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For the purpose of the conference held by Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup>, with regards to the positions of participating actors, pronounces and suggests:

### **Cultural integration or integration culture?**

No culture is static. Ideas, technologies, products, and people move from one place to another. When cultures come into contact through migration, trade, or the latest telecommunications devices, they influence each other. Sometimes cultures cross-pollinate, exchange foods, music, sports. At other times, say critics of globalisation, a culture swamps another like an invasive, fast-reproducing weed. Cultures have evolved in response to contact for thousands of years. But the pace has changed. In the past the influences of distant cultures came slowly, delayed by long journeys. Today, because of the telephone, the television, the Internet, telecommunications satellites, world trade, and long-distance travel, cultural influences can spread across the planet as fast as the click of a mouse. Cultural integration also concerns the adoption of a mass consumer culture where everything from fashion to sport, music to television, becomes integrated into the national culture, often without challenge. Through technology and trade, a seemingly borderless world is created. Globalisation affects economic, political, social, cultural and environmental decision-making.

Will local cultures inevitably fall victim to this global "consumer" culture? Will English eradicate all other languages? Will consumer values overwhelm peoples' sense of community and social solidarity? Or, on the contrary, will a common culture lead the way to greater shared values and political unity?

Historically, lingua franca has been a functional communication means which has always been used in certain regions as a bridging language independently of the linguistic history of the native language. In Europe, for example, German has served as lingua franca in large portions of Europe for centuries, being one of the official languages of the Austro-hungarian empire. French was the language of diplomacy and still it is a working language of many institutions. English is the current lingua franca of international business, science, technology and aviation. Moreover, English serves as a common platform for various international meetings and forums. In order to prevent misunderstandings and misleading usage of homophones, Forum for the 21st century suggests to develop an unitarian functional system of the English language, being used as lingua franca for the global communication, especially for the purposes of communication among the international and global institutions, as well as among countries. In order to establish such an international standard for the language, also referred to as Global English, Forum for the 21st century



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suggests to create a commission formed by native English speaking professionals from the academic field as the main platform, supported by representatives of each country, in order to bring their view and their meaning for the terminology of Global English, along with the representatives of institutions, with the aim to set an internationally comprehensive terminology and that would express the same meaning in all languages. UNESCO is also willing to participate by offering its know-how, scientific and cultural researchers and institutions. Functioning of this commission should be financed on the national level, by devoting 1% of GDP of each participating country to the commission's budget. Activities and all accomplishments of the commission will be supervised by a body created by the Forum for the 21st century for this purpose. As the objective is to enhance and facilitate the communication among professionals, representatives of international organizations and representatives of the nation on international level, their education will be crucial. Nonetheless, creation of materials for a system of learning English, available for schools, science and business participators free of charge will also be an inevitable part of commission's agenda. In the future, the Forum for the 21st century might consider the option of adding a second language, that could complement English in its function.

The political, military, and economic pillars of a global world can not be fully supported without the fourth pillar - a global religion - standing beneath the fourth corner, lest the structure collapse. Religious differences are seen as the final barrier, separating various ethnic populations. Until these differences are broken down, divergent cultures will never fully meld into a one global world. Religions need to accept the validity of all beliefs to attain world peace. The Catholic Church would favor one religion in the world - if it were Roman Catholicism. Assorted grand muftis and other true believers hold the same view, again so long as it is their faith that is universally recognized. The Forum for the 21st century therefore proposes the process of secularization, as done mainly in Europe, where an increasing majority of the European population has ceased to participate in traditional religious practices (on a regular basis) while still maintaining relatively high levels of private individual religious beliefs. In this respect, Forum for the 21st century advises unchurching and religious individualization, rather than secularization. The main feature of this process is "believing without belonging". Religions must not identify themselves with political, economic, or social powers, so as to remain free to work for justice and peace. Each state should respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares the freedom of belief for all humans, as well as the freedom of not-believing for atheists. States should promote dialogue and harmony between and within religions. They are obliged to minimize the risks of clashes among people of different religions and avoid demonstrations of communal bigotry in the society. In all participating countries, this could be achieved by establishing a system of bilateral or multilateral agreements between different religious associations, as well as by creating a fiscal system that allows citizens to devote part of their taxes as a financial support to the church they belong to. Despite the fact that the so called



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Western model of secularization can not be legally proclaimed in all the countries taking part on this Forum, it is highly advisable that the above mentioned recommendations are put into practice in the form of legally binding guidelines on a national level, in order to ensure secularization in the sense of equal protection to all religions and people of different faiths.

Today's global trends of migration, growth of minorities, and increased consciences about rights are some of the main factors that have brought multiculturalism onto the social scene. As a term it has provoked public and professional attention, commencing significant scientific and political debates related to its implications on the redefinition of the traditional concept of the State. Cultural diversity is not a contemporary phenomenon. The history of the world testifies that multiculturalism can be traced back to the empires of Alexander the Great or the Roman Empire. Furthermore, it can be identified in the new age empires of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empire. Also, multiculturalism can be identified in twentieth century communist federations such as the Soviet Union and Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. One of the most significant arguments against multiculturalism, is that it stands for the respecting and supporting of cultural differences that potentially can lead to serious obstruction of universally accepted values. Multiculturalism as a form of organization of the State is not sustainable unless there are binding elements identified in supra national, supra ethnical, supra cultural, supra racial, and supra religious level. The power of these elements should surpass the particular interests of one group. With respect to this notion, Forum for the 21st century suggests to outline a set of such elements on a national level, in order to create and maintain favorable conditions for sustainable multiculturalism. This outline should be, however, accomplished not only on the political field, but also various groups of specialists or non-governmental organizations should take part on this process. As migration brings new elements into a resident culture, a research on the cultural, historical, political, social, psychological, educational and economic factors, which facilitate the peaceful coexistence of different cultures, is essential. Forum for the 21st century suggests creation of a special body, functioning under the Ministry of Culture, responsible for this research in every state. According to the outcomes of various surveys and presented experience of individuals, a concept of the so called democratic multiculturalism" should be created. It would combine cultural and political communitarianism, recognise the importance of cultural identity and be committed to bringing the issue into the political domain. The state would intervene in religious and cultural practices in order to banish any kind of demonstration of racism, xenophobia or affirmative actions.

Nowadays, the state as a carrier of a dominant cultural core and as an exclusive unit of loyalty is challenged and being redefined in the vortex of a massive globalization process in migration and digitally-driven communications. Cultural re-tribalisation is stridently asserted, but paradoxically at the same time, split identities are becoming more common,



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multiple identities are negotiated, dual citizenship proliferates and a global network of shared symbols render cultural exclusivity less tenable. The contemporary multi-ethnic state is now a site of relentless interrogation of the validity of any sort of cultural consensus or attempts to impose one. Intercultural dialogue is crucial in preventing and ending conflicts. As Ban Ki-moon said on the Security Council, May 26. 2010, intercultural dialogue could promote reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict and could also introduce moderate voices into polarized debates. At a time when prejudice and hatred are all too common, when extremists seek new recruits through incitement and identity-based appeal, when politicians use divisiveness as a strategy to win elections, dialogue can be an antidote. In order to prevent ethnic conflicts and misuse of cultural differences, Forum for the 21st century considers crucial increasing intellectual engagement among scholars and nongovernmental organizations about possible approaches for preventing and resolving intra-national conflicts. Drawing attention to self-determination movements and issues that would likely lead to violent conflict in case of absence of international attention also play an important role in preventing conflicts. Moreover, building a foundation for an active international network of experts (from university, policy, NGO, and think-tank sectors) that can advance new thinking and policies about the self-determination-sovereignty-governance conundrum. A principal objective of this international entity is to bridge the gap in knowledge about other cultures, to lay foundations for a debate based on universally shared values and to help the governments undertake concrete activities especially in the areas of education, cultural diversity and heritage, the sciences and media. For this purpose, this international entity should consist of scholars representing each member state, selected by the Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, according to the fields of interests of each particular country. Representatives of nongovernmental organizations, both national or international, will help to bring a broader picture to the debates, providing information coming directly from the citizens. Cooperation within this organization has to be built on the basis of equality, mutual respect, trust and benefit, with focus on achieving strategic long-term harmony. Moreover it has to be built on the basis of respecting the fundamental principles of international law and the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations. Regarding the financing, Forum for the 21st century proposes to create a common budget of the organization with a contribution of 1,5 percent of GDP from each state.