HANDBOOK ON TOLERANCE & CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN EUROPE

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WHY THIS HANDBOOK

At a time of financial and economic crisis in Europe and elsewhere, students may feel the stress of their parents coupled with rising economic and social insecurity. For many there is also a sense of powerlessness and of things being 'out of control' – the financial markets seem more powerful than national governments, the welfare state seems at risk, many people wonder whether they will ever get a pension, others are unemployed. On top of these anxieties there is also a fear that 'unwanted' migration or minorities place additional strains on the system. Such anxieties are not new however.

Europe has experienced increasing tensions between national majorities and ethnic or religious minorities, more particularly with marginalised Muslim communities during the last decade. Such conflicts have included the violence in northern England between native British and Asian Muslim youth (2001); the civil unrest amongst France's disadvantaged youth of immigrant origin (2005); and the Danish cartoon crisis in the same year following the publication of pictures of the prophet Muhammad. Muslim communities have also come under intense scrutiny in the wake of the terrorist events in the United States (2001), Spain (2004) and Britain (2005), and there is growing scepticism amongst European governments with regard to the possible accession of Turkey into the EU, a country which is socio-culturally and religiously different from the present EU-27. Tensions are also exemplified in local mosque building controversies in Italy, Greece, Germany or France in the minaret building controversy in Switzerland (2009) and the ban of the full veil (the *burqa*) in Belgium and France most recently implemented as of 2011.

During this first decade of the 21st century, politicians and academics have been intensively debating the reasons underlying such tensions and what should be done to enhance societal cohesion in European societies. The question that is being posed (sometimes in more and others in less politically correct terms) is: What kind of cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies and how? A number of thinkers and politicians have advanced the claim that it is almost impossible to accommodate certain minority groups - notably Muslims or the Roma - in European countries, asserting that their cultural traditions and religious faith are incompatible with secular democratic governance. Others have argued that Muslims can be accommodated in the socio-political order of European societies provided they adhere to a set of civic values that lie at the heart of European democratic traditions and that reflect the secular nature of society and politics in Europe.

At the turn of the decade, the summer 2011 massacre in Norway and the racially motivated killings in the city of Florence, Italy in December 2011 are a shocking indication of how desperately fearful some people are of social change.

This Handbook seeks to inform and educate youth, to help them understand diversity and talk about it using a common set of terms. It aims to give young people the tools to resolve dilemmas that they may face in their everyday lives and in the future.

The Handbook's targeted readers are high school students **and undergraduate University students between 17 and 23 years of age.** However, the Handbook is also **geared toward teacher-trainers, i.e. it is intended for use in programmes that prepare teachers to serve in high schools in Europe**. While it could be beneficial for teachers of any subject, the Handbook may be most useful to those who are preparing to deliver courses on European civics and citizenship education.

The main purpose of this Handbook is to clarify terms commonly used to talk about diversity. Many terms (such as *nationality*, *national identity* or *citizenship*) have different meanings in different languages, and people regularly talk about them without knowing exactly what they mean. Does *nation*, for example, refer to the citizens of a given country or only to those who are of the same national origin? Does *race* refer to the colour of one's skin or some other physical trait? Or does it refer to a whole set of supposed psychological or mental traits (e.g. 'Indians are clever,' 'Black people are good at sports', 'The Japanese are shy')? Race is often confused with religion, and members of certain religious faiths are frequently characterized as stereotypes (e.g. 'Muslims are cunning', 'Jews are stingy'). Indeed, many of these terms are closely linked to negative stereotypes of minority groups. Some concepts such as *integration*, *multiculturalism* and *intercultural dialogue* are contested, and there is little agreement on what they stand for and how they relate to one another. This Handbook's first objective, then, is to define these terms and, by doing so, to give young people the tools needed to better understand the reality that surrounds them.

Secondly, the Handbook introduces **the concepts and phenomena underpinning fear of diversity**. It seeks to help young people understand the nature of negative behaviours towards diversity, enabling them to distinguish between beliefs and actions that are *xenophobic* and those that are genuinely *racist*. By clarifying such terms and giving appropriate examples, the book tries to foster an understanding of why *xenophobia*, *racism* and *prejudice* have more to do with our own fears rather than the differences of others.

Finally, **the Handbook proposes answers to the challenges of ethnic and religious diversity in everyday life**. Terms like *integration* are often employed to describe very different things, thus resulting in confusion. Integration may mean finding a job (integrating in the labour market), going to school, learning the language of a country, adopting a certain lifestyle or a code of dress (social integration), or indeed voting in elections (political integration). The meaning of the term often gets confused, as some people use it to argue that minorities and immigrants should completely mould into the way of life of the majority. Others understand *integration* to mean that people should adapt to their new environment without giving up their own language or traditions.

Taken as a whole, **this Handbook seeks both to clarify important terms associated with its subject matter and to clearly articulate the principles that should guide democratic life in European societies**. Drawing on examples of conflicts, dilemmas and solutions from different European countries, it provides insights into religious and ethnic diversity at school, at work and in public spaces. Seeking to help students grasp the terms and definitions in the context of real life problems, we hope the Handbook will prove helpful in preparing youth to be the European citizens of tomorrow.

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DIVERSITY IN EUROPE: IMMIGRANTS AND MINORITIES

Europe is often thought of as a group of separate nation-states, each with its own distinct history, culture and identity. It is commonly assumed that every individual Member State is relatively homogeneous internally. However, the reality is quite different. European countries are more internally diverse than many of us are aware.

Since the Second World War and particularly since the early 1950s, northern and western European countries have received immigrants from Asia, Africa and South America in relatively large numbers. Around 5% to 10% of the resident populations of countries like France, Britain, Germany and the Netherlands are foreign born. People with an immigration background now account for about 20% of the total population in these countries.

Following the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, international migration intensified. While redrawing the map of Europe, these geopolitical changes have led to significant population movements. People from 'new' EU Member States (mainly former communist

countries) to the east have moved into the 'old' Member States in the south, north and west. Inflows from other continents have also continued, contributing to an ever-increasing diversity in European societies. This trend has been particularly pronounced in the south. During the last 20 years countries in southern Europe that were previously characterised by emigration (such as Spain, Portugal, Italy and Greece) have become important destination countries for migrants. Currently immigrants constitute 5% to 10% of their resident populations.

In addition to migration-related diversity, EU countries (especially those in central-eastern and south-eastern Europe) have significant populations of native minorities. Many of these minorities have lived in the territories for centuries. In some countries, such as Bulgaria, native minorities (Turkish Muslims and Roma) account for more than 10% of the population. In other countries, traditional minority populations (Ukrainians and Germans in Poland, for example) are comparatively small. One native minority – the Roma – warrant particular attention as they are found in nearly all EU countries. Roma populations range from a few thousand (in Sweden, for instance) to several hundred thousand (as seen in Hungary, Romania, Greece and Bulgaria).

The tables below identify the principal minority and immigrant groups in selected European countries.

Table 1
Native Minorities and Migrant Populations in Countries Experiencing Immigration Since the 1950s and 1960s

Countries	Total population (2009)	Migrant population (size)	Largest immigrant groups (by country or region of origin)	Size	Largest native minorities	Size
Denmark	5.5 million	540,000	Turkey Germany Iraq Poland	60,000 30,000 30,000 28,000	Roma Ethnic Germans Greenlanders	5-10,000 15,000 18,000
France	65 million	4.8 million	Other EU North Africa Sub-Sah.Africa Turkey Rest of world incl. China	2 million 1.5 million 570,000 220,000 600,000	Roma	250-450,000
Germany	81.9 million	15.7 million	Poland Greece Italy Romania Turkey Russian Fed. Africa America North-America Kazakhstan Other Middle-East South and South-East Asia	1.3 million 375,000 717,000 435,000 2.5 million 1 million 477,000 385,000 179,000 656,000 1.2 million 563,000	Roma German Danes Frisians Sorbs	60-70,000 50,000 400,000 60,000
Netherlands	16.3 million	3.35 million (with one foreign born parent)	Turkey Indonesia Morocco Surinam	383,000 382,000 349,000 342,000	Inhabitants of Friesland Inh.of Limburg Roma	644,000 1.12 million 3,500
Sweden	9.3 million	700,000	Iraq Sub Sah.Afr. Former Yugosl. Poland Iran Bosnia Herz.	118,000 80,000 70,000 70,000 60,000 56,000	Roma Meankieli Saami Swedish Finns	30-65,000 40-70,000 17,000 675,000
United Kingdom	61.8 million	4.6 million	Irish * Mixed All 'black' All Asian Other ethnic	90,000 670,000 1,150,000 2,300,000 230,000	--	--

Source: Author's own compilation on the basis of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project reports. For more see **http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NationalDiscourses.aspx** .

Note: **This table does not include stateless nations like for instance the Basques in Spain or the Welsh in the UK. The table is based on national censuses** and other national statistics' sources **that measure national and ethnic minorities to different extents and in different ways.**

* Immigrant groups in the case of the UK refer to national census categories on ethnic minorities rather than country of origin.

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Countries	Total population (2009)	Migrant population (size)	Largest immigrant groups	Size	Largest native minorities	Size
Greece	11 million	840,000	Albanians	500,000	Turks/	
			Bulgarians	55,000	Muslims	
			Romanians	34,000	of Thrace	80-120,000
			Georgians	34,000		
			Pakistanis	23,000	Roma	300-350,000
			Russians	20,000		
Ireland	4.5 million	420,000	(data for 2006)		Irish	
			UK citizens	110,000	travellers	22,000
			Poles	60,000		
			Lithuanians	25,000		
			Nigerians	16,000		
Italy	60 million	4.9 million	Romanians	900,000		
			Albanians	460,000	Roma	120-150,000
			Moroccans	430,000		
			Chinese	190,000		
			Ukrainians	180,000		
			Filipinos	120,000		
			Sub-Saharan Africans	285,000		
Spain	46 million	4.7 million .	(data for 2010)			
			Romanians	700,000	Roma	650,000
			Moroccans	760,000		
			Ecuadorians	380,000		
			Colombians	260,000		
			UK citizens	225,000		
			Italians	165,000		
			Bulgarians	155,000		
			Chinese	152,000		
			Sub-Saharan Africans	~110,000		

Table 2
Native Minorities and Migrant Populations in Countries Experiencing Immigration After 1989

Source: Author's own compilation on the basis of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project reports. **For more see http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NationalDiscourses.aspx**
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Table 3
Native Minorities and Migrant Populations in Central Eastern European Countries

Countries	Total population in 2009	Total immigrant population (size)	Largest immigrant groups	Size	Largest native minorities	Size
Bulgaria	7.6 million	No	--	--	Turks	750,000
					Roma	370,000
Hungary	10 million	No	--	--	Germans	200,000
					Slovaks	100,000
					Croat	80,000
					Roma	400-800,000
					Romanians	25,000
Poland	38 million	700,000 (estimate for 2005)	Ukrainians	Unspecified	Germans	150,000
					Belarussians	50,000
					Ukrainians	30,000
					Silesians	170,000
					Roma	20-30,000
Romania	21.5 million	No	--	--	Ethnic Hungarians	1.5 million
					Roma	0.55-1 mill.
Turkey	72 million	(no data available)	Bosnians	2 million	Jews	40,000
			Pomaks	600,000	Greeks	3,000
			Circassians	2.5 million	Armenians	60,000
			Iranians	500,000	Assyrians	53,000
			EU migrants	170,000	Alevis	15 million
			Transit migrants	200,000	Arabs	1 million
			Refugees	20,000	Kurds	13 million

Source: Author's own compilation on the basis of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project reports. For more see **http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NationalDiscourses.aspx**
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Minority populations - whether native or migrant in origin - can differ from national majorities in several ways. Their differences may be expressed through ethnic background, cultural tradition, language, religion or any combination of these features. Different minority populations are sometimes falsely grouped together under a single label - e.g. people from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Morocco and Turkey may be referred to collectively as 'Muslims'. It is not uncommon for minority groups with distinct ethnic or cultural identities to be lumped together according to a single shared characteristic such as religion.

THE DIVERSITY CHALLENGE

In political terms, minority groups present a challenge to nation-states that define themselves as homogenous, mono-cultural, mono-ethnic and mono-religious. Aside from seeking political representation and participation as citizens, minorities frequently establish special minority institutions to ensure the survival of their cultures and traditions. They may also challenge the dominant view of national history and appeal for a re-interpretation of past historical events (especially wars) and national heroes. The Italian majority and the Slovenian minority in Italy, for example, tend to have very different views on the development and outcome of the Second World War. The same is true of native Greeks and Albanian immigrants in Greece. Divergent views also surround the history of colonialism, with national majorities (the former colonial powers) and post-colonial immigrant groups often having very different interpretations (e.g. Algerians in France, or Surinamese in the Netherlands, or West Indians in Britain).

In practical terms, minorities may pose challenges for the majority regarding what is considered '**acceptable**', 'normal' or 'deviant' behaviour. **Given that the groups may have different worldviews, different religious beliefs and different conceptions of gender relations, the family and the community, the challenges can be significant.**

During the last two decades, minority groups in several European countries have been characterized in media and political debates as 'unsuited' for European democratic and secular societies. The groups most stigmatised in this way have been Muslims (regardless of their ethnic origin) and Roma (regardless of their citizenship).

Muslims in Europe have often been accused of being illiberal. This issue was at the heart of a controversy surrounding the publication of caricatures of the prophet Mohammed in the Danish press. Here's a summary of what happened.

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Religious Diversity and Freedom of the Press

In 2005 a Danish newspaper's publication of twelve caricatures of the prophet Mohammed led to an international crisis. The caricatures, which showed the prophet in a variety of supposedly humorous or satirical situations, originally appeared in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* on September 30, 2005. They were part of an editorial criticizing self-censorship in the Danish media. The most controversial image depicted Mohammed as a terrorist, donning a turban shaped as a bomb with a burning fuse. Islamic tradition considers any depiction of the prophet as blasphemy. In order to prevent idolatry, it explicitly prohibits all images of God, the prophet Mohammed and the major prophets of the Christian and Jewish traditions. Following the publication of the cartoons, the editors received a number of angry letters and the artists were reportedly sent death threats. The threats were widely reported in Denmark and prompted anti-Muslim comments and protests.

On October 14, 2005, two weeks after the first publication, a demonstration was held in Copenhagen to protest against the cartoons. Five days later, ambassadors from 11 Muslim countries filed complaints to Danish Prime Minister Andres Fogh Rasmussen, asking him to intervene and take a stance against the newspaper. The prime minister's initial reaction was that it was inappropriate for the government to get involved in an issue pertaining to press freedom.

In order to end the dispute, Danish diplomats offered an 'explanation' to the head of the Arab League, and on January 30, 2006, Rasmussen made an official statement. Although he expressed his regrets at the offence caused to millions of Muslims, he continued to defend press freedom. So did the editors of *Jyllands-Posten*. Their account was accepted by the Islamic Society in Denmark. Ironically, however, the efforts that were undertaken to end the dispute actually propelled it to a more serious level. A number of newspapers and media professionals in various European countries felt freedom of expression was being undermined and reacted by republishing the disputed caricatures. That decision enraged millions of Muslims around the world.

The controversy fuelled public protests in several Muslim countries. Between the 2nd and the 8th of February, some of the most violent events of the crisis occurred, notably the burning of the Danish Embassy in Syria on February 4. In Lebanon and Indonesia, public rallies became violent and Danish embassies were attacked by mobs. EU offices in the Gaza Strip were surrounded by Palestinian gunmen demanding an apology over the cartoons. In the same week there were also protests in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran as well as in Britain and other EU countries.

During the so-called Mohammed cartoons crisis, the media in some countries opted not to republish the cartoons. They said it was important to balance freedom of expression with a responsibility not to offend the religious faith of other people. Other European newspapers, however, chose to republish the cartoons as a way of defending freedom of expression over and above any other consideration. The matter remains contested to this day. It raises questions not only about respect for religious freedom and the limits of freedom of expression. For some, it also poses the more political question: To what degree are Islamic traditions suitable for European secular democratic societies?

Diversity in Europe: Immigrants and Minorities

It has been argued that because Muslims do not accept the idea that religion and political institutions should be separate, their claims cannot be satisfied by European liberal democracies. It is further argued that Muslims do not recognise the autonomy of the individual. Roma, on the other hand, have been portrayed as being unwilling to integrate into a settled modern lifestyle that includes having a 'normal' job, sending children to school and abiding by the laws.

Both groups have sometimes been stigmatised for their dress codes. While Muslim women in Europe have been criticized for wearing the headscarf (and related garments) as a form of religious attire, Roma women have been scorned for their colourful and unusual dresses. Both groups have also been criticised for promoting arranged marriages involving minors. In general they are regarded as valuing family and ethnic solidarity above individual autonomy. Hence, both groups have been seen as raising illiberal claims that European democracies cannot accommodate.

When it comes to resolving these issues, interesting approaches have been explored. The following accounts of disputes involving Muslim schoolgirls in Britain and Bulgaria are cases in point.
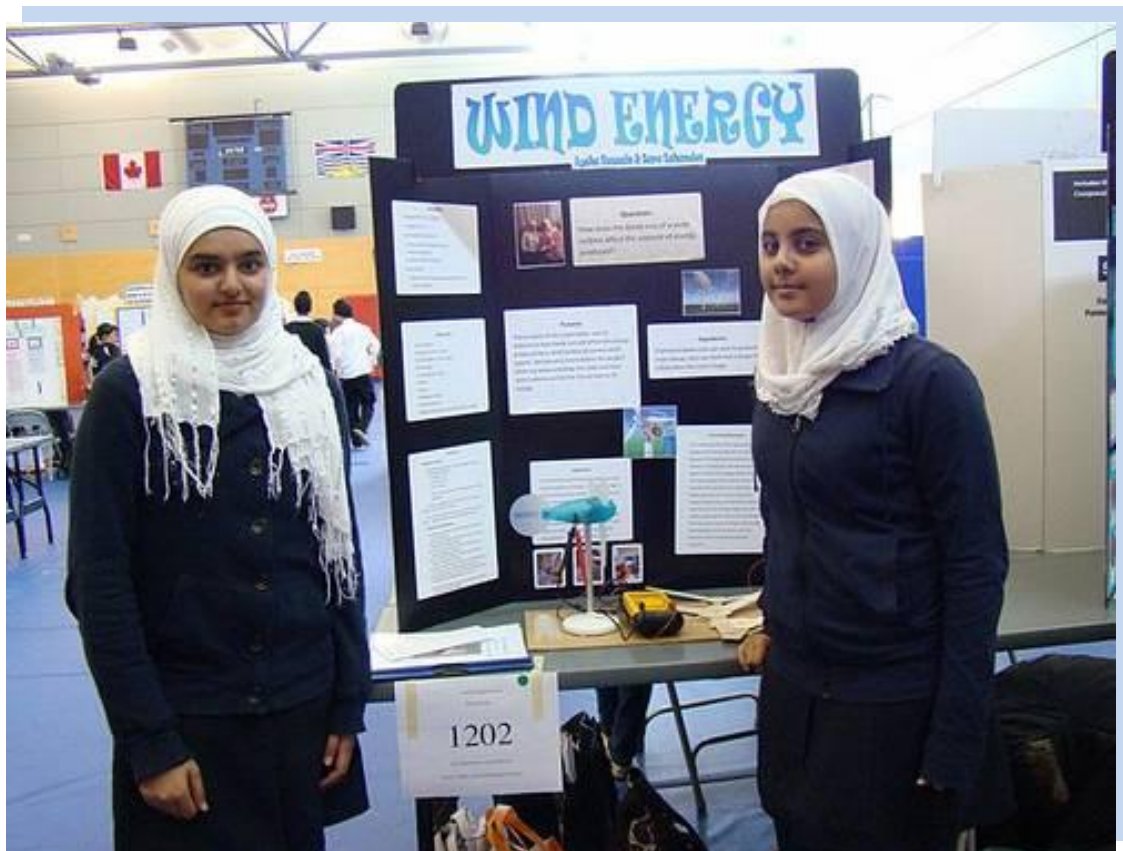
A dispute over religious dress at a British school ...

Begum, a pupil at Denbigh High School in Luton, England, claimed that she was required by her Muslim faith to wear a *jilbab* (a full length gown) to school. The school viewed this as a contravention of its uniform policy and decided that Begum would not be allowed to attend school again until she wore the official uniform. In response Begum sought a judicial review of the school's decision on the grounds that the school had interfered with two of her basic rights: 1) the right to manifest one's religion and 2) the right to an education, both of which are enshrined in the European Convention on Human Rights. The school - in which nearly 80% of the pupils are Muslim - argued that it had already introduced Muslim-friendly uniform changes such as trousers, *shalwar kameez* (a tunic and baggy trousers) and headscarves in school uniform colours. Administered by a Muslim headmistress, the school further argued that the uniform changes had been decided in consultation with local mosques and parents.

Begum lost the case in the High Court, but later won on appeal at the Court of Appeal. The school appealed against this decision, and in 2006 the case was heard by the Judicial Committee of the House of Lords which eventually ruled in favour of the school. In doing so, Lord Bingham of Cornhill stressed at the outset of his judgment that 'this case concerns a particular pupil and a particular school in a particular place at a particular time. It must be resolved on facts which are now, for purposes of the appeal, agreed. The House is not, and could not be, invited to rule on whether Islamic dress, or any feature of Islamic dress, should or should not be permitted in the schools of this country'. Nevertheless, he concluded that 'it would, in my opinion, be irresponsible for any court, lacking the experience, background and detailed knowledge of the head teacher, staff and governors, to overrule their judgment on a matter as sensitive as this. The power of decision has been given to them for the compelling reason that they are best placed to exercise it, and I see no reason to disturb their decision.'

Although the particular case of Begum has not been resolved to universal satisfaction (notably not to hers), it has reaffirmed a pragmatic form of multicultural accommodation that considers claims when and where they arise.

...and how a similar dispute was addressed at a school in Bulgaria

In July 2006, the Organisation for Islamic Development and Culture from the town of Smolyan in southern Bulgaria filed a complaint before the Bulgarian Commission for Protection against Discrimination (CPD). According to the complaint, the Smolyan Professional High School of Economics, which required the wearing of school uniform, acted against the Constitution and limited personal freedom and choice. The plaintiff organisation claimed that the compulsory wearing of school uniforms was especially aimed at preventing the wearing of clothes typical for the local Muslim population. The complaint focused specifically on two Muslim girls who wanted to attend the school wearing headscarves and robes instead of school uniforms. They were told by the school principal that they should remove the headscarves as they were violating the internal rules of the school. The two girls were not, however, prevented from attending their classes.

The CPD dismissed the allegation that the school was acting against the Constitution and thereby violating a fundamental right of the two students. Instead, the Commission ruled that the School Principal's decision allowing the girls to attend their classes wearing headscarves led to unequal treatment of the *other* high school students who wore the prescribed uniforms. As a result the CPD imposed sanctions against all parties - the plaintiff organisation, the school board and the Ministry of Education and Science for actions inciting discrimination and unequal treatment.

Eventually, the case was solved by allowing the two girls to finish their education in a special way – preparing for the final exams at home with the help of teachers from the school. This incident received nation-wide media coverage. The solution adopted was regarded as fair by the majority of actors involved as it allowed the girls to retain their individual religious affiliation and to complete their secondary education. It was largely perceived as an example of tolerance and acceptance of diversity because the compromise satisfied all parties

It is worth noting that wearing a school uniform is not a universal rule applied in all schools in Bulgaria. On the contrary, schools that have decided to introduce school uniforms are an exception. In all other schools, where there are no requirements regarding the way pupils dress, Muslim girls can wear headscarves in classes without hindrance.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

What do we learn from the two examples cited above?

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TOLERANCE AND RESPECT

In recent years the term 'tolerance' has popped up frequently in public debates. Aside from its popular usage in discussions about law enforcement (where policies of 'zero tolerance' are advocated), the concept of tolerance has become a key feature in discourse concerning minority groups. But tolerance is by no means a new concept, and - unlike 'integration' or 'interculturalism' - it is relatively easy to define.

On a basic level, **tolerance** means:

to refrain from objecting to something with which one does not agree.

While the basic definition of tolerance is fairly straightforward, the mechanism behind the phenomenon is rather more complex, involving several essential elements. It begins with someone (or a group of people) objecting to a particular belief or behaviour. This person or group must also be convinced that their objection is legitimate. Moreover, they must be in a position to suppress (or combat) the 'objectionable' belief or behaviour. **Finally -and this is the crucial step- they must then decide to forgo suppression and instead allow the** 'objectionable' belief or behaviour **to persist, whatever the consequences may be.**

As the American political philosopher Preston King puts it, tolerance is meaningful when the 'tolerator' has the power to interfere with **the actions of another act but does not exert this power.**

The terms 'tolerance' and 'toleration' **are usually used interchangeably as synonyms to describe situations where one allows practices or attitudes to persist even though one disapproves of them. Historically, the development of the idea of tolerance in Europe began in the 16th and 17th centuries in response to the Protestant Reformation and the Wars of Religion. It started as a response to conflict among Christian denominations (and also to the persecution of witchcraft and heresy). In the 16th and 17th century, writers such as the French intellectual Michel de Montaigne questioned the morality of religious persecution and offered arguments supporting toleration. In the 17th century the concept of toleration was taken up by British thinkers such as John Milton and was further developed in the late 17th century by John Locke in his** *Letters concerning Toleration* **and in his** *Two Treatises on Government*. **Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire in France and Lessing in Germany further developed the notion of religious tolerance, although these ideas did not prevent intolerance and violence in early modern Europe.** Tolerance was then understood with reference to religious diversity (dominant religions' toleration of minority religious groups) while today the concept is applied to all forms of difference including race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and gender.

It is important, however, to acknowledge that tolerance has non-European roots as well.

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The Non-European Roots of Tolerance

Toleration is often thought of as an achievement of European Enlightenment thinking. Yet, however significant the contributions of thinkers such as by Michel de Montaigne, John Locke and Friedrich Lessing may have been, they do not present a complete picture. Likewise, the idea that the Enlightenment set in motion a process that led directly and necessarily to the tolerance of the 21st century is short-sighted. It tends to disregard the many reversals that occurred in the process, sometimes even in defence of Enlightenment values. (The most infamous example is found in the oppressive phases of the French revolution.) It also ignores the contributions made from different perspectives and backgrounds, such as the possibility to justify toleration on religious grounds.

Medieval Christianity, while not a particularly 'tolerant' system of beliefs on the whole, provided some precedents. Toleration –the non-interference in the life of others- could be justified on strictly religious grounds, such as by the idea that God's omnipotence and the incomprehensibility of his actions should lead humans towards humility in their judgments–towards toleration.

Ideas and practices of tolerance had also developed outside the European context. Buddhism has historically been inclined towards toleration. Ashoka, for example, introduced moral principles of both public and individual conduct intended to respond to the immense socio-cultural diversity of his Indian Empire in the 3rd century BC.

Ideas and values of toleration underpinned Islamic practices that were often far more accommodating towards religious difference than their Christian counterparts. Although commonly misrepresented as an 'inter-faith utopia', Muslim Andalusia offered types of accommodation and co-existence that were unknown in the rest of Europe. Later, the millet system in the Ottoman Empire made it possible for religious communities to organise their affairs in relative autonomy, thus accommodating cultural and religious diversity within the empire.

While the Enlightenment is rightly understood as an important starting point for contemporary ideas of toleration, we should be aware of alternative origins. The value of cultural pluralism and ideas of intercultural coexistence have been proposed in different ways, emerging not only from the secular Enlightenment but also from within religious traditions.

Because the concept of tolerance is so crucial to our subject matter (as indicated by the Handbook's **title), we are going to give it more thorough consideration.** Let's begin by looking at tolerance in a western **religious context.**

From the time of the Enlightenment, a distinction was made between:

- **mere toleration (i.e. adherents of a dominant religion allowing religious minorities to exist although they are seen as mistaken and harmful) , and**

- **the higher level concept of religious liberty which involves equality between all religions and the prohibition of discrimination among them.**

Depending on how you look at it, this distinction is either the main weakness or the main strength of the concept of tolerance. Some thinkers criticise it because they feel that toleration implies a negative view and therefore constitutes a form of discrimination. They prefer to focus on the notions of acceptance and recognition of cultural diversity (further discussed below).

Accepting [?] Diversity

It is worth noting that tolerance implies a relationship of power: **only majorities have the power to tolerate minorities**. A minority (one that is not dominant) cannot tolerate a majority because it does not have the power to do so. However, a minority may (or may not) be tolerant regarding diversity among its own members.

Susan Mendus and Preston King, two political philosophers that have written extensively on the subject, see toleration (or tolerance) as a practical matter. They regard it as practical because each society has to set the limits of what and who it tolerates and what or who it does *not* tolerate. They also consider it an appropriate way to approach issues of cultural diversity and discrimination against minorities.

Sticking with practicalities, toleration raises questions as to (a) who or what *should not* be tolerated, (b) who or what *should* be tolerated, and (c) who or what should not only be tolerated but *accepted*. When it comes to policies for addressing diversity, tolerance can in fact be proposed as a middle solution that stands between intolerance and acceptance.

A technical breakdown of this **three-tiered approach to diversity** (with toleration representing the middle way) would look something like this:

- Individuals, groups and practices to whom/which toleration is not granted

- Individuals, groups and practices to whom/which toleration is granted

- Individuals, groups and practices for whom/which toleration is not enough and other approaches are (or should be) more relevant, such as equality, respect, recognition

The repetition of 'individuals, groups and practices' **above is important because it highlights the fact that tolerance may be applied to a minority group as a whole, an individual who belongs to such a** group and/or 'divergent' customs or practices of the minority individual or group.

It is important to note that the relationship between *tolerance* of difference and *respect* for difference is not necessarily a hierarchical one. Respect is not *always* a better institutional or practical solution for accommodating difference. Public recognition and respect may be appropriate for *some* diversity claims and may satisfy *some* requests of minority groups. For other types of diversity claims **tolerance** may be a better 'fit'.

The following pair of illustrative anecdotes are intended to provide material for discussing some of the concepts explored in the Handbook. The first example is drawn from the controversy surrounding the construction of the Central Mosque in Cologne, Germany. It illustrates how local conflicts can be resolved in a spirit of respect and accommodation rather than excluding the claims of a minority group. The second anecdote focuses on an initiative by the City of Copenhagen to provide special training for teachers. Exemplifying respect for diversity in school life, the initiative was aimed at improving the ability of teachers to communicate with minority parents.

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Respect for Diversity. The Controversy over Cologne's New Mosque

In 2006, the Turkish Muslim organisation DITIB publicly presented a plan for a large new mosque in Cologne. Members of the conservative CDU party criticised the architecture, which was closely linked to the Ottoman traditional style and thus, in their opinion, excluded non-Turkish Muslims. In that same year, the right-wing populist organisation Pro-Köln started a petition for a referendum against the building of the mosque.

In 2007, the author and Holocaust survivor Ralph Giordano appeared in a TV debate with Bekir Alboga, the mosque's commissioner for intercultural dialogue. Giordano demanded that the building of the mosque be stopped. He defended his position by arguing that the mosque was 'not an expression of the Muslim will to integrate, but a centre of an anti-integrative maintenance of identity' and symbolized 'an attack on our democratic way of life'. In the media debate surrounding the mosque project, issues of integration and prejudices towards Islam abounded.

Giordano expressed similar ideas to those of the right-wing movement Pro Köln. Basically, they argued that a Muslim minority with an 'alien' religion was creating a parallel society that was not able to integrate into German society. It was suggested that Muslims did not respect the German constitution, that their veiled women offended the aesthetic sensibility of ordinary people, and that they had general difficulties adapting to modernity.

Unlike many of his fellow party members in the conservative CDU, Cologne's mayor, Fritz Schramma, defended the 'constitutional and moral right' of the 120,000 Muslims of the city to have their own place of worship. He expressed the hope that the mosque would also be 'eingekölscht' soon, meaning that it would be embraced in the local environment.

In 2008 the Cologne mosque conflict became a rallying point for a group seeking to hold an International congress against the 'Islamisation of Europe' in the city. Pro Köln tried to organise a demonstration against the building of the mosque, but they met broad resistance from the people of Cologne. The counter-demonstration against the right-wing movement was so strong that the Cologne police finally forbade the demonstration against the mosque, which had in any case been blocked by thousands of Cologne citizens and officials. Many of the international leaders of right-wing populist movements who had come for the anti-Islam congress were unable to leave Cologne airport because the taxi drivers refused to transport them. These visitors also had difficulty finding lodging because hotel owners declined to accommodate them, and the owners of bars refused them drinks.

When the issue was finally settled, the mayor of Cologne proudly proclaimed: 'With strong commitment, humour and intelligence we fought against this racist nonsense.'

Intercultural Dialogue in Denmark. Respecting the Difference of Minority Parents

In 2007 the city of Copenhagen created an 'Integration Taskforce' to act as a contact unit between the city's central administration and its street-level professionals. These professionals included social workers, teachers, childcare workers and employees of housing associations and sports clubs (collectively 'practitioners'). In its initial meetings with the practitioners, the Task Force found that they face a common problem when it comes to communicating with the parents of minority children.

The solution was to develop training courses for these practitioners and supply them with special tools enabling them to improve their dialogue with parents. A handbook was developed complete with chapters on theory, concrete exercises and management tools for implementing and developing good parent dialogue. The emphasis was on conveying the theory in simple terms and converting it into practical knowledge for application in everyday situations.

The training courses and toolkit focused on rebalancing the otherwise asymmetrical relationship in dialogue between practitioner and parent. An essential step involved helping the practitioners open up to the perspectives of the parent. Emphasis was placed on creating common solutions to concrete problems and setting clear and achievable objectives such as getting minority pupils to participate in school excursions or gym classes. The desired mode of dialogue contrasted significantly with the standard hierarchical approach in which the practitioner speaks from a position of power. The initiative sought to provide alternatives to the situation in which the practitioner informs or 'tells' the parents what is expected of them and which solution is the 'right' one. The pragmatic, goal-oriented approach offered ways of 'bracketing out' discussions about fundamental principles or values in order to be able to deal with the concrete issue at hand.

Through this type of dialogue the minority parent is recognised as an individual of equal standing and as a generally competent parent whose ideas, points of view and feelings matter (and not just as a person with a particular minority identity). A parallel idea in the initiative is that minority parents should not only be 'invited' to school events that may be culturally unknown to them (e.g. the Danish Carnival celebrations), but should be also be 'involved' in their creation (the motto being: 'Do not invite, involve!').

The initiative also sought to help the practitioners become more aware of their sometimes unconscious prejudices or pre-judgments. An effort was made to help them to see how these views may influence their interactions with minorities. The main focus, however, is not on changing convictions or eradicating prejudices, but on establishing rules for professional behaviour in connection with creating and maintaining dialogue.

The idea of professionalised dialogue with minority parents has been vindicated through the feedback of participants in the training courses. The general experience, supported by interviews with minority parents, is that continued contact with and involvement of parents can be hugely beneficial in facilitating participation of minority children in key school and after-school activities.

ACCEPT PLURALISM

QUESTIONS FOR
DISCUSSION:

✓ What kind of claims of
minority or immigrant groups
should not be tolerated in Europe?
Please give examples
✓ What kind of claims or needs
of minority immigrant groups
should be accepted and respected?
Please give examples

THE ACCEPT PLURALISM RESEARCH PROJECT

TOLERANCE, PLURALISM AND SOCIAL COHESION: RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN EUROPE

In 2001, violent conflicts between native British and Asian Muslim youth took place in northern England. In 2005, civil unrest amongst France's disadvantaged youth of immigrant origin expanded all over the country. In 2006, the publication of pictures of the prophet Mohammed in Denmark generated the so-called 'cartoon crisis'. Muslim communities have come under intense scrutiny in the wake of the terrorist events in the United States (2001), Spain (2004) and Britain (2005). Extreme right wing politicians such as Geert Wilders in the Netherlands and parties such as the Northern League in Italy gained votes by playing on the electorate's fears of the 'Muslim' or the 'immigrant'. The current economic crisis provides further fruitful ground for racist and discriminatory behaviour towards minorities: the massive expulsions of Roma populations from Italy in 2008 and from France in 2010 are dramatic examples. The tragic events in Norway in summer 2011 are yet but another expression of this social malaise.

ACCEPT PLURALISM is about tolerance and acceptance of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity in contemporary Europe. This European FP7 project [Socio-Economic Sciences & Humanities] investigates the meanings of tolerance in a variety of contexts with a special focus on 'what needs to be done' now in Europe in order to proceed to more coherent societies, while respecting ethnic, religious and cultural plurality.

In recent times, the integration and accommodation of ethnic and religious minorities and their special needs or claims have been an important concern for the European Union. In some countries challenges relate more to immigrant groups while in others they concern native minorities. The question that has often been posed, in more or less politically correct terms, is how much cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies. It is in this context that the ACCEPT PLURALISM project responds to the need to investigate whether European societies have become more or less tolerant during the past 20 years. The project investigates what tolerance means in different countries and under different circumstances. Do we (not) tolerate specific practices or specific minority groups (immigrant or native) or indeed specific individuals?

The divide between *liberal tolerance* (not interfering with practices or forms of life of a person even if one disapproves of them) and *egalitarian tolerance* (institutional arrangements and public policies that fight negative stereotyping, promote positive inclusive identities and reorganise the public space in ways that accommodate diversity) lies at the core of ACCEPT PLURALISM research.

However, the borderline between what is tolerable and what is intolerable is not always clear-cut and not everyone agrees on where the borderline lies. Which are the processes through which the lines are drawn 'here' or 'there'? What are the implications of drawing the boundary 'here' or 'there'? Are the political discourses on pluralism relevant to the actual policies and/or to their implementation? What is the difference between (in)tolerant practices, policies and institutions?

THE ACCEPT PLURALISM PROJECT

DIVERSITY & RELEVANT GROUPS
chosen in the framework of the ACCEPT PLURALISM PROJECT

Ethnic diversity
- native minorities
- immigrant groups

Religious diversity
- Muslims
- Different Christian groups
- Jews

'Racial' diversity
- 'Black' people
- Roma

Focus on specific CHALLENGES

School Life
– School (de-)segregation
– Religious schools
– Curriculum revisions
– Accommodation of diversity in everyday school life

Political Life
– Tolerance of intolerant discourses in political life.
– Public policies of exclusion: institutional obstacles to minority rights
– Recognition or opposition to minority mobilisation

PRINCIPLES GUIDING POLICY RESPONSES

Intolerance

Tolerance

Accept

Respect

Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom

ACCEPT PLURALISM