



November 21, 2010

The European Union would like to thank the Forum for the 21st Century for initiating the discussion and organizing the conference on cross-cultural issues. The European Union also highly appreciates consideration and incorporation of some of its observations to last published version of final document.

### 1. Global English as Lingua Franca

The European Union once again acclaims the importance of English language in international relations. But it insists on its attitude on establishing English as a lingua franca. According to EU language policy, The European Union recognizes that language and identity are closely intertwined, and also that language is the most direct expression of culture. In the European Union language diversity is respected, multilingualism is promoted and, if necessary, threatened languages are protected.

In accordance to this, the European Union could never participate in establishing of any language as a compulsory diplomatic language. This step would contradict to its language policy and principle of multilingualism. In this context, the European Union refuses the Forum's proposal and according to its principles and opinions suggests creating commission of English speaking professionals following the Forum's suggestion but only as an institution of propagation of English language education.

The EU aims for a situation in which every EU citizen can speak at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue. Because of this, the European Union is ready to support Forum's initiative of worldwide education of English, which could some time leads to the situation when elites of all countries will be able to speak English. But the European Union supposes this could be a long-distance race.

Discussing the form of financing this project, the European Union considers unacceptable to contribute the 1% of country's GDP. It suggests creating fund, where all participating countries would give their contributions in an amount of 1% of their national education budget. The European Union considers this to be sufficient and this question could also be re-negotiated after the constitution of mentioned commission. It also accepts the distribution of proposed materials for free.

### 2. Secularization and Harmonization of Religious Differences

As the European Union proclaimed in its first position, secularized state can assure more independent governance in the countries and also easier respecting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which declare that human beings shall enjoy freedom of belief. The European Union also highly insists on respecting all rights declared by above-mentioned document that implies the respecting the right of belief.

But in regard to status of the European Union as an institution representing the sovereign states which didn't transfer all the competences on it, the European Union is not





capable to respond this question and, consequently, recommends excluding the issue of global religion from final document of Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century conference.

### 3. Multiculturalism and Importance of Common Values

As the European Union mentioned in its first position it does appreciate the Forum's efforts to create a list of common values which in case of being respected by everyone would lead to peaceful coexisting of races and a constructive dialogue among cultures.

Question of universally accepted values is a good idea, but calls for excellent preparation of the list. The European Union emphasize again and thanks Forum for the consideration of fact that the research is needed on the cultural, historical, political, social, psychological, educational and economic factors which facilitate or prohibit the peaceful coexistence of different cultures. Only this is the way how to get well-prepared list of common values accepted by all nations and ethnic groups.

The European Union suggests creation of this list with reference to values of Universal Declaration of Human Rights signed by most of the countries of the world.

Consequently the main issues can be highlighted and discussed. This dialogue should be taken not only on political field and in this context the European Union appreciates the willingness of Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century to involve representatives of academic field, non-governmental organizations and minorities in dialogue and creation of The List. According to this plan the risk of misunderstanding is minimized and possibility of success is higher.

Suggestion of establishing a special body under Ministry of Culture is for the European Union complicated. The EU is not competent to make such a decision on behalf of its member states. Regarding to this fact, The European Union proposes this part of draft to make to have a recommendation character: as an appeal to states to solve the problem of multiculturalism by this way.

Finally, the European Union would like to repeat its opinion that the role of the media and public discourse in the formation and results of diverse coexisting cultures should be explored.

### 4. Intercultural dialogue as Prevention of Intra-national Conflicts

As the European Union declared, intercultural dialogue is essential in prevention and ending conflicts and the solution could be found in implementation of before mentioned common values. These could establish an indubitable frame of discussion what can lead to resolving the problems.

So the European Union does agree with the idea of involving non-political representatives into a dialogue in resolving conflicts and also with creation of supranational





# The Model Conference

## Cross-Cultural Issues in the Global Context

Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics in Bratislava



# Modelová konferencia

## Kultúrna sekcia

Fakulta medzinárodných vzťahov, Ekonomická univerzita v Bratislave

institution (or committee) where the experts and representatives could meet and discuss the problem of cross-cultural character.

But the European Union would like to add another competence to this entity. The European Union considers crucial to prevent the conflicts by the education. And because of that, it suggests to concentrate in the proposed entity the specialist which could cooperate on common educational program for elementary and high schools, where children could be educated and informed about existence of another cultures, their habits and differences. The European Union believes this is the right way how to achieve more understanding among cultures.

This entity should also organize the discussions and round tables for adults, where the problems and conflicts could be discussed and the information about cultures and their differences would be available.

Financing of this project could be made by regular tax from the national states (1% of culture expenditure at max.), but also from the international organizations which are interested in culture, international relations and conflicts in them (NATO, EU, UNESCO, etc.).

The European Union would like to express the hope that its voice and opinions the Forum will take into consideration in preparing final version of document and that its suggestions and comments will be useful.

