



National Strategy of Romania

May 2007

The present document was drafted by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, together with the Consultancy Center for European Cultural Programme (National Coordination Body for the 2008 – EYID)

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

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1. National Context: challenges to be met

The Year of Intercultural Dialogue is an opportunity to achieve some important goals in the field of cultural co-operation and dialogue, education on tolerance and active citizenship, information and strengthening the European dimension and promoting the concept of European identity. These priorities will be of great help for defining a targeted campaign.

Wanting to use in an efficient manner the gained expertise in the field of cultural programmes and actions, undertaken at Community level, the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs took the decision to represent Romania, as central public authority, only in the "Member States Consultative Committee" and appointed the Consultancy Centre for European Cultural Programmes (which is currently the Media Desk and the Cultural Contact Point for the EU's "Media" and "Culture"), in April 2007, as the RO National Coordination Body for the EYID.

CCPCE is, according to GD no. 68/2005, amended by GD no. 162/2007, the public institution, subordinated to the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, which ensures the promotion of Community's programmes dedicated to the cultural and media sectors.

According to the Decision n° 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 (EYID 2008)**, some specific measures will be implemented by the European Commission in cooperation with the NCB.

The strategy is based on the overall objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and will contribute to:

- promote intercultural dialogue as a process in which all those living in the EU can improve their ability to deal with a more open, but also more complex, cultural environment, where, in different Member States as well as within each Member State, different cultural identities and beliefs coexist,
- highlight intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a diverse and dynamic society, not only in Europe but also in the world,
- raise the awareness of all those living in the EU, in particular young people, of the importance of developing an active European citizenship which is open to the world,

respects cultural diversity and is based on common values in the EU as laid down in Article 6 of the EU Treaty and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,

- Highlight the contribution of different cultures and expressions of cultural diversity to the heritage and ways of life of the Member States.

Special attention is paid to the specific objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue in order to:

- seek to raise the awareness of all those living in the EU, in particular young people, of the importance of engaging on intercultural dialogue in their daily life,
- work to identify, share and give a visible European recognition to best practices in promoting intercultural dialogue throughout the EU, specially among young people and children,
- foster the role of education as an important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and develop skills and best social practices, and highlight the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding,
- raise the profile, increase the coherence of and promote all Community programmes and actions contributing to intercultural dialogue and ensure their continuity,
- contribute to exploring new approaches of the intercultural dialogue involving cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders

Also, the Romanian strategy is designed in close relation with the Final recommendation of the 3rd Intercultural Forum on "***Promoting Intercultural Dialogue between Generations***", organised by the Council of Europe and the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, in Bucharest, 17-18 March 2006. The working sessions of the Forum were devoted to:

- daily life for young people including the intergenerational question;
- youth culture;
- education for young people;
- memories and identities for young people;
- cultural territories of young people.

2. Consultation of civil society and stakeholders

Mobilization of possible participants will be made in the near future, in order to get as wide an involvement as possible. In order to achieve this, an inventory of stakeholders will be made. Consultations are envisaged with a team involving members of the civil society, i.e. journalists, sociologists, researchers and communication experts. Also, a special partnership contract will be established with the Intercultural Institute of Timisoara (I.I.T.)

The I.I.T is an autonomous, non-governmental institution, having a cultural, civic and scientific activity, without political purposes, which adheres to the values and the principles of the Council of Europe concerning intercultural actions. The I.I.T. was established in 1992 with the support of the local authorities of Timisoara and of the Council of Europe.

Through its programmes and activities, the I.I.T. pursues the development of the intercultural dimension in the fields of education and culture. The I.I.T. also promotes, at the national and international level, the climate of tolerance and inter-ethnic communication specific to the town of Timisoara and to the region of Banat.

The I.I.T. has established a wide network of partners from different regions of Romania and from several European countries, including institutions, NGOs and professionals from its interest areas. I.I.T. is co-operating very well with local, regional and national authorities in the fields of education, culture, youth and national minorities.

A particularly fruitful co-operation has been established with the Council of Europe, mainly with the departments of education, culture and youth and with the Confidence Building Measures Programme.

The Intercultural Institute has been actively involved in several important projects of the Council of Europe:

1. Democracy, human rights, minorities: the educational and cultural aspects
2. All different, all equal – youth campaign against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and intolerance
3. Education for democratic citizenship

Since 1996, the Intercultural Institute:

- has implemented, as coordinator or partner, over 20 pilot projects, mainly related to intercultural education, at local, regional, national and international level
- Has published 16 volumes resulted from different projects, in Romanian, French, English and Hungarian and has published the Romanian version of four volumes of the Council of Europe.

Since 1998 the Intercultural Institute established close partnerships with several civic, minorities and youth NGOs from the neighbouring ex-Yugoslavian space. Two representatives of the Intercultural Institute are currently members in working groups of the Education Task Force of the Stability Pact for South – East Europe.

The NCB will develop a partnership contract with the IIT, based on the present strategy framework.

After consultations and the design of an implementation strategy, seminars will be organised for the dissemination of the key messages for the information of the cultural operators.

3. National priorities for the Year

The profile of Europe can be defined as a multitude of ethnical, regional and national cultures, which co-exist together for centuries. The European culture is therefore understood as unitary in its diversity. The spiritual geography of Europe contains major and significant spaces of communication and synthesis, partly because of the continuous changes of geographical frontiers, partly because of the trend of the European cultures' approach to seek the knowledge and spiritual richness in the other's values. The wisdom of Europe consists not only in accepting the differences, but also in assimilating the differences and making them valuable for the spiritual life. None of the European cultures evolved only by itself and therefore Europe cannot be seen as a whole unless each culture has its well-defined role in the general picture.

The geographical position of Romania on the cross-roads of Central and South – East European cultures is reflected in the variety and richness of its cultural diversity in both a national and wider European setting. Romania constitutes the interactive space for cultural minorities and identities, carries a large economic potential, plays a crucial role in the growth of voluntary ethics and is a cornerstone for the European integration.

The Romanian social scenery is characterised by its variety of complementary cultural traditions, like for instance: Hungarian, Roma, German, Ukrainian, Jewish, Turk, Tartar, Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian, Slovak, Greek, Polish, Italian, Armenian Croatian, etc., whose significant identities should translate themselves into a creative contribution to the world contemporary art.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue **represents a great opportunity** to deal with a more complex cultural environment, as an occasion to get familiar with a complex cultural environment and to promote a European citizenship through modern and active means, by making a connection between different actors and their homologues in other Member States, giving them the chance to know people who are interested in promoting a common set of values.

Organizers of major cultural events and festivals will be encouraged to include events relevant to the topic in their programme in 2008. Local organizations willing to participate will be encouraged to write their own strategies based on the national strategy. National, regional and local bodies should be encouraged to participate in the funding and development of the program.

The strategy is focusing on enhancing dialogue between different groups in society and between generations. The European dimension shall mean establishing direct contacts with other countries, involving other countries' nationals living in Romania in the projects and bringing together different national identities for strengthening the European identity, through many themes of European interest.

Discussions about the meaning and importance of intercultural dialogue should be launched among government authorities (both at national and local level) and NGOs.

The participation of cultural operators, young people and educational organizations in European programmes, networks and actions should be strongly encouraged. A national communication campaign should be launched to raise awareness, especially among the young people, of the necessity of intercultural co-operation and dialogue in our daily lives and modern reality. Media should be involved as much as possible in the campaign, so that the messages reach the widest range of the population. This objective should be implemented by publicizing existing national and international mobility schemes as widely as possible, as well as by negotiating with various potential founders to establish new schemes. A major role in this should be played by the Cultural Contact Point network.

The national priorities are included in a concise Action Plan focused on multiple approaches:

- Several steps in the time
- Several levels of involvement
- Bottom up approach.

Aims:

1. To place the intercultural debate in a strategic European context;
2. To demonstrate the need for concerted European cultural co-operation outside of Europe, respecting European diversity;
3. To demonstrate the viability of a European cultural policy through exemplary projects and initiatives.

Major steps in the preparation

- Screening the best practices at the Community level
- Fostering the exchange of knowledge and best practices in regard to cultural pluralism with a view to facilitating, in diversified societies, the inclusion and participation of persons and groups from varied cultural backgrounds
- Communication campaign – raising awareness and disseminating best practise, giving voice to marginalised, excluded using all available technologies
- Building partnerships between the public sector, the private sector and civil society. From this perspective, the pre-eminence of public policy, in partnership with the private sector and civil society, must be reaffirmed.
- Promoting confidence-building measures aimed at increasing tolerance and understanding between peoples

CCPCE has created the PACT initiative as a tool for cultural co-operation which acts as:

- an inter-cultural laboratory for local, regional and European cooperation
- a screening mechanism
- a tool for collecting ideas, creative intercultural initiatives etc.
- a structure to communicate at all levels
- an umbrella model with a critical mass of delivery projects

- assisting cultural and creative practitioners.

The main tasks of the EYID Action Plan:

1. Consultation (3-4 round table meetings) within the workgroup for culture (public and private cultural institutions, universities, NGOs, networks). *Objectives:* setting a common action plan, setting a calendar for drafting and implementing the strategy, setting some fields for involving the partners.
2. Comparative analysis of the situation in Romania and in the EU Member States in the field of cultural diversity and intercultural initiatives. *Objectives:* selection of good practices compatible with the Romanian cultural sector. It would be a model of how a distinctive identity can be moulded by bringing diversities together.
3. Drafting the short term implementing strategy in the field of intercultural dialogue. *Objectives:* designing comprehensible selection criteria for the national project proposals (these criteria will allow for a better knowledge of the cultural offer in cultural diversity area).
4. Consultations on the strategy: local authorities, cultural operators, wider civil society. *Objectives:* informing the society about the strategy, absorption / integration of possible proposals coming from the civil society or from the local government, adapting the strategy to the feed-back from the field.
5. Implementation of the strategy in all Romanian regional development areas (8 regions). The diversity of cultural traditions from these areas reflects the wealth and specific features of European cultural approach due to the diverse historical, geographical and cultural characteristics of Romanian historic regions. *Objectives:* testing the impact, analysis of the latest initiatives, improving the co-operation.
6. Public information on the procedures of selection at the national levels. *Objective:* informing all the stakeholders and the beneficiaries about the steps and the results.
7. Developing partnerships in order to improve and promote cultural diversity and understanding between European societies and strengthening international dialogue and cultural co-operation with countries outside Europe.

4. Education

We particularly emphasize the importance of the involvement of educational organizations and young people in this process. During this elaboration process, aspects of intercultural dialogue have to be taken into account and strong co-operation needs to be enhanced between professionals and the other members of the civil society.

5. Best practices

Best practices will be identified during this year, through finding, creating and developing new approaches and stimulating discussions and projects in different communities. The experience acquired by the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs in organizing festivals (music and theatre festivals), by the Consultancy Centre for European Cultural Programs in developing many cultural projects (Culture 2000), by different actors taking part in the Socrates II programme with its different sections, by the European Cultural Foundation in developing “S.T.E.P Beyond – Supporting Travel for European Projects”, by ARCUB – the Centre for Cultural Projects of the Bucharest Municipality are just examples of fruitful experiences that may be useful as best practices.

6. Communication strategy

The National Communication campaign will be built on the strategy of the Commission, meaning that the main target group is young people; other target groups include various civic organizations and also some steps should be directed to the broad public.

The existing mechanisms should be used, including the website www.pact-online.ro, which is dedicated to co-operation problems on cultural problems for the South-Eastern Europe. The project fiche will be placed on this website.

The programme will be launched with a press conference organised by the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs.

Other actions may be added and devised at a later stage, including key messages.

7. Sustainability

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue should aim to raise the public awareness on the importance of dialogue, especially within the European Union’s borders, in order to facilitate the crystallisation of a common European identity. The Year should stimulate further actions in this direction.

Sustainable elements may be considered programmes and actions initiated and carried on during the Year, that will continue to be implemented after 2008, awareness raised of educational actions and programs existing that will still be undertaken after the Year, contacts established that will continue to be fruitful and to develop after the Year, spin-off cultural events from the large-scale national action, the use of the website mentioned above, that will probably continue to be consulted by cultural operators.

8. Monitoring and reporting

A consultative group will be established to advise NCB on the coordination of the Year involving key stakeholders. Regular reports and updates will be provided as the year progresses. At the end of the Year a report will be published to coincide with a closing ceremony. The report will also be forwarded to the European Union.

Semi-annual reports will be submitted to the Romanian Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs by those who implement the Year’s programme, including financial reports.

9. Funding

Funding will be sought from a range of Government Departments in Romania, especially the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, to add to the available funding from the EU. The financial planning period and a number of detailed submissions will be drawn up. A detailed funding strategy will be provided in the form of an annex to the more detailed work plan/programme to be published in October 2007.

10. Outline framework for the Year (a roadmap)

April-December 2007	Informing/seeking support of stakeholders
May-August 2007	Identification of budgets for the Year
April-July 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of the campaign strategy, overall profile for the year • Round Tables involving national institutes from abroad, IIT etc. • CCPs & NCBs Meeting in Berlin: 6-9 June • “RegioCult”- an Inter-regional Forum: 6-7 July, Constanta, Romania
October 2007	International Conference to highlight the objectives (in partnership with IIT, in Timisoara City)
October 2007	Publication of detailed strategy and programme of work
January 2008	Launching
March 2008	Intercultural week, including major public awareness initiative
January-December 2008	Range of events focusing on the main actions identified in 2007, after public consultations
December 2008	Closing initiative and publication of report of the Year

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