



## **Immigrants & Integration Is for many just a mirage?**

### **Agenda**

## **How and Whys of the Interreligious Dialogue**

21 – 22 September 2017

Sala Fiume – Palazzo Donini, Perugia

1. As decided at the planning stage and confirmed at the Brussels meeting, the session to be held in Perugia on 21-22 September will cover the fostering of interreligious dialogue as an important factor in the integration process of the immigrant population.

The role undertaken by religion in contemporary society as a component of identity, as a place to keep the memories of Cultures, as a space for prevention and management of conflicts, makes it a significant channel to improve the relationship between different communities, in order to obtain and keep social cohesion. The recognition and respect of each religious affiliation can indeed contribute to the effective interaction between different ethnicities, cultures and religions, only if the actors involved (immigrants and natives) recognize each other as interlocutors with equal status.

As shown by the critical issues or lacunae in the integration process of the immigrant populations in many EU countries, it was not enough to facilitate the process through housing, work, school and training, or to simplify the process of family reunification, in order to activate a real immigration/natives equalisation and, consequently, to build the premises of a shared identity within a plural society, maker of active citizenship.

In fact, favouring the structural dimension of the integration processes did not allow the development of policies and practices to enhance spaces and channels of dialogue able to neutralise the emergence of conflicts apt to undermine the common good that is social cohesion. Many consider this deficiency as the main reason for the disquiet of so many members of the Second/Third Generations, whose neglected expectations laid the foundation for the search of a religious identity able to fill a double gap: that is,

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the feeling of not fully belonging either to the society in which they live nor to that of their parents.

Moreover, these same loose ends can be considered the cause of the phenomenon of radicalization and extremism, particularly within fringes of young Muslims, as the latest Spanish case shows.

**2.** In light of these premises and as a logical continuation of the issues addressed in the previous meetings (existing integration processes, welfare system, Second/Third Generations), we propose for the meeting of 21/22 September a reflection on a Best Practice implemented in Umbria on interreligious dialogue within three EU Projects, which Aliseicoop realized in collaboration with the University of Perugia and Regione Umbria.

This Practice does not aim to enhance religious and cultural knowledge as "value in itself", but to consider institutional representatives, individual practitioners (both believers and ministers), and public and private bodies as socio-political actors who move within a field of forces, where cultural and religious knowledge, political opportunities and structural limits are interwoven.

In short, the structural approach of this Best Practice focused on the perception of identity and religious dynamics not as a "mosaic of communities" but as a dynamic network of constantly evolving relationships, which are crossed by multiple forms of belonging and sense of identity.

**3.** In close connection with the discussion about the Best Practice of Interreligious Dialogue, it is proposed a debate/workshop on the contents of a draft legislation approved by the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house of the Italian Parliament) aimed at neutralising the jihadist radicalization processes through initiatives of cultural prevention (along with existing intelligence service and territorial controls). The focus of the draft law essentially lies in the fact that the phenomenon of radicalization is fought on the ground of ideas. Thus, the purposes of this proposal is to: propagate (in schools, prisons, media and within families) the appreciation of the cultural and religious realities of a society that aims towards plurality; enhance a counter-narrative that allows young Muslims to comprehend the nature and the characters of jihadist propaganda; and demystify the theological distortions fed by radical messages.

**4.** For the meeting, it is therefore proposed:

- a) Presentation of the Best Practice regarding the Interreligious Dialogue. Will follow a workshop with the subject who participated to the implementation of the Best Practice.
- b) Presentation of the draft legislation on cultural prevention of the phenomenon of jihadist radicalization.

