focus its attention on this issue beyond the EU Year 2008. The implementation of integration measures places considerable demands on towns and cities in particular, creating a need for support from public bodies at all levels of government. At the Conference of Cities and Towns on 1 June 2007 a resolution was adopted which takes into account the issue of integration as follows:

The Austrian Association of Cities and Towns

- perceives the integration of immigrants as an opportunity for local communities, with cities and towns having the greatest interest in successful integration;
- points out that problems arising in the course of the integration process can only be solved by an integration policy based on cooperation between federal, regional and local authorities, particularly in the policy areas of schools, the labour market and housing;
- calls for the establishment of a coordination centre on a federal level to support and promote integration measures, especially in cities, towns and metropolitan areas.

## 5.15 Austrian Commission for UNESCO (ÖUK)

[www.unesco.at](http://www.unesco.at)

Intercultural Dialogue is immanent to all UNESCO activities. In relation to 2008, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO plans the following activities:

- Continuation of the awarding of Austrian projects, meeting the international criteria of the UN-Decade "Education for Sustainable Development". The projects are collected in a data base, an evaluation is foreseen.
- Implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, particularly through workshops and public discussions within cultural events all over Austria.
- Contribution to the International Year of Languages:
- Holding a major conference (200 members) around the public presentation of the Austrian Languages Profiling Report about "Language Policy in Austria"
- Holding some 4-5 regional workshops in Austria about mother tongue education, including teachers and parents.
- Activities of the UNESCO-Schools, e.g. creating language profiles of their schools etc.
- Development of a webpage

## 5.16 Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

[www.ada.gv.at](http://www.ada.gv.at)

The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) welcomes the initiative to hold a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and is participating in the Austrian National Committee in order to support nationwide planning and co-ordination efforts. The ADA has launched a call for proposals inviting civil society organisations to send in applications for the funding of projects which especially address the links between development issues and issues of intercultural communication.

An amount of up to **1 million Euro** from the 2008 ordinary budget for development education and public awareness-raising activities on development issues has been reserved for this call for proposals. In particular, ADA wants to support the conceptual development of intercultural dialogue and, in this context, has therefore already financed a start-up workshop on content-based issues, which took place in Vienna on 13 June 2007.

It is of special interest for ADA that these projects address new target groups and are, at least partly, carried out together with partners who have so far not been involved in this field.

The ADA will also fund special activities run by the Austrian Orient Society in connection with Islamic issues.

Last but not least, ADA is co-operating with the Austrian UNESCO Commission and the Global Education Network Europe (GENE) in matters relating to this European Year.

## 5.17 Austrian National Youth Council

[www.jugendvertretung.at](http://www.jugendvertretung.at)

As the representative body of more than 40 Austrian youth organisations, the Austrian National Youth Council welcomes the proclamation of the European Year and sees its main focus, “intercultural dialogue”, as an opportunity to continue to actively pursue the ideas and objectives of its current European “*all different – all equal*” youth campaign for *diversity, human rights and participation* in a sustainable way in the coming year.

Working with children and young people from diverse cultural backgrounds reveals on a day-to-day basis the opportunities, as well as the challenges, this involves. The Austrian National Youth Council actively promotes the presentation of the cultural diversity in our society in a positive light. The intention here is not to ignore the social problems involved, but to enable (young) people – by means of youth work, amongst other things – to deal with diversity without discriminating against “others”.

When discussing “intercultural dialogue“, the Austrian National Youth Council believes it is important to avoid referring to homogeneous groups and to point out complexities instead: not only identifying any differences but also the similarities between individuals and social groups. The Austrian National Youth Council calls for an open definition of culture that not only refers to national origin, ethnicity and religion, but also takes into consideration other dimensions such as sex/gender, sexual orientation, physical ability and socio-economic background.

“Intercultural dialogue” is reliant on the participation of a variety of different people; it cannot be based on any kind of hierarchical structure and should be founded on the principle of equal opportunities. Therefore, the structural environment is a key factor for the success of any such dialogue – be it in schools, on the labour market, in youth work, national politics or in public discourse (media). Within the scope of our activities, we will also actively lobby for these aspects to be discussed in the course of the European Year.

In November 2007 we will be hosting a symposium on “Diversity & Participation” in intercultural youth work as a training opportunity for people working in this field. Furthermore, we are planning a panel discussion on the above-mentioned issues, as well as an international seminar on intercultural skills in 2008.

## **5.18 Vienna Integration Conference – Networking Centre**

[www.wik-vernetzungsbuero.at](http://www.wik-vernetzungsbuero.at)

Approximately half a million people of migrant background live and work in Vienna. They make a considerable contribution towards the diversity in Austria and growth of the country. Migration is a fact of European life. In a modern Europe it is necessary to strengthen the legal status of migrants, their human rights, their right to equal treatment, and their dignity, as well as to recognise migration as a resource and a contribution towards the wealth of a country.

The Networking Centre of the Vienna Integration Conference (WIK-VB) was established in 2004. The elected board of directors consists of a total of seven people from Asia, Africa and Latin America. The Vienna Integration Conference–Networking Centre, which comprises over 130 founding member organisations and represents the interests of migrant organisations, is the largest and the first association of its kind in Austrian history. Its current membership totals over 180 member organisations.

Genuine integration is a process that affects the whole society and, as such, should be supported by all those involved. To guarantee the long-term success of this socio-political challenge, the active involvement of civil society is also necessary. In this context, the potential of migrant organisations takes on a particular significance.

The Vienna Integration Conference–Networking Centre sees itself as:

- an organisation which promotes cooperation between migrant organisations, as well as between these organisations and other institutions
- a contact point for the City of Vienna, other NGOs and governmental organisations
- an opinion-leading forum for migrant organisations
- a network and advisory body for NGOs in the field of migration and integration.

The Vienna Integration Conference–Networking Centre considers respectful dialogue between all parties involved and reducing communication problems and prejudices as the only way towards a peaceful form of living together.

Among the objectives of the Vienna Integration Conference–Networking Centre are the improvement in the general living and working conditions of immigrants,

improvement in the quality of public debate on the topic of migration/immigrants, strengthening the participation of migrants in decision-making processes in society. By means of its various activities and initiatives, from a series of lectures to radio programmes and running its own educational institution (The Diversity Academy), the Vienna Integration Conference–Networking Centre strives to show that migrants constitute a valuable asset for Austrian society.

## **5.19 Syndicate of Authors (IG Autorinnen und Autoren)**

[www.literaturhaus.at/lh/ig/](http://www.literaturhaus.at/lh/ig/)

“Cultural diversity“ refers to the manifold ways in which groups and communities express their respective cultures. These forms of expression are passed on within – as well as between – these groups and communities.

In an Austrian context, this predominantly involves the following issues:

first of all, the (long-standing) historical components of cultural diversity in Austria;

secondly, the current role of Austria as a country of immigration as a result of economic migration and/or asylum seeking;

thirdly, the presence in Austria in particular of artists and intellectuals due to increased international mobility;

fourthly, the contrasts within different cultures in today’s society as a whole (sub-cultures, generations, religions, languages, sexes, socio-economic positions).

In order to deal with such cultural diversity in a sensible manner it is necessary, first of all, for this diversity to be perceived and accepted as such. A logical consequence of this is that all of these forms of cultural expression are given the opportunity to be put into practice; on no account should obstacles be placed in their way. This is of particular relevance in the field of art.

## **5.20 Austrian Filmmakers Association**

[www.filmschaffende.at](http://www.filmschaffende.at)

Film is a global language and a way of telling stories which deals with the circumstances of people's lives. A large number of projects are produced internationally; international teams are commonplace. Cultures and the tensions between them frequently provide material for feature films and documentaries in particular. In this way, film is *per se* a medium of intercultural dialogue.

Documentaries and feature films (short films) can take on an important role in communicating the objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, as the content of these films is made up of the actual circumstances under which people live. Using narrative and emotionalization, they present the conflicts between the individual and society, gender differences and the tension between cultures.

The Austrian Filmmakers Association is discussing and outlining joint projects in this context with those responsible in publicly owned television stations in Austria. Such projects are to be carried out as far as possible using actors who can be seen as representative of the target audience (people with a migrant background, people with a certain distance to intercultural issues, and people with a constructive approach towards dealing with integration).

Other relevant projects could include, for example, smaller projects that could be used repetitively, as in a campaign. These plans should be implemented by autumn.

## 5.21 IG Kultur Österreich

[www.igkultur.at](http://www.igkultur.at)

Intercultural dialogue can only take place when the meanings of both concepts are taken into consideration when it is implemented.

Dialogue is a form of communication between equal partners, an exchange of content at the same levels of power and hierarchy. Intercultural in this context means that dialogue partners come together along their diverse cultural distinguishing features.

Under these conditions, the IG Kultur Österreich promotes intercultural dialogue not only via conferences, workshops and publications ([www.igkultur.at/transfer](http://www.igkultur.at/transfer)), but also through the observation and analysis of social hierarchies, how things are portrayed in the media, and the political decision-making process.

The result of these observations is that even in those places where intercultural issues are raised and where intercultural decisions are made, this does not always occur in the form of self-advocacy. IG Kultur strives to make the voices of self-organised migrants heard by involving them at an expert level in development and decision-making processes.

## 5.22 Austrian Association of Independent Theatre

[www.freietheater.at](http://www.freietheater.at)

In 2005 the Austrian Association of Independent Theatre organized a meeting joined by 250 theatre makers from 28 countries within and around the new European member states in the Festspielhaus St. Pölten. During this meeting the European Off Network (EON) was founded as informal network of fringe, independent, off theater makers. (A description of the network, the report of this meeting and 20 country reports are available on [www.freietheater.at](http://www.freietheater.at)).

A new awareness of independent theatres' role as "cultural ambassador" and the cultural exchange and development of this role was defined as main goal. Since then visits and exchange of experiences as well as several meetings have taken place, e.g. a meeting with 200 participants from 30 countries in Brescia, Italy in May 2007. In Brescia three main topics were discussed: theatre and/in war; women and/in theatre and theatre and media. As some of the participants came from crisis regions, for example from Israel, Palestine, Kosovo and Serbia, the political conflicts could be discussed out of the horizon of theatre work and a "third space" besides the totality of conflict could be established. This was an amazing experience for all participants and the Austrian Association of Independent Theatre hopes to organize further discussions as well as a follow-up meeting in 2008. It is also planned to invite theatre makers from Palestine, Israel, Kosovo and Serbia to Vienna for performances related to intercultural dialog.

During a meeting in Belgrade at the end of September 2007 the further activities of the European Off Network were planned. The Austrian Association of Independent Theatre is currently in search of partners for the organization of the international theatre meeting and the invitation of artists in the framework of the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

## 5.23 Austrian Federation of Community Radios

[www.freie-radios.at](http://www.freie-radios.at)

The Austrian Federation of Community Radios has adopted “**10 Years of Intercultural Dialogue in Community Radio**” as the theme for its 10-year anniversary celebrations. Above and beyond this, Community Radio is very actively involved in the shaping of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 in Austria. In cooperation with the National Committee, the visibility of multilingual programmes that were until now only accessible to a local audience is to be enhanced. The homepage of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue will provide access to the range of multilingual radio programmes available, opening up local broadcasting to a wider audience via Internet streaming. The Year of Intercultural Dialogue will also be reflected in a series of specific programmes. Within the Project ‘**Radio Dialogues – Voices of Diversity**’ the Community Radio will develop a new, multilingual programming format, the content of which focuses on aspects of intercultural dialogue in local contexts. In cooperation with other social, cultural and educational initiatives and institutions, the Community Radio stations will organize eight intercultural festivals, which above all aim to promote personal interaction between different cultures and to turn intercultural dialogue into a tangible experience for people (see Communication Strategy p. 27).

Furthermore, Radiofabrik, the Community Radio Station in Salzburg, is coordinating an international radio campaign for language learning, which is strongly related to football and the EURO 2008. The project "I speak football" is financed by the European Union (LINGUA programme) and produces multilingual radio spots with football stars in order to promote language learning and intercultural dialogue among (young) football fans. The spots will be broadcast by radio stations all over Europe and in football clubs, as well as at several events around the EURO 2008 in Austria.

## 6 Best practice

Numerous projects, initiatives, publications, teaching material and homepages illustrate the relevance of the topic of intercultural dialogue in Austria. Best practice projects in the fields of education, culture and youth will be continued, complemented or expanded throughout the EU year.

A wide range of best practice examples are presented in the online calendar of events on the official Austrian website of the EU Year. Best practice projects will also be presented in April and May during the Dialogue Tour throughout Austria.

## 7 Communication strategy

The National Coordinating Body (Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture) has elaborated the communication strategy in cooperation with the National Committee and the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF). The aim is to work together with numerous institutions, local radio stations and local/regional print and online media, and to make use of networks or existing communication channels, in order to reach the largest possible target group.

## **7.1 Elements of the communication strategy**

### **✓ Information and networking**

The Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture has been informing and sensitising institutions in the fields of culture, education and youth (cultural institutions, schools, universities and adult education institutes, NGOs, media, ministries, local and regional authorities, etc.), since 2006 in preparation for the planned Year in 2008.

With the support of these institutions, references, information and best-practice examples are to be published on relevant websites and in articles in specialized journals and other publications before and during the EU Year.

### **✓ Calendar of events and website**

During the EU Year a printed calendar of events and a website provide information on the activities that will take place during the Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2008. The online calendar of events is updated throughout the year ([www.interkultureller-dialog-2008.at](http://www.interkultureller-dialog-2008.at)).

### **✓ Branding the Year of Intercultural Dialogue**

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue has been established as a brand – for instance, by organizing annual calls for ideas and competitions in connection with this theme (e.g. Europe at School, EDC Action Days, etc.)

### **✓ Events**

A national launch event in February, as well as thematic weeks in April, September and November 2008, and further high-visibility events and projects take place. These events are prepared and implemented in cooperation with the National Committee.

### **✓ Good-will ambassadors**

Well-known figures from the fields of education, arts, culture, media, science and sports have been invited to act as "good-will ambassadors" to draw attention to and stimulate interest in the Year. Cross-references are made to the European Football Championship 2008 (fair play and intercultural dialogue in sports).

### **✓ Media work**

Public relation work and cooperation with television, radio and print media give visibility to the aims and the activities of the EYID 2008. The Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and the Association of Community Radios are members of the National Committee.

## 7.2 Main media partners in the implementation of the Communication strategy

### Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF)

[www.orf.at](http://www.orf.at)

As a public broadcasting entity, it is of particular concern to the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation ORF to highlight the chances and opportunities offered by migration, integration and cultural diversity.

Apart from reporting on current developments, which are usually only a reflection of a longer-lasting process, the task of the ORF is to look behind the scenes and to get to the bottom of these developments. The mechanisms of migration and integration and the resulting need for intercultural dialogue have to be explained to the consumers of the media, and populist statements have to be questioned. The ORF as a public value broadcaster views it as one of its key tasks to help its audience to understand and appreciate this set of themes, which is so important for the development of our society and for the future of the European integration process. This is achieved via discussions, reports, documentaries, films and forums.

The ORF is therefore highlighting migration/integration in all of its media in **Spring 2008**. This **special focus on migration/integration** deals in depth with the opportunities and chances, but also with the unsettled issues related to immigration.

A key element of the ORF's contribution to the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is the **Dialogue Tour 2008** jointly developed with the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture. The objective and the central theme of this tour, which will **cover all nine Austrian provinces**, is to highlight **visibility for** the promotion of **intercultural dialogue**, which is also particularly emphasised in the EU objectives for this focus year.

It is planned to present the topic to the public on a main stage as well as in six further event areas in the form of partner- and theme tents. This is to include both fixed installations and programme items as well as moderated and locally variable events, performances, discussions, audience games etc.

In addition to the off-air activities, the Dialogue Tour is to be accompanied by **further marketing measures** such as radio, television and newspaper adverts.

In order to position this project optimally with regard to other major events, **April 2008** would be a suitable time.

### Association of Community Radios Austria

[www.freie-radios.at](http://www.freie-radios.at)

There are currently twelve community radio stations broadcasting in Austria. Their programmes are compiled by 2500 volunteer broadcasters in 25 languages. Community radio stations provide the only opportunity in the media for numerous representatives of migrant communities to express themselves in their own languages. Above and beyond this, community radio stations also encourage the provision of multilingual programme formats and cooperation between different language groups, thus creating a "multi-ethnic public sphere".

Community radio stations create communicative spaces for intercultural dialogue and

media experiments. They promote the building of bridges between diverse social, cultural and linguistic groups, as well as between minorities and the majority of the population. This commitment is reflected in many EU projects in cooperation with schools, adult education and social and cultural institutions. In this way, community radio stations not only create a place of intercultural learning for various skills, they also promote social integration and the active involvement of citizens in their local community.

As part of the Communication Campaign the Community Radios have submitted the project '**Radio Dialogues – Voices of Diversity**' within the restricted call for projects for the Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The project will be carried out by the Austrian Federation of Community Radios (Verband Freier Radios Österreich) and co-financed by the Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture.

People with migrant backgrounds living in Austria will be actively involved in implementing the project and are at the same time an important target group.

The aim of the project is ongoing and creative cooperation between people from different cultural contexts through the establishment of intercultural editorial teams at six independent non-commercial radio stations in Austria. The main activities are the regular production of multilingual radio magazine programmes, networking and communication via an interactive online platform. In cooperation with other social, cultural and educational initiatives and institutions, the Community Radio stations will organize intercultural festivals in eight Austrian towns.

The project 'Radio Dialogues – Voices of Diversity' promotes active citizenship and intercultural dialogue as well as understanding between cultural, linguistic and social groups. In this way, it makes an important contribution to the EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 and creates synergies to the UN Year of Languages 2008.

(See also the contribution of Community Radio in the chapter "National Committee 6: Contributions of Partner Institutions").

### **DerStandard.at**

<http://www.derstandard.at/integration>

An intensive discussion of various aspects of intercultural dialogue is planned in cooperation with the Austrian daily newspaper *Der Standard* and, in particular, with its Internet medium *derstandard.at* over the longer term. The media platform <http://derstandard.at> is one of the largest in Austria, with a coverage of 16% of the population and over one million users per month.

Articles dealing with topics related to the 2008 EU Year will appear on a monthly basis, including editorial articles, announcements of events and the presentation of specific projects, thus reaching a wide public, not only in Austria but also beyond its borders.

## **8 Sustainability**

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue follows the EU Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007. It represents a transition to a possible European Year of Creativity and Innovation in 2009. Austria strongly supports the Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009 and welcomes the opportunity to create synergies between 2008 and 2009, as well as to promote sustainable projects extending beyond the EU Years 2008 and 2009.

Further factors for ensuring the sustainability of the activities of the EU year in 2008:

- Ø Close cooperation and networking between the fields of education, culture and youth.
- Ø Inclusion of and cooperation with key players in Austria.
- Ø A focus on reciprocal exchange and learning from each other to multiply the effects and to incorporate it into the system in a sustainable way.
- Ø The aspect of sustainability will also be an important criterion in the (co-) financing of projects.