

## Summary of consultation responses submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on the Proposal for a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport received nine responses to the consultation. Three of these came from DCMS's Non-Departmental Public Bodies: Arts Council England, English Heritage and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council; the others were from: the Commission for Racial Equality of Great Britain, the Foundation for Community Dance, the Prince's Trust, the Rural Cultural Forum, Visiting Arts, and the Central Council of Physical Recreation.

The key findings from the consultation were as follows:

- All respondents welcomed the proposal.
- Many saw Intercultural Dialogue as an important aspect of their present work in building cohesive communities, and were encouraged by the opportunity the Year provided to develop this further.
- Several pointed out the opportunity which Liverpool Capital of Culture and the Beijing Olympics, both in 2008, provided to promote Intercultural Dialogue.
- Several remarked on the vital role of the arts, and one on that of sport, in promoting Intercultural Dialogue.

The respondents had experience of working with disabled people, disadvantaged young people, ethnic minorities, people in rural areas and sportspeople. They were keen to use the experience of working with these groups to promote Intercultural Dialogue among them and other groups in the UK and in Europe.

Several respondents remarked on the modest size of the budget (€10 million) considering the Europe-wide scope of the proposal. One suggested that the level of co-financing expected from each member state be considered the minimum point of investment for the UK. Another thought that as half the budget was assigned to information campaign promotion, it was unrealistic to expect that €5 million, devoted both to co-financing national actions across 25 member states as well as providing grants for Community scale activities, would be sufficient to meet the stated objectives; the budget should at least be equal to that of the Year of Equal Opportunities (€13.6 million). One respondent suggested that ring-fenced funds should be made available to directly finance the proposals rather than relying on the funds from the various Community programmes mentioned in the proposal.

One respondent queried whether adequate funding would be available to ensure that minority communities participated fully in any initiatives, bearing in mind that most groups that work on minority heritage issues were small and poorly funded. This respondent also said that resources would be an issue for the heritage sector in generating projects that could address intercultural dialogue across the European Community.

One respondent was concerned that terms within the proposal were not clearly defined. In particular, definitions of neither "intercultural dialogue" nor "active European citizenship" were provided, despite the fact that these represent the two over-arching objectives of the Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Some respondents pointed out that there was no specific mention in the proposal of race or identity, or of Black or Asian people, people of colour, migrants or newcomers. They were worried that the impression could be given that the dialogue concerned only white Europeans whose differences were purely linguistic. One of these also suggested that the principle of non-discrimination and the objective of lessening ethnic tension should be given much greater prominence in the text of the proposal.

To reach and engage UK citizens, one respondent recommended a trans-sector approach utilising the education sector and the existing arts and cultural networks that operate across Europe and in the UK. They recommended a strong lead from UK national and local governments, the need for public participatory arts activities and the benefits of online vehicles for connecting people across borders.

Noting that sport and physical activity programmes in EU member states have already proved their ability to unite people of differing cultures and religions, one respondent urged that sporting activities should be included in the programme of events.