

2008, European Year of the Intercultural Dialogue – with women?

2008 is the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID), which aims to inspire Europeans to celebrate their own culture, connect with others in Europe and the wider world, on fostering tolerance and respect. Established by a joint Council-European Parliament Decision, Decision No 1983/2006/EC which does not propose any specific definition of Intercultural Dialogue, the Year will focus on some of the strategic priorities of the EU such as respecting and promoting cultural diversity, contributing to ensuring equal opportunities and non discrimination, emphasising the cultural and the educational dimension of the Lisbon Strategy and stimulating the “cultural and creative economy” in the EU.

Equality between women and men does not appear in the Decision, although it certainly is crucial in relation to the eight topics chosen to illustrate the Intercultural Dialogue: culture, education, migration, minorities, religion, multilingualism, the workplace and youth. EWL believes that a gender approach should be transversal to every topic to guarantee the participation of women, ensuring their own concerns and needs are taken into account when developing actions. Moreover, the Intercultural Dialogue can be a good mechanism to voice, expose and condemn those practices that violate women's rights and silence women's voices. Intercultural dialogue and diversity of culture should be promoted in a way that respects women's rights. As a result, intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship.