

Rainbow Paper boosting intercultural dialogue

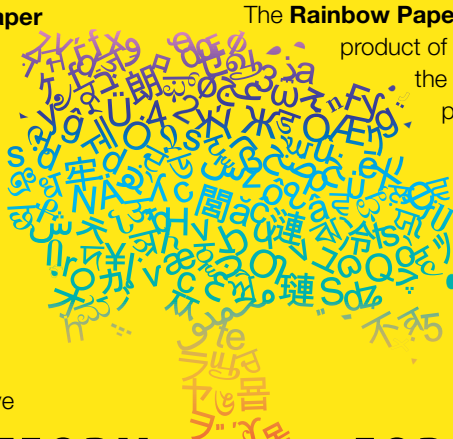


Photography: Daniel Greene

At the **European Cultural Foundation (ECF)** we have been working for European integration through arts and culture for more than five decades. Our goal is a truly inclusive Europe – a living and working space that fully embraces cultural diversity, making the most of the opportunities which this diversity offers.

The Platform & The Rainbow Paper

To get there, we joined forces in 2006 with our partners Cultural Action Europe (CAE) and the Network of European Foundations (NEF) and created the **Platform for Intercultural Europe**. A growing number of organisations – almost 400 so far, from many disciplines and sectors – and thousands of committed individuals make the Platform a credible and powerful representative of civil society. Crucially, its power comes ‘from the people’.



PLATFORM FOR INTERCULTURAL EUROPE

The **Rainbow Paper** is its chief lobbying tool. A product of two years’ broad consultation, the paper is a call to action in two parts: firstly, it appeals to civic organisations to change and live up to the new and vibrant diversity around us; secondly, it appeals to policymakers to create the right conditions for Europe to take the fullest advantage of its diverse cultural richness. Both the Platform and its Rainbow Paper argue for ‘diversity standards’ in public life and put forward specific policy goals.

Main Recommendations

The Rainbow Paper makes key recommendations in five specific areas (see the full version for details):

- *positive lifelong learning about cultural diversity through formal, non-formal and informal means (Education)*
- *ensuring the everyday practice of 'interculturalism' (Building capacity in organisations)*
- *sustaining good policies and practices and learning from bad ones (Monitoring)*
- *keeping the lifeblood of 'intercultural dialogue' flowing (Mobilising across boundaries)*
- *guaranteeing adequate investment (Resourcing intercultural dialogue).*

The Right Time is Now

We, as civil society, have a seat at the top table and can speak up. The stronger *our* voice, the more *they* will listen.

Committed to open dialogue with civil society, the European Institutions officially recognise the Platform as an 'interlocutor'. As a hub of communication between local actors, Platform members, and the political institutions, the Platform plays an important role that must be maintained. And if the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue is to have a lasting impact, continued action and advocacy are needed to broaden and deepen the power and recognition of culture and cultural diversity.

Our Goal

Our goal is clear. We want the non-profit sector to drive this campaign for change. We want as many

civil society partners as possible to join the Platform and sign the Rainbow Paper; to initiate and monitor organisational change; to observe policies in their cities, regions and countries; to see that European standards are built up and implemented. Through strong united action we can influence cultural policymaking for the better.

Next Steps

The Paper argues for four types of change: attitudinal, social, structural and policy oriented. This takes investment and involves tough choices. The Platform has already taken the initiative by introducing 'scouting missions' focused on Capacity building and Advocacy. These will deepen the Platform's knowledge of local practices (needs and challenges, etc.) and its own membership.

The Platform will offer specialised guidance (in the five key areas covered by the Rainbow Paper) to European institutions, national governments and local actors so that they can learn from good practice and take appropriate action.

Your Support

We know that we have your support in creating a fairer Europe together. We are asking for small efforts that will have great impact on the legacy of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the future of interculturalism:

- Sign up to the Rainbow Paper at <http://rainbowpaper.labforculture.org>
- Sign up to membership of the Platform at www.intercultural-europe.org

Facts about the Platform & Contact Details

Currently we have almost 400 participating organisations, with thousands of individuals from all walks of intercultural life: arts and culture, education, youth, social work, human rights, migration, inter-faith organisations, etc.

Our ambition is to translate this participation into actual membership and ensure as democratic a representation as possible. The Platform's membership will be its authority and legitimacy. The Platform's role is not to act in the field of intercultural dialogue but to voice the experience, needs, and insights of those who do.

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