How to combine Integration and Diversities:

The challenge of an EU multicultural citizenship

Discussion paper

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1. The context: the diversification of EU diversity

Like all human societies, the European Union displays a wide variety of ethno-cultural and national affiliations and identities. This diversity is not going to disappear under the pressure of globalisation. The "uniformisation" of mass culture is certainly a trend that cannot be denied. But at the same time, various forms of cultural, ethnic, national, religious and post-national identities emerge in the public sphere and reconstruct themselves as a response to the "uniformisation" trend.

In a book published in 1995, the American historian David Hollinger introduced the expression « diversification of diversity » to describe the dynamics of cultures and identities in the United States context. By analogy, one could claim that the European Union has also entered a process of diversification of its diversity, which follows specific patterns and calls to some extent for a specific European debate about European forms of diversity or about European diversities.

In the European Union, the diversification of diversity has several sources. First, since May 2004, the European Union is composed of 25 states, each of which is linked to a specific history of nation building and to specific national identities. These states do have many points in common but they also defend their specificity in terms of language, political systems, legal systems and so on. Tomorrow, the process of enlargement will increase the diversity of national identities available within the EU. The new candidate countries are obviously interested in joining the EU experience but they do not want to assimilate in the EU project and loose totally their distinctiveness. In that sense, the next enlargement of the EU will certainly again increase the EU diversity in terms of national identities.

Second, in several member states, acceding states and candidate countries, sub-national political mobilisation promotes ethno-regional identities as groups claim recognition as national minorities, as ethnic groups or even sometimes full independence. We could mention the Basque and Catalan cases in Spain, the Corsican and Breton cases in France, the historical ethno-linguistic divide in Belgium or the rise of the Northern League in Italy whose agenda is to build a distinct Padanian nation and state outside Italy. In Central and Oriental Europe as well the issues of national minorities remains stringent. In all these cases, claims are put forward for the recognition and the protection of distinctive cultures and identities based on the specific history of the minorities, on their language or on other cultural traits. The political result of that dynamics is sometimes federalization, sometimes regionalisation, sometimes the granting of cultural rights to the national minorities or sometimes the implementation of more or less declared assimilation policies.

Third, European Union is and will be a region of immigration. Migrants come from all over the world following new patterns of migration. Some of them settle and adapt culturally to their new environment while simultaneously enriching the local culture and the variety of ethno-cultural identities. Others maintain transnational links and activities. One could say that today the whole world is represented in the European Union. This is clearly a structural data since immigration will continue and will perhaps soon or later be again legally organized both at the EU and national levels. Immigrant and immigrant origin populations in European cities are undoubtedly bound to increase in the future. As a result, new ways of life, new religions, new visions of the world, new cultures are constantly introduced in the European Union social fabric in a more or less smooth way.

Fourth, compared to other parts of the world, the issues of indigenous minorities and post-slavery minorities (like the African-Americans) are much less relevant in the European Union. But the issue of the gypsy populations is certainly more acute. These groups are present in many EU states. Everywhere they suffer a high level of discrimination and racism while at the

same their culture is often celebrated, for example music. Their position is specific in the sense they are often forgotten both in migration debates and national minorities' debates.

Fifth, several EU states are home to variably important Jewish communities whose identity is often internally discussed within but also outside the community. Furthermore the situation in the Middle East does have an impact in the EU and antisemitism remains a point of contention.

Beyond these national, cultural, ethnic lines of diversification, the European Union is also diversified in many other different ways. As a matter of fact, Europe faces a fundamental problem, at least for those who suffer from it, namely the social, economic and political inequality, between states, between regions and cities within each state and between individuals and groups. Economic, social and political deprivation is on the increase in many European cities with the rise of unemployment, homelessness, petty urban crime, the return of some diseases, which had disappeared, etc. Two processes seem to be simultaneously at work.

First, exclusion/inclusion processes account for the apparition of a distinct society outside the mainstream society. Conservative moralists stress the distinctive features (cultural, mental, etc.) of this "European permanent underclass". Progressive thinkers prefer to stress the macro-economic and social processes, which lead to the formation of a category of excluded pseudo-citizens.

Second, new configurations of inequality patterns within the mainstream society can also be observed. Global capitalism has been reshaping the class structure through flexibility, precarious and badly paid jobs, etc. Not all EU citizens are equally 'in': there is a huge difference between a top manager in a big firm and a part-time worker in a restaurant, even though both are part of the 'included' as opposed to the 'excluded'. Clearly, these forms of inequality and unbalance also shape other dimensions of EU diversity that need to be dealt with in relation to ethno-cultural diversity.

Besides social and economic diversity, one could also mention political diversity, diversity as concerns sexual orientation, the gender dimension of diversity and so many other sources of diversity that shape any complex society.

2. The issue: integration and diversities in the EU

Like any human society the European Union is thus de facto a multicultural society, a culturally diversified society in which many collective identities coexist. The myth of monoculture is daily contradicted by the sociological evolution of all the EU states.

It is not satisfactory to simply accept that statement drawn from a careful observation of sociological trends in the EU. It is not sufficient either to acknowledge that the EU is de facto socially, economically and politically unequal. But it is more accurate to consider that the processes of diversification of EU diversity in terms of cultures and identity and the processes of reconstruction of social, economic and political inequality are closely connected in several ways.

First, one should be aware that two myths on which most European societies were build (the myth of monoculture and homogenisation within a nation building process, on the one hand, and the myth of an egalitarian society based on the idea of a shared citizenship understood as a set of rights and duties available to all, on the other hand) are precisely what they are: myths. They are not realistic descriptions of social dynamics.

Second, economic, social and political inequality and ethno-cultural and national diversification overlap in many complex ways. Not all ethno-cultural and religious identities are equally recognized socially and politically in the European Union. Some of those identities are considered to be legitimate while others are not. For example, more clearly than before September 11, Muslim identities in Europe raise not only fears among the European populations but also questions about the legitimacy of that type of identities in the EU context. Being simultaneously a Muslim and a European is not unanimously considered to be normal even though – or maybe because - the number of European Muslims is on the increase in many EU countries. Holders of illegitimate identities are more easily excluded from the labour market though mechanisms of ethnic, racial or religious discrimination, which can in turn reinforce their specific identity. In other words, those whose culture and identity is not well accepted as legitimate in the EU context are also often at the bottom socially and economically. This can reinforce the constitution of identity refuges both for the majority populations and the minority populations, of distinct social worlds between which the dialogue is easily replaced by either ethnicized conflicts or mutual ignorance and avoidance strategies. This obviously hurts social integration.

Consequently, in these diversified European societies the relationships between states, supranational organizations and a population that is increasingly diversified constitutes a major concern in the necessary reflection on the subject of democratic consolidation: What political responses surface in response to identity claims and to demands for the preservation of a cultural specificity? How can the states and the European Union intervene in the management of cultural diversity? How can the European Union, deal with its de facto multicultural, multi-religious, multiethnic growing character while simultaneously reasserting its democratic exigencies and dealing with growing social and economic inequality and exclusion? The concern at the beginning of the third millennium is not to choose between the construction of a multicultural European society and the construction of a culturally homogenous society. Rather, each society, including the European Union, finds itself being challenged to tailor a sort of multiculturalism adapted to its population and to its history in order to reconcile observable cultural and identity-based diversity, on one hand, with the necessary social, economic and political cohesion, on the other hand. In other words, how can the European Union combine the search for a more united and integrated society while at the same time valorising the various facets of its diversity and fostering more social and economic equality? This is the challenge of a multicultural citizenship of the European Union.

3. Do we need a EU model of diversity management?

Issues linked to citizenship and multiculturalism have become topical in European academic discourse as witnessed by the growing number of conferences held and of articles and books published which deal with one or the other aspect of these extremely complicated issues. Multiculturalism has recently been discussed as a project of post-national society or an alternative to the nation-state model, as an ideology, as a politically correct version of racism, as a set of State policies aimed at fighting discrimination past and present against ethnic minorities, as a resource for ethnic minorities leaders' social mobility, as forms of cultural expression and as forms of political mobilisation aimed at taking into account the cultural and identificational diversity of modern states. For its advocates, multiculturalism is the only means to avoid the 'Balkanisation' and the ethno-cultural fragmentation of modern states by allowing each group living within the borders of a state some recognition within a broader and shared set of political institutions. On the contrary, some challengers argue that multiculturalism will increase the ethnic fragmentation of the society and lead to some sort of generation of apartheid. Other challengers argue that multiculturalism is just a smoke screen used not to address efficiently the main problems in our societies, namely socio-economic inequality, if not to reproduce this inequality. In any case, multiculturalism is thus much more than the simple statement that we are living in culturally diverse societies as shown by the demographic indicators.

By and large, liberal approaches seem to predominate in the academia whereas among the general public illiberal stands on ethnicity, citizenship and multiculturalism increasingly find a channel of expression in extreme-right wing and conservative politics in several member states of the EU (the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, the Lega Nord in Italy, the FPÖ in Austria, the Front National in France, etc.). This gap between academic liberalism and the relative “illiberalism” of the general public is probably reinforced by the innumerable disputes and misunderstanding which oppose scholars in this area.

The scholarly debate in Europe has largely been dominated by North American political philosophers or by scholars educated in the United States or in Britain, or influenced by North American perspectives. This has had important consequences for the debate in Europe. First, the terms of the American academic and political debates on multiculturalism have been imported in European without sufficient care. Acknowledging the richness and relevance of the American debates is fine but this cannot preclude from expressing explicit reservations in terms of the very questionable way in which the American debates have been applied to Europe. A major problem lies in the fact that the dissimilarities in terms of the historical, social, and economic background of Europe and the United States have been underestimated. These differences should have at the very least triggered a sense of carefulness in transferring concepts and debates from one context to the other. Even though some of the core issues in the area of integration and diversity are similar across the Atlantic, it seems very risky to apply the same framework of analysis in both situations and even more, to adopt in the Europe Union normative and political solutions designed for North America.

Second, both in academic and in political discourse, issues connected to multiculturalism and diversity, and issues connected to social and economic inequality are generally disconnected. Since the mid-nineties and even more after September 11, the ethno-culturalist approach to the global society has become increasingly popular. In a way, both multiculturalists and anti-multiculturalists have become culturalists and have adopted to a certain extent the clash of civilisation argument. Therefore, the articulation between ethno-cultural diversification and socio-economic inequality is too often neglected both in academic and political debates. This is another consequence of the domination of “anglo-americentric” perspectives on integration and diversity in Europe.

Third, the European debates on multiculturalism and citizenship are often essentially normative, even if it may be very difficult to distinguish in the literature between normative concerns one the one hand and explanatory concerns on the other hand: sometimes considerations fundamentally aimed at answering the question 'what ought to be?' are presented as mere analyses of the situation and vice versa. Per se there is nothing wrong with normative approaches to integration and diversity. Normative thinking is certainly needed. But when normative constructions only use sociological developments as illustrations of normative points, when they are not rooted in a deep empirical knowledge of social dynamics, they easily become abstract models, which usefulness and adequacy need to be demonstrated.

Within the European Union, there are various national narratives of citizenship, integration and multiculturalism. In France, the republican conception of national integration and citizenship underlines the divisive effects of a public recognition of cultural diversity. Multiculturalism is often presented as a new tribalism, as a balkanisation of France and, in the end, as a risk for citizenship. In Britain, things are different. There are conflicting views on multiculturalism but the issue is discussed. The accommodation of diversity in the public sphere is less problematic. In Germany, a "multikulti" trend coexists with a more exclusive conception of citizenship despite the movement of liberalisation of German citizenship. Each country, for historic and political reasons has its own way to address the issues of diversity and unity and wants to keep its sovereignty in these matters. This explains why there are very little supranational European powers in the field. Furthermore, in many member states of the European Union, debates on issues related to multiculturalism overlap with the debate on the position on ethnic immigrant minorities. It is not seen as a broad social issue. This is too restrictive a perspective to allow for the development of a multicultural citizenship of the European Union. Combining integration and diversities concerns all the citizens and residents, not only migrants.

Beyond the national narratives on citizenship and multiculturalism often called “models” which remains quite different, local policies are sometimes very similar even between French and British cities and give similar results in terms of the position of immigrant ethnic minorities in the society. To put it bluntly, assimilationist policies can be implemented in countries allegedly characterized by a multicultural approach and vice versa.

In any case, the necessity to accommodate ethno-cultural and national identities in the Europe Union in a dynamic way seems clear. Any attempt to promote a homogeneous Europe is bound to fail because Europe means diversity. But should the priority given to the construction of a new normative model of management of EU diversity or should it be given to the construction form below of a EU citizenship and to a more pragmatic approach in terms of policy making in the field of integration and diversity based on already consolidated normative and legal foundations of the European Union? The rest of the paper will advocate in favour of the latter by presenting 5 elements of a multicultural citizenship of the European Union.

4. Towards a multicultural citizenship of the European Union

In the areas of citizenship and cultural diversity, the national states have more competences than the European Union and they seem very keen in protecting their sovereignty in those matters. However, European institutions are increasingly interested in citizenship and integration issues as demonstrated by the Communication from the Commission on Immigration, Integration and Employment of the 3rd of June 2003. Progressively, the issues discussed in this paper are being dealt with though a multilevel governance process involving the European Union, the member states, the components of federal states and the cities. Trying to impose from above a monolithic model of EU multicultural citizenship would encounter strong resistances locally. It is therefore strategically more adequate to try to agree on common general principles and approaches and to respect the autonomy of states and local authorities as provided for by the principle of subsidiarity. Simultaneously, promoting the dialogue and the exchange of good practices in the field of integration, cultural diversity and citizenship between the various levels of governance is certainly a good way to progress in the building of a EU multicultural citizenship from below.

4. 1. Cultural Diversity and Social Justice

As far as substantive issues related to EU multicultural citizenship are concerned, at least 5 dimensions should be discussed. First, the processes of ethno-cultural identity formation and assertion and the processes of socio-economic exclusion and exploitation are deeply connected. Those who are excluded from the labour market or exploited at the bottom end of it are often also those whose identity and culture are not considered as legitimate or even feared in Europe. Ethnic, racial and religious discrimination and socio-economic discrimination often coincide as shown by the example of migrants coming from Muslim countries. Therefore, the recognition and promotion of ethnic identities and cultures and the struggle against socio-economic exclusion and exploitation should go hand in hand. In other words, the politics of recognition, anti-discrimination and anti-racism are connected though analytically different. It does not make sense to separate issues related to cultural diversity and issues related to social justice. In other words, promoting a cultural citizenship though for example special cultural rights for minorities without granting them a full socio-economic citizenship and an equal access to the labour market, education, health and housing could be counterproductive. One could claim that more social and economic equality brings the development or more open ethno-cultural identities while more social and economic inequality and exclusion favours the development of more closed and exclusive ethno-cultural identities that serves to compensate for the frustration and. Even more simply state, the social and economic “balkanisation” is certainly more threatening for the EU democracy than cultural diversification.

4.2. Equal Basic Rights and Duties

Second, the supporting pillar of any development towards EU multicultural citizenship is the idea of a total equality of basic rights and duties for all legal residents in the EU. The introduction of EU citizenship more than 10 years ago did confirm and legalize three main levels of citizenship, three types of citizens in the European Union depending on the civil rights, the socio-economic rights and the political rights they enjoy.

Only the citizens of a Member State living within the border of their nationality state enjoy the full civil, socio-economic and political rights, that is the full citizenship. In terms of the set rights they enjoy, they are the only fully included category. Even though a growing number of them is effectively excluded from the processes of redistribution of economic, social and political resources.

At a lower level, the citizens of a Member State of the European Union who are living in another Member State than their own enjoy only limited political rights (mainly the right to vote and to be elected at the local and European level). In other respects, their civil rights are not complete. For example, they do not enjoy total freedom of settlement in another European Union country. In order to avoid movements of unemployed workers from Member States with low social protection to Member States that offer a high level of protection, two conditions must be fulfilled by the European Citizens if they want to settle in another Member State, that is financial independence and independence in terms of social security. Furthermore, their opportunity to have access to the civil service in their country of residence remains limited. Eventually, even though this category of European Citizens is largely protected by European Union law, the full equality between nationals and other European Union Citizens is not yet achieved.

The third category of citizens living in the European Union is actually divided into two sub-categories. The 'denizens' that is the citizens of a third-state legally settled in Europe, are part to a certain extent both of the civil and of the socio-economic European society. As human beings and as workers they do enjoy some civil and socio-economic rights. But they generally enjoy no significant political rights in the European Union. The second sub-category, the 'Margizens', enjoy extremely limited civil, socio-economic and political rights. In many cases they have almost no rights at all because they live illegally in a member state. Between the Denizens and the Margizens, one could also mention a growing category of legal temporary residents or workers, some of which might be in quite good positions while others are severely marginalized. Anyway, 'Denizens' and 'Margizens' are grouped together in the same category because they suffer analogous mechanisms of exclusion from the cultural and political 'Europeaness'.

This triangular structure of citizenship in the European Union is more complex than the description above may suggest. Here too, the fact that the European Union is a multilevel democracy is highly relevant. For example, Turkish citizens enjoy a similar amount of rights under EU law but Turks who live in France and the Netherlands have different rights under French and Dutch laws. In the first case, Turks have no voting right while in the second case there was local disenfranchisement since 1985. From a EU perspective, this could be read as a discriminatory treatment contrary to any idea of a EU multicultural democracy.

The solution to that type of problem is not easy to find and the road towards the total equality of rights for all legal residents is still long. However, in order to move in that direction, it could be suggested that EU citizenship as it exists today should be extended to all permanent and legal third-countries residents.

In terms of duties and obligations, the principle of equality between all resident citizens entails that third-countries nationals should respect the laws and the Constitution of the country they live in. They should also, like any other EU citizen, respect the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, European law, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and tomorrow, the EU constitution. These documents reflect the set of core values (democracy, human rights, non-discrimination, gender equality, respect for the physical and psychological integrity of the human person, respect for cultural diversity and identities) that are not negotiable and that should be shared by all EU citizens whatever their ethno-national identity and religion.

Those who disagree with the non-negotiable core of values mentioned above should have the right to express their disagreement within the limits of the laws on freedom of expression. They should also be allowed the right to mobilize politically in order to alter the balance of power

and promote alternative core-values. But in the meantime, they have to obey the law and those core-values.

4.3. The symbolic recognition of diversity

Dominant ideas about European culture and identity are often rooted in a somewhat mystified vision of the past of the European continent with the consequence of potentially excluding many non-EU citizens, but also many EU citizens with a ethnic or racial minority background, of a full European belonging. Institutional visions of European multiculturalism which inform and are simultaneously informed by discussions and ideas on European culture, identity and citizenship can actually be interpreted as elements of a widespread concern about the optimal degree of cultural and identificational diversity not only acceptable in the European Union context, but defining the core of a European model of living together based on member states of the European Union.

There seems to be an important gap between the institutional visions of European multiculturalism and de facto multiculturalism, identity construction and cultural construction processes that can often be observed mainly in urban Europe. Individuals and groups who consider themselves as deeply European too (they may embrace other identities as well), who locate their social action in Europe are not recognised as 'real' European citizens because of their alleged cultural non-conformity with a European cultural substance mainly defined with reference to the past. Simply stated, whereas Europe is de facto increasingly multicultural and multi-identificational, institutional visions of multiculturalism, identity and culture in Europe remain restricted to the past as it is supposed to have forged the national identities and culture of the member states of the EU. European institutional multiculturalism rests on a substantial approach of culture and identity that conditions to an significant extent the opportunities of incorporation within European citizenship.

As seen above, the European Union and most of its Member-States are de facto increasingly multiethnic, multicultural and multiracial. The various minorities living in the Member States whose presence is a consequence of colonialism, labour migrations processes and other patterns of human mobility are a living challenge to the mythical view of an ethnically, racially and culturally relatively homogeneous Europe which to be fair, is not the only view of how the European Union should look like. In urban Europe, ethnic segregation and discrimination is a reality in the labour market, in the school system, in housing, etc. It is counterbalanced by multicultural practices. European urban youth often display a 'soft' multiculturalism. They are open to the world, to diversity, to 'mélange' and they are attracted by cosmopolitan identities. To them, old national identities often seem obsolete. They prefer to display their multidimensional identities and their multiple affiliations. Sometimes though, very strict and exclusive ethno-national identities are asserted not only in social life but also in politics. Haider, Le Pen and the Vlaams Blok are also supported by parts of the youth. It would certainly be over simplistic to divide the European youth in two groups: the cosmopolitan group and the nationalistic and racist group. It is nevertheless clear that the possession of good educational, cultural and economic and social resources is often more favourable to the assertion of a cosmopolitan identity whereas social dislocation, poor education and economic marginality combined with the collapse of overarching ideologies, like for example the decline of communism, explain to some degree and in some cases the emergence of restrictive ethno-national identities among fractions of urban youth. But in any case, the problem of combining social and political unity with cultural and identificational diversity remains unsolved at the European level.

Recognizing symbolically the multifaceted diversity of the EU is a step in that direction. Therefore, it would be contradictory and discriminatory in the context of a multicultural Europe to mention Christian values as a core European value in a new European Constitution. If historically the religious heritage of the European Identity is undisputable, non-Christians, be

they atheists, Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs, have also contributed to the development of Europe and will continue to do so in the future. Therefore, asking citizens to endorse a Constitution that excludes their religious or philosophical identity would stimulate separation instead of unity.

An important question is whether it is possible to recognise symbolically the multifaceted diversity of the EU without constructing sharp boundaries between ethnic groups whose members are supposed to share a distinctive and common culture and identity? The answer to that question is to be found in the developments above. If the diversity talk is a surrogate to the quest for social and economic inclusion and equality, the risk is to stimulate ethnicized opposition and conflict. If the symbolic recognition of diversity takes place at the same time as efforts to bring about more social and economic exclusion, the divisive effect of symbolic recognition of diversity will be very small.

4.4. Integration, Diversity and Public Policies

Should the state and the supranational EU institutions intervene in the management of cultural diversity and in integration matters? This is a disputed issue in the European Union. On the one hand, in a more free-market approach some advocate the retreat of the state and the non-intervention of the EU in the area of integration and cultural diversity. In their view, those issues should be left to the work of time, to the market or to self-organisation of minorities who claim recognition. On the other hand, others, in a more interventionist approach, argue for an active presence of the state and of EU institutions in cultural and diversity affairs though various policy interventions.

The latter position seems more in line with the experience of nation building in Europe and with the process of European integration. Obviously, the articulation of the states' interventions and of the EU institutions' ones should be discussed carefully. Here again, the principle of subsidiarity might be useful to combine profitably state action and supranational action for the sake of the EU multicultural democracy.

Furthermore, once the principle of a public intervention, either by the states or by the EU institutions or by both, to reinforce multicultural democracy and citizenship is accepted, many other sensitive questions arise that need not only abstract normative treatment but also concrete policy-making: what type of public policies should be developed in order to combine the respect for diversity and the struggle against social and economic exclusion and inequalities? Should minority groups be legally recognized? Should some groups enjoy special rights and which rights? What type of integration policies should be implemented? How about access to citizenship in European multicultural societies?

Again, there is no simple and global policy answer to those questions. It would be tempting to adopt a "model" of multicultural policies developed elsewhere, for example in Canada or in Australia, but policies do not necessarily travel well. A multicultural policy adapted to a national context in which it promotes efficiently integration can have the contrary effect when implemented in another national setting. Therefore, policies should take into account the local social and political context as well as the sociological characteristics of the population and the demands of minority and majority groups in the field of cultural diversity.

Furthermore, the preference goes to the recognition of the various facets of diversity as such rather then to groups which identity need not be rigidified. However, groups need recognition as such too and a multicultural democracy needs to listen to identity recognition claims. Policies and subsidising are important forms of recognition that should always be reserved for groups that respect the core of values mentioned above, and whose political agenda is not against the democratic system. There is no reason for a democracy to subsidise groups that want to destroy democracy even though it is the case in some countries where for example

extreme-right parties have access to public money. On the same line, groups that oppress their members and do not respect their individual freedoms should not be subsidised either.

As to the fixation of collective rights and hence the recognition of ethnic, cultural and religious groups in the Constitutions, this solution must be considered with care. It should be the exception more then the rule. The first risk with constitutional recognition of groups is the give the image of a society made of separate groups more than of individual citizens who can of course form groupings too. In that respect, it favours more separation than integration and unity. The second risk is a "rigidification" of ethnic frontiers and the institutionalization of ethnic conflict between the groups recognized by the Constitution. The third risk is that since the Constitution are very stable, recognizing groups within it does make it more difficult to take into account the dynamics of diversification of diversity at work in Europe. The Belgian case illustrates perfectly the dilemmas of constitutional recognition of diversity. Imagined as a response to separatist tendencies, it has increased the conflict between the Belgian national groups. Obviously, when specific groups are threatened to disappear if not vigorously protected, constitutional recognition may be an element of solution.

Besides constitutional arrangements, many more flexible policies and legislations can be designed and implemented in order to promote and support diversity while simultaneously encouraging integration and unity. An exhaustive list of all multicultural policies available would go beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, some policy interventions seem highly appropriate in the European context.

First, providing some financial support to immigrant associations engaged in actions aimed at encouraging a better knowledge of cultural diversity in a given society and also at bridging the gap between cultural groups is in principle an interesting tool. In many EU countries, intercultural and multicultural initiatives have been supported for quite a while. The Commission has also supported large immigrant associations to develop that type of work.

Second, strong anti-racist and anti-discrimination legislations and policies both at the national and at the EU level are a strong component of any multicultural democracy. The monitoring of racism and discrimination (ethnic, religious, based on sexual orientation, gender, etc.) is a crucial task of the institutions created in relation to those legislations and policies. At the EU level, one could mention the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia. At the national level, one could mention the Commission for Racial Equality in Britain and the Centre pour l'Egalité des chances et la lutte contre le racisme in Belgium.

Third, opening up public education to cultural diversity is another crucial and multidimensional policy issue. One aspect of it relates to the issue of language training. Experiments were conducted in the past under the auspices of the Council of Europe to teach immigrant children "their language of origin". These pilot programs were criticized because of their restrictive character and their potential for unwanted exclusion of immigrant children who were in a way forced to refer to the language of their parents.

A more adequate approach to the language issue would be as follows. Language is crucial to communication and communication is needed to promote a multicultural democracy. The more languages a person speaks, the more she or he will be able to communicate with different people. Therefore, a concrete suggestion is to adopt the principle of multilingualism as basis for language policies in the EU countries. Following that general starting point, it would be logical to encourage all the residents to speak the national language (at least one of the national languages in the cases of EU states that have more than one) of the country they live in. It also makes sense to encourage all the residents to learn as many other EU languages they want to learn and also non-EU languages among which, the languages of the countries of origin of the migrants.

On another matter, it is fair to underline that school curricula do not often incorporate cultural diversity and the contribution of immigration to nation building and EU building.

Obviously, the school curricula would not gain in being uniform at the EU level. Nevertheless some general recommendations valid throughout Europe can be made. One of these would be that the national and European history of emigration and immigration should be included in the general courses of history.

A very hot issue in the present global political context is the accommodation of religious diversity. A first point is that especially after 9/11, debates about religious diversity in Europe and even more generally debates about cultural diversity tend to focus explicitly or implicitly on the position of Islam and Muslims. This could seem justified since Islam has become the second religion in many EU countries. But the issue of accommodation of religious diversity concerns all the religions represented in Europe as well as non-religious beliefs. The debate needs therefore to be enlarged also in view of accommodating new religions and beliefs that may appear in the future in the EU.

The member states of the EU differ in their way of dealing with religions. In some states, there is theoretically a sharp separation between churches and the state. In other states, there is an established religion with a privileged status. Finally some other states have developed a "concordat" regime defining the relations between the Catholic Church and the state through an agreement with the Vatican. Two observations can me made. First, the Amsterdam Treaty states that the EU respects the religious legislation specific to each member state. Second, for historical reasons, Islam has not been considered by these arrangements. The question therefore is how to ensure an equality of treatment of all religions and non-religious beliefs by the states of Europe. An equal treatment concretely means that if Catholic or Protestant schools are accepted and receive public subsidies than Muslim or Buddhist schools should also receive in principle the same treatment. If religious dress codes are accepted or refused in the public space, the measures should concerns all religious signs. If the principle of religious holidays is accepted, than all religions should be entitled to the same facilities, etc. Is it possible to do so while respecting the national religious legislations? It seems clear that a regime of separation between the state and religions offers the best prospects for an equal treatment of all religions and non-religious beliefs by the state. The German approach of "religious taxes" could be a starting point to discuss how public money should be raised to support fairly all religions and non-religious beliefs.

Access to citizenship is also a point of discussion in multicultural democracies. Some advocate that the acquisition of the nationality of the country of residence is the end point of the integration process. Others claim that making access to nationality easier is a form of recognition of new members of the society that will precisely foster the integration process and the identification with the new country. The debate is heated in many EU countries. In any case, it seems reasonable to liberalize access to citizenship for permanent residents after a period of time to be determined and also to allow for double citizenship. The reason for this is that people have very often double or even multiple identification that need to be respected. It could be claimed that for some immigrants with a long migration history, keeping the nationality of their country of origin is the only link with it and also the only witness of their migration experience. For the rest, they are very often fully integrated in the country of immigration. In such cases, a double citizenship clearly reflects a sociological reality.

Furthermore, the fact that EU citizenship is not accessible directly but only through the acquisition of the nationality of one of the member states is a problem that qualifies the aspirations of the present EU citizenship to be a real citizenship. It could be imagined to introduce a procedure of direct application for EU citizenship that would be discussed and agreed upon in the EU Parliament, in the national Parliaments and in the European Council.

4.5. Political Participation and Representation

Finally, the issues of political participation and representation are also of central importance in any multicultural democracy. In terms of political participation, the local voting and eligibility rights are already a reality in several member states of the EU. Despite resistances in some member states, the trend moves in that direction. Again, the local voting rights do have a symbolic value but they also provide a tool to participate in the management of the cities for all the residents. Forms of consultations could also be discussed in order to promote the local political participation of all residents and of immigrant origin citizens in particular. In that respect, the Council of Europe Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level of February 5 1992 is certainly a document that could be ratified by at least the member states of the EU Union and of the Council of Europe. More generally, promoting various kinds of arenas for dialogue and discussion between citizens and residents is an interesting way to consolidate the EU democracy.

As to the issue of representation, it seems obvious that elected political institutions should reflect the sociology of the citizenry. In many EU countries, women, ethnic and immigrant groups are still largely underrepresented in formal politics. For example, in a country of immigration like France, there are virtually no French-Maghrebians in Parliament! Positive action may be discussed as a means to encourage minorities to choose the former political career. Furthermore, political parties should be more welcoming to ethnic minority members.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, the conception of multicultural democracy and of EU multicultural citizenship advocated in this paper is understood as a way to stimulate the discussion and not as a final project. It supposes the constitution of a citizenry made of active citizens who share the same rights and duties, the same public space, support the democratic project and respect the law and the legal and political procedures. These citizens can display varied and multiple identities as different cultural practices both in private and in public. Their identity and cultural choices do not affect their position in the social, economic and political order.

A united and integrated democratic European Union can only be diverse and multicultural.

However, the construction of the EU multicultural citizenship faces many obstacles. There is no simple and unique way to overcome the many difficulties. At least, the contribution of this paper will perhaps mainly be to argue convincingly in favour of the EU multicultural citizenship utopia.