

Multiculturalism – A Confusing European Approach

Cristian JURA¹

¹ State Secretary, National Council for Combating Discrimination. Lecturer, Public International Law, Christian University Dimitrie Cantemir, Romania

Correspondence: Cristian JURA, National Council for Combating Discrimination, 1-3 Walter Maracineanu Str., 1st District, Bucharest 010155. Romania; Public International Law, Christian University Dimitrie Cantemir, 176 Splaiul Unirii, 4th District, Bucharest 040042, Romania. Tel: 407-2264-3235. E-mail: cristianjura@yahoo.com

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Abstract

In this research I will introduce the issues of multiculturalism from a European perspective, more precisely from the view of the leaders of European Union and from the legal provisions related to this topic. What started once with a lot of enthusiasm, ended with extremely disappointing declarations of top European leaders about multiculturalism. It seems that European leaders do not understand the importance of sustainable policies in this sensitive field of multiculturalism. At the end, what is European Union? A sum of cultures, living together for hundreds of years. But, after last waves of expansion of European Union the citizens had to live together with other cultures. And maybe they are not used to live in the proximity of a different culture. So, the issue of multiculturalism is vital for the existence of the whole European Union.

There are countries in which several cultures co-exist, being more or less accepted or tolerated by the whole community. The minority cultures are in different stages of acceptance or tolerances with each other or with the dominant culture.

Keywords: multiculturalism, European Union, EYID 2008 (European Year of Intercultural Dialogue)

1. The European Union Lacks a Clear Perspective on Multiculturalism

The European political project cannot ignore this plurality of cultures in which each national culture expresses and imposes itself differently. The problem of building a new political area means, among other things, the establishment of a new pattern of society - a pluralist pattern which aspires - through the contribution of the various national/ minority cultures - to create a common European culture.

Is multiculturalism able to create a European identity through cultural and political exchanges?

This aspect has to take into account the problem of citizenship and of the intervention of the supranational institutions in defining and creating the notion of citizenship and identity in Europe as for a European political culture to be created.

One of the ideas related to a unite Europe expressly refers to exceeding the models of the states considered to be particularistic and to using means of linking different juridical, cultural and political areas together; at the same time the proposal refers to maintaining the national sovereignty of each state and to elaborating a constitution able to recognize them all.

Mainstreaming culture in all relevant policies within the EU is based on The Lisbon Treaty (Article 167, paragraph 4; the ex- EU Treaty, Article 151) which requires the Union to take into account culture in all its actions so as to foster intercultural respect, and promote diversity (Note 1). The Commission work to ensure that the promotion of culture and cultural diversity is given due consideration when all regulatory and financial decisions or proposals are made.

In May 2007, the Commission advanced an European Agenda for Culture founded on three common sets of objectives: cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity; and culture as a key component in international relations.

This Agenda, prepared pursuing a public on-line consultation, was approved by the cultural department during the Lisbon Forum of September 2007. It was also endorsed by the Council in its Resolution of November 2007 and then by the European Council in its conclusions of December 2007.

Alongside with the first set of objectives, the Union and all the other relevant stakeholders should work together to foster intercultural dialogue to ensure that the EU's cultural diversity is to understand, respect and promote. In order to accomplish this objective, they should, for example, seek to enhance the cross-border mobility of artists and workers in the cultural sector and the cross-border dissemination of works of art.

The second set of objectives focuses on the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and its follow-up "EU 2020". Cultural industries are an asset for Europe's economy and competitiveness. Creativity generates both social and technological innovation and stimulates growth and jobs in the EU.

Promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations is the third set of objectives. As a party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (Note 2), the EU is committed to developing a new and more active cultural role for Europe in international relations and to integrating the cultural dimension as a vital element in Europe's dealings with partner countries and regions.

In order to implement these three sets of objectives, new working methods and partnerships have been launched.

The Commission now engages in a structured dialogue with the cultural sector in order to identify and better understand the full range of stakeholders involved in European cultural co-operation. In this framework, the various stakeholders in the field of culture – professional organizations, cultural institutions, non-governmental organizations, European networks, foundations, etc. – discuss issues among themselves and engage themselves in dialogues with the EU institutions and the Member States as to support the development of new policies.

For the Member States, implementing the Cultural Agenda entails the taking of their cooperation one step further by using the open method of coordination. Four thematic working groups of experts nominated by the Member States have formulated policy recommendations based on exchanges of best practices and have made proposals for cooperation initiatives.

Intercultural dialogue is an ongoing priority of the European Union. After the implementation of 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (Note 3), the European Commission is actively continuing work in this field. This includes in particular the following initiatives taken by GD Education and Culture (Note 4) and other Commission departments to support cooperation on intercultural dialogue. The General Directorate for Education and Culture and other services of the Commission support the cooperation on intercultural dialogue.

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue EYID 2008 was a year of projects, festivals, debates, information campaigns, competitions, articles, speeches, networking and reflection, all aimed:

- to raise public awareness in Europe and, apart from the need for intercultural dialogue, to help us adapt ourselves, as European citizens, to an increasingly mixed and complex world;
- to involve many people in investigating what the intercultural dialogue means in their daily life;
- to promote the role of the intercultural dialogue in increasing mutual understanding, trying to find out the benefits of cultural diversity, fostering active European citizenship and a sense of European belonging

2. Political Approach of Multiculturalism

2.1 Angela Merkel and Multikulti (Note 5)

The multicultural society has suffered a failure in Germany. The premises of creating the so-called 'multikulti' - the term "pampering" the effort of integrating the foreigners within the borders of the federal territory - proved to be very weak. During the hot debates that took place within the governmental coalition with regard to the law of immigration and to the policy of integrating the foreigners, the tone used by Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, gave satisfaction to the conservatory wing. "This concept was a failure, a total failure," said Merkel in the Congress of the Young Union/ the Union of the Youth that took place in October 15-17, 2010, in Potsdam. In her declaration Merkel supports Horst Seehofer (CSU), the Bavarian Christian-socialist chief, who declared that "Multikulti died."

The declaration Seehofer presented a day before at the same Congress raised numberless critical opinions. Besides, Seehofer spoke about a "dominant German culture," which was supported by the CDU-CSU governing Union. He declared that "Germany cannot turn into a human assistance world office" and, that before continuing the debates on the law of immigration, it is necessary that the foreigners, who already live in Germany, should be professionally integrated and qualified. "Not even the prognostication concerning the lack of specialists cannot open the gates to an uncontrolled immigration" added Seehofer. He considered that the absorption of highly qualified working hands in Germany is "sufficiently regularized," and combated the system of evaluating the

immigrants according to the Canadian models, as proposed by the liberals (FDP).

By his declarations, the Bavarian Prime Minister raised contradictory reactions from the part of the parties in opposition, but also from the part of the liberals and of certain Christian democratic ministers. The Chief of the Green Faction, Jurgen Trittin, accused Seehofer that he "courted with the right side way of thinking." The reason why Merkel supports the Bavarian Prime Minister is due to the reproached she received for neglecting the conservatory wing of the CDU-CSU Union, and consequently making her lose a part of the electorate. The Chancellor was reproached even in Potsdam, in the Congress of the Young Union/ The Union of the Youth, the lack of a definite position and of "clear words." As a counter response, Karl –Theodor zu Guttenberg, the Minister of Defense, offered a peremptory position and a direct approach of the problems. At the same time with labeling the reaction of the multicultural society of Germany as a failure, Angela Merkel announced, at Potsdam, the position of the President of the country, Christian Wulff, who previously declared that "the Islam is a part of Germany."

It seems that the Chancellor tries to dearly strengthen her position and her authority within the Governmental Union which has been permanently submitted to intense inner frictions this year. On the one side Merkel has a very open attitude versus the Muslims, backing Wulff's declarations and on the other side she disputes the achievement of a multicultural project, meant to allow both Germans and foreign immigrants a happy cohabitation, and covering thus Seehofer's declarations.

2.2 David Cameron and Multiculturalism (Note 6)

"The doctrine of the multicultural state has failed and it shall be abandoned," said David Cameron, the British Prime Minister, in a speech delivered in a conference on security that took place in Munich. "The British Muslims shall adopt the main values of liberty and equality," considers Cameron. The Declaration of the British Executive Power appears at only a few months after the moment the Chancellor Angela Merkel declared as well that "the attempts of building a multicultural society in Germany have faced a complete failure." Here are a few of the most important ideas extracted from the speech of the Premier David Cameron:

- The British Muslims shall adhere to the main values of liberty and equality;
- Premier Cameron will announce the end of the "passive tolerance" in the context of the divided communities;
- The members belonging to all religions shall integrate themselves in the larger society and accept its fundamental values;
- To be a British citizen means to believe in the liberty of speech and in religion, in democracy and equal rights, irrespective of race, sex or sexual orientation;
- We have to be sure that the immigrants learn English and that all schools teach their children elements connected with a common curriculum and culture;
- Each individual, from ministers to electors, shall have an active confrontation with those sharing extremist opinions;
- Cameron warned that all organizations and groups who do not promote the British values will no longer receive funds from the state budget and will no longer be allowed to cooperate with the state;
- The Premier has promised to elaborate a new plan meant to confront and "triumph" over the extremist ideologies that make some to involve themselves in terrorist actions;
- In the name of a multicultural state we have encouraged various cultures to develop independently, apart from one another and apart from the main culture;
- We have failed in the attempt of offering the immigrants the vision of a society they wanted to belong to;
- I do accept the fact that multiculturalism made some of the members of the white community feel that they were not treated correctly;
- Racism and intolerance are, "truly speaking," doomed to failure. But when the unacceptable opinions and practices came from the non-white persons, we played far more cautiously, fearful to condemn them;
- Cameron underlined the clear-cut difference between "the Islamic extremism" and "the Islamic religion": "We shall be clear-minded. The Islamic extremism and the Islamic religion are not one and the same thing".

2.3 Nicolas Sarkozy and Multiculturalism (Note 7)

The French President Nicolas Sarkozy declared in February 2011 that the multicultural model is a European “failure”; he thus, adhered to similar opinions previously expressed by Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, and by David Cameron, the British Premier, says AFP “Yes, it is a failure. The truth is that in all our democratic views we are more preoccupied by the one who comes rather than the one who houses and whose identity has to be mainly taken into account.” This was the answer of the President when interviewed by TF1 about multiculturalism. “We are not the adepts of a society where communities coexist together. If you come to France, you have to identify yourself with the community you are living in, that is with a national community. If you do not agree, do not come to France,” underlined Sarkozy.

By these declarations he practically joins Angela Merkel’s position when she declared in December 16 that the model of a multicultural Germany, where various cultures cohabit harmoniously, was a “total failure.”

These assertions uttered by the three main European leaders are heard the moment when immigration starts to become a major problem to be taken into account by almost all European countries, as it, very often, entails a resuscitation of the extreme right.

“Our Islamic fellow countrymen shall live and practice their own religion, as all the other countrymen, but they can act only as a French Islam not as an Islam in France,” said Sarkozy. “We, in France, are not desirous to witness ostentatious street prayers,” but we find it “normal” that the mosques should exist,” he added. “The French national community does not like to change their way of life, their life style, the equality between men and women (...), the liberty of girls to attend school,” he added. “Because of the uncontrolled immigration, they feel like not living in their own country, and think they are imposed certain practices which are altogether contrary to the rules of our social life,” said Claude Gueant, the French Home Minister in an interview on Europe 1. “The French want to choose their own way of living and they do not want to be imposed another one,” added the minister.

Claude Gueant defended the debates the UMP Presidential Party intends to launch on Islam and laity in April 5, and which stirs anxiousness among the French Muslims.

The Government has already launched in 2009-2010 a controversial debate on the notion of “national identity.” 14 months before the Presidential elections and threatened by the growth of the extreme right, as shown by the polls, the problem concerning the place allotted to Islam, has re-appeared as actual in the political debates.

France houses between 5 and 6 million Muslim, being the largest community of this type in Europe.

3. Daily Multiculturalism

There is no doubt that, if legally approaching the subject, multiculturalism cannot, beyond any restraint, be spoken about. Multiculturalism has been approached and debated from various points of view: political, sociological, psychological, or from the point of view of migration or of ethnical and religious minorities. Consequently, there appeared several theories referring to a dialogue on multiculturalism and multilingualism. Yet, in the end, multiculturalism cannot be fully understood, and accordingly, each citizen of the European Union lives his daily life in conformity with the rules of the community he is living in.

Much talk, few deeds.

One of the simplest ways of defining multiculturalism is to appreciate, accept or sustain the existence of a multitude of cultures. Multiculturalism has often been compared with assimilationism and social integration and has been described as a “salad bowl” or a “cultural mosaic” rather than a “melting pot” (Note 8).

As a matter of fact, the states pretend to be blind at the development of societies and have done almost nothing to promote multiculturalism. They prefer to speak about minorities, migration and migrants, rather than to offer a comprehensive strategy in approaching multiculturalism. In the best of cases the states were only preoccupied by some aspects - as cultural exchanges or promoting diversity rather than by a comprehensive multicultural approach.

The result of these blind states policies is that there are countries in which several cultures co-exist, being more or less accepted or tolerated by the whole community. The minority cultures are in different stages of acceptance or tolerances with each other or with the dominant culture. Is this multiculturalism?

The whole Europe is confronted with the same phenomenon, in which cultures are submitted to the rule: if you do not disturb me, I will not disturb you.

All these cultures have independent evolutions, having practically no contact with each other; very often there

appear discussions concerned with this separate development of the cultures and problems are raised connected with the way they have reached one level or another. In such cases, the states usually take legal measures as to forbid what they do not like within one culture or another. It so happened in France and Belgium, where the dominant culture or the majority of those belonging to the dominant culture suddenly discovered that persons or a group of persons belonging to another culture, or to a minority represented by a religious culture, want to use a different dress code, different from that of the majority. The majority discovered that Muslim women wear 'burqa', which was contravening the main stream. Consequently, the Parliaments of the two above mentioned countries hurried to pass laws against 'burqa.' Belgium was the first European country to adopt such a law, then France.

The Law interdicting the Islamic women to wear a veil in public areas entered into force in France, at the beginning of 2011, France becoming thus, the second European country to apply the interdiction, after Belgium. It is estimated that the Law, adopted by the Paris Government on October 11, 2010, after very stormy debates, will prejudice almost 2,000 Muslim women who used to wear the 'niqab' - the face covering veil - or the 'burqa' - the full traditional attire provided with a net for the eyes - out of approximately 5 million Muslims living in France.

A public area is defined by the Law as any precinct or open place destined to the use of the public - shops, cinema halls, restaurants, markets or squares, as well as all government offices. The adoption of the Law was seriously supported by Nicolas Sarkozy, the President of France, in spite of all the warnings given by the State Council whose opinion was that such an interdiction could never be applied.

The Law stipulates that the punishment applied to those women who still wear the Islamic veil, shall be a fine of 150 Euro or training lessons about the values of France and about their obligation to respect the statute of a French citizen. At the same time, whoever forces an Islamic woman to cover her face - either by threat, violence or by any other form of abuse - shall receive a one-year confinement or shall be fined with 30,000 Euro.

In the given context, Professor Omid Safil (Note 9), an expert in Islamic Studies, declares: "*The latest European controversies related to the 'burqa' represents another signal concerning the xenophobia that is spreading all over Europe. This anxiousness is not exactly referring to the Koran or to the competitive interpretations of the Islamic culture and traditions, but it mainly refers to the threat many European citizens feel in connection with the changes concerning the demographic tendencies of the European continent.*

After all, the 'burqa' worn by the Islamic women affects a very small number of women living in Europe; no more than a few thousand (ed. note - according to certain unofficial statistic information, less than 2,000 women living in France use to wear the 'burqa'). The interdiction of the 'burqa' practically is connected with the infatuated attempts of the main powers to define the parameters by which an oppressed minority is not allowed to manifest their own religious creeds. Yet, at the same time, you shall admit the fact that the same continent - through several countries - accepts nudist-beaches or legalized prostitution. There is a long time practice for some people to permanently concentrate their - sometimes - obsessive discussions on the Islamic women; yet in the end, the various forms of 'hijab' (among which the 'burqa' is the most drastic one) are significant only in the outlook of those very people's personal opinions. If people are really interested in what the 'burqa' means for the Islamic women, it would be better and advisable to ask them and not to impose on them their own personal interpretations."

Here are just a few examples of actions related with the 'burqa' in Europe:

- In 2012, the editor of the Top Gear radio broadcast, Jeremy Clarkson, stirred up a wave of dissatisfactions and revolts after having said - within a broadcast program in which the three speakers were talking about the driving accidents - that he saw - while in a taxi cab - an Islamic woman who stumbled and fell; when she was helped up and her 'burqa' was removed, a very provoking underwear was shown (Note 10);
- The leaders of the Madrid opposition have declared on July 18, 2011 that the Spanish Members of Parliament will discuss over the law draft interdicting the wearing of the Islamic veil in public areas, arguing that those attire covering the whole body are degrading for women;
- The polls made in Europe and the States by the Pew Research Center (with its headquarters in Washington) revealed the fact that a large majority of Germans, Spaniards, French and British support the interdiction of the Islamic veil. Most of the Americans are against the interdiction of wearing the 'burqa';
- On July 13, 2011, the Lower Chamber of the French Parliament approved a law draft meant to forbid Islamic women to wear the Islamic veil - 'the burqa' - that covered their whole body except for the eyes and hands. The document is to be presented in the Senate;

- On June 25, 2010 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe unanimously adopted Resolution 1743 (2012) on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe (Note 11) that was against the interdiction for women to wear the Islamic veils in public areas, justifying this decision by the fact that a fundamental right of the Islamic women who desire to cover their faces is violated. The resolution underlines the fact that the veils - known under the names of 'burqa' or 'niqab' might be interdicted only in case of public safety or professional obligations;
- In June, 2011, Jordi Hereu, the mayor of Barcelona stated the Barcelona is to become the first large town in Spain in which the wearing of the Islamic veil in public offices will be interdicted. The decree shall be applied to all public areas: Town Halls, covered markets or nurseries. Eight more towns and communities have interdicted the wearing of the 'burqa' (Note 12);
- At the beginning of May 2011 a young woman of about 26, Mamei Marmouri (a native immigrant from Tunis), was the first woman fined in Italy for wearing the Islamic veil in public areas. The event took place in Novara, Northern Italy and the fine was of 500 Euro;
- In May 2, 2010, the Vice President of the European Parliament requested that the Islamic veil should be interdicted everywhere on the European continent. Silvana Koch-Mehrin considered that the 'burqa' is an abuse against the women's rights (Note 13);
- The Belgian Parliament approved on July 15, 2011 a law interdicting the wearing, in public areas, of the Islamic veil and of other pieces of attire covering women's faces. Belgium the second European country to interdict the wearing of the 'burqa', after France (Note 14);
- In Holland, during his electoral campaign, Geert Wilders requested that the mosques and the wearing of the 'burqa' shall be interdicted. The Swiss Canton of Aargau has demanded the interdiction of the veil all over Switzerland, while the Austrian Party of Liberty (FPÖ) from Oberösterreich has failed in its recent attempt to impose a similar law for the whole Austria;
- In April 2010, a woman wearing the Islamic veil while driving was fined by the French police for the guilt of "inconvenient driving and lack of visibility." The fine of 22 Euro was given to her in the basis of one article of the Rode Code which obliged the driver to afford himself enough free moving space and a large visual area, as to be able to comfortably execute the necessary movements;
- In January 2010, Roberto Maroni, the Italian Home Minister declared that the Italian Parliament intend to impose an interdiction with regard to the Islamic veil worn by the Muslim women in the aim of covering their faces;
- In August 2009, a spokesman of the Denmark Conservatory Party announced that his faction demand the interdiction of the 'burqa' - the traditional Muslim veil - to be worn in public area;
- In August 2009, the French officials forbid a Muslim woman to swim in a public piscine because she was dressed in 'burkini' - a swimming suit covering the whole body except for the face, the arms and the legs. The personnel of the piscine explained that the woman could not enter the water because the piscine had to be "hygienically protected."

All the examples mentioned above are linked with the freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Some people manifested a total lack of respect regarding other religions: they were disrespectful against women. The next step was taken by the authorities: laws or regulations to interdict Islamic veil in France, Spain, Italy, UK, Belgium, Austria. Even in more tolerant cultures such regulations were adopted, like in Denmark or Switzerland. The whole attitude against Islamic veil is like an avalanche, impossible to be stopped.

It seems that those leaders who are against Islamic veil forget that there are legally binding provisions in, at least, two international human rights documents. One of them is European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe. There is a particular article, article 9, regarding freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Note 15). The article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights is using the word „everyone” (Note 16). All the countries mentioned above are members of the Council of Europe.

The second document is Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union (Note 17). Article 10 (Note 18) has a similar content with the article 9 from European Convention of Human Rights and is using the same word „everyone” for people entitled to this right (Note 19).

It becomes confusing. Do they respect the legally binding international provisions or not? Are there those two articles really for everyone?

There is no action without re-action. A businessman will sue France and Belgium after having paid the fine for

the first two women in Belgium called in the Court for the wearing of the Islamic veil in public areas (Note 20).

The Frenchman Rachid Nekkaz established a fund of 1 million Euro meant to cover all the fines paid for the women wearing the 'niqab' or the 'burqa' in public areas, as these types of attire are forbidden in both France and Belgium. The two above mentioned women were fined because they were wearing the 'niqab' in Brussels.

"France and Belgium have taken the decision to offer no possibility and liberty for women to wear whatever they like. It is beyond any acceptability that the European governments pass laws which do not respect the rights of the individual," declared Nekkaz in Brussels. Besides, the businessman intends to sue both countries at European Court of Human Rights for the violation of the individual's liberties.

4. Conclusions

2008 was the year of European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. After 2 years only, in 2010 the European political leaders still talk about the failure of multiculturalism. In fact, there was no strategy to really implement multiculturalism as a transversal policy in European societies. No relevant document has been adopted; no specific laws to promote multiculturalism were passed. People live with the fear that the balance between the culture of the majority and the culture of the minority might change.

It is already high time to admit the availability of a new concept: stability and well-being through multiculturalism. On the one side it is about the national multiculturalism and on the other side it is about the global multiculturalism

Cultural diversity means wealth. And wealth shall be kept untouched. Yet, this diversity shall not undermine the chances of a civic life within a coherent civilization, built on the solidarity of its members. Multiculturalism might offer Europe the much-dream-of stability, allowing all and each in turn to reach the full satisfaction of having the possibility to live within a strong civilization and in the midst of some hundreds of cultures.

There are still questions to which confusing answers were given:

Who is responsible for drafting a solid multicultural policy and then implement it? Who should legally assume this policy? Should the Member states of European Union? Should the European Union itself? Could we reduce multiculturalism in exchange for artists, intercultural dialogue and raise awareness campaigns, minorities and immigration, seminars and conferences, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity and culture as a key component in international relations?

Too many questions, and certainly still more. Unfortunately, it seems that we have forgotten to focus our attention on the most important problem when speaking about multiculturalism: people. It appears that multiculturalism addresses to elites not to individuals who live their life in the midst of other cultures.

But most of all we must not forget that multiculturalism is a policy that encompasses at least two parties willing to share each other values.

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Notes

Note 1. Treaty of Lisbon was signed by the 27 European Union member states at 13 of december 2007. Available http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/index_en.htm (24th of January 24, 2012)

¹ Full text of the Convention available

Note 2. Full text of the Convention available http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 3. <http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 4. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 5. Declaration on multiculturalism of Angela Merkel available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 6. Declaration on multiculturalism of David Cameron available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 7. Declaration on multiculturalism of Nicolas Sarkozy available at: <http://www.france24.com/en/20110210-multiculturalism-failed-immigration-sarkozy-live-broadcast-tf1-france-public-questions> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 8. It is not the objective of this study to define multiculturalism, to count all the definitions of multiculturalism or to analyses various definitions. Interested persons could use simple definitions as the ones from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Multiculturalism> or other more sophisticated like <http://www.britannica.com/bps/search?query=multiculturalism&blacklist=941150> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 9. Omid Safi is one of the outstanding Muslim scholars, Professor of Islamic Studies in the North Carolina University at Chapel Hill, specialist in contemporary Islamic thinking and Medieval Islamic history, the director of the Department for Islamic Studies within the American Academy of Religions, editor of the Volume "Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003). Here are a few of his books: "Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam" (UNC Press, 2006), "Voices of Islam: Voices of Change" (Praeger, 2006), "Memories of Muhammad" (HarperCollins). He is about to finish writing a book on the reforming movement in Iran and a volume about Rumi - the Persian poet.

Note 10. Declaration of Jeremy Clarkson available at: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-1297965/Top-Gears-Jeremy-Clarkson-sparks-fury-burka-babes-undervest-joke.html> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 11. Resolution 1743 (2012) on Islam, Islamism and Islamophobia in Europe, text available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta10/ERES1743.htm> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 12. Declaation of Jordi Hereu, Mayor of Barcelona, text available at <http://www.apropo.ro/news/social/barcelona-primul-mare-oras-din-spania-care-va-interzice-portul-burqa-6422749> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 13. Declaration on Islamic veil of Silvana Koch-Mehrin. Available at: <http://www.mediafax.ro/externe/propunere-de-interzicere-a-valului-islamic-integral-in-spatiu-uniunii-europene-6086055> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 14. Text available at text: <http://www.frontpress.ro/?p=15638> (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 15. European Convention on Human Rights of the Council of Europe, text available at: http://www.echr.coe.int/NR/rdonlyres/D5CC24A7-DC13-4318-B457-5C9014916D7A/0/CONVENTION_ENG_WEB.pdf (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 16. The article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights: „1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. 2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such

limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.”

Note 17. Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union, text available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 18. Consolidated Treaties. Charter of Fundamental Rights (2012). Publications Office of the European Union. DOI: 10.2860/58644, http://europa.eu/pol/pdf/qc3209190enc_002.pdf (24th of January 24, 2012)

Note 19. The article 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of European Union: “1. *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right includes freedom to change religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or in private, to manifest religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.*

2. *The right to conscientious objection is recognized, in accordance with the national laws governing the exercise of this right”.*

Note 20. <http://www.france24.com/en/20110819-french-businessman-pay-all-burqa-fines-belgium-rachid-nekkaz> (24th of January 24, 2012)