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INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE: TOWARDS A NEW HUMAN GEOGRAPHY IN THE EU27

Intercultural dialogue is the basis for any multicultural society, becoming particularly important in the rapidly changing human geography of a growing European Union. The European Parliament and Council established 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. This idea was proposed initially by Ján Figel', the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth. During 2008, a series of community events took place, aiming to promote dialogue, knowledge and skills, where people with different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds could meet and come together.

Even long before 2008, several pilot and sectoral programs were implemented between 1996 and 1999, namely the “Kaléidoscope⁴⁵”, the “Ariane⁴⁶” and the “Raphael⁴⁷” program. These three initiatives were followed by the “Culture 2000⁴⁸” program, dating from 2000 until 2006. Between 2007 and 2013 “Culture 2007⁴⁹” is in place, respecting the European agenda. This agenda is based on three premises: 1st) cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; 2nd) culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation in the context of the Lisbon strategy for jobs and growth; and 3rd) culture as a key element in the EU’s external relations with non-member

⁴⁵ Kaléidoscope aimed at the encouragement of artistic and cultural creation.

⁴⁶ Ariane supported the field of books and reading, including translation.

⁴⁷ Raphaël complemented Member States’ policies in the area of cultural heritage.

⁴⁸ This program provided grants to cultural cooperation projects in artistic and cultural fields.

⁴⁹ Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

states⁵⁰. Intercultural dialogue is therefore seen as a major economic factor that should help European companies to booster their competitiveness around the world.

The Eurostat Statistical Book entitled “Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2008” characterizes the multinational population in the EU27 using several factors among other, for example education and research patterns, work patterns, economic factors, consumption of culture, tourism and international transport, the information society trends and the values and challenges to intercultural dialogue.

According to the Flashbarometer report “Intercultural Dialogue in Europe⁵¹” published by the European Commission in December 2007, almost 72% of EU citizens believe that people with a different background (ethnic, religious or national) enrich the cultural life of their country. The dominant opinion is that intercultural dialogue⁵² is beneficial (83%), although holding on to the cultural traditions is equally important (67%). As much as 25% of young people show a “cosmopolitan attitude” towards intercultural dialogue, where keeping traditional values is not important, in comparison with 55% of youngsters in favor of a “pro diversity and keep roots” attitude.

The main Intercultural Communication theories were analysed, composing the theoretical framework for this research : Habermas (1960), Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J.C. (1990) and Bourdieu, P. (1991) for the

⁵⁰ www.eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2007/com2007_0242en01.pdf.

⁵¹ Over 27.000 randomly selected citizens aged 15 years and above were interviewed in the EU27 Member States. Interviews were predominantly carried out via fixed telephone, approximately 1.000 in each country.

⁵² Intercultural dialogue was defined by 23% of respondents as meaning “communication among different communities”, 13% defined it as “cooperation, exchange and transnational mobility”, 11% as “living together, knowing and understanding different cultures” and 10% as “attending cultural events and having access to culture”. Low importance was given to factors like linguistic diversity (5%), education (3%), equal rights (4%), immigration and minorities (3%).

definition of Culture, the Anxiety Uncertainty Management Theory by Gudikunst (2005), Habermas' (1984) and Deetz's (1982) Critical Theory, the study in Cross-Cultural Adaption written by Kim (1977), the Standpoint Theory of Wood (1982) and Gudikunst's (2005) Stranger Theory. Furthermore, Trompenaars' (1993), Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) and Simonet's (1992) models were equally taken under consideration.

Research aim and research hypotheses

The aim of this research paper is to search for underlying behavioural patterns regarding the intercultural dialogue between citizens belonging to different EU27 Member States. The identification of potentially influential variables of an ethnocentric view or a perspective of multiculturalism towards diversity dialogue was considered to be the structuring framework to the mentioned behavioural patterns.

Ho: There is a relationship between several demographic and geographic variables defined *ad hoc* and the variable “cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue” (*CosmoAtt*), as defined by the Flashbarometer report mentioned above.

Methodology

Taking into account the review of the main representative theories on Intercultural Communication, several different variables were defined by the author, according to its potential relevance to the issue under study. These variables are secondary data obtained from different statistical sources which will be specified (table 1).

The research methodology consisted in calculating bivariate correlations between the variable *CosmoAtt* and these variables. The Pearson correlation coefficient was measured and tested for significance. The following table summarizes all 26 *ad hoc* variables and the statistical sources that define them in constitutive and operational terms. The country codes that were used in order to identify each of the EU27 Member countries

correspond to the ones applied by the European Commission in the Eurostat statistics.

Table 1
Definition of *ad hoc* variables

Ad Hoc Variables	Definition and Statistical Source
CosmoAtt	Number of respondents that have a “Cosmopolitan attitude towards Intercultural Dialogue”*
ProDiaKeepRoot	Number of respondents that have an “Attitude pro dialogue, but keeping roots”*
DialNotEnrich	Number of respondents that think “Cultural diversity does not enrich”*
DialEnrich	Number of respondents that think “Cultural diversity does enrich”*
DialRatherEnrich	Number of respondents that think “Cultural diversity rather enriches”*
DialEnrichTotal	Transformed variable: DialEnrich + DialRatherEnrich
PDI	Index “Power Distance” as defined by Hofstede**
IDV	Index “Individualism” as defined by Hofstede**
MAS	Index “Masculinity” as defined by Hofstede**
UAI	Index “Uncertainty Avoidance” as defined by Hofstede**
AdmittanceYear	EU27 admittance year***
NNeighbCountr	Number of neighboring countries ⁵³
NLangugSpoken	Number of spoken foreign languages [#]
English	Number of people speaking English [#]
French	Number of people speaking French [#]
German	Number of people speaking German [#]
Emigration	Number of emigrants ⁵⁴
Immigration	Number of immigrants ⁵⁵
Tourism	Number of tourist staying more than 4 nights ⁵⁶
Student	Number of enrolled students in 2006 ^{##}
Isced	International Standard Classification of Education (2004) ^{###}
TotEducExp	Total education expenditure (public + private) ^{###}
StudMobil	Number of students in mobility ^{##}
ADSLAccess	Number of people with ADSL access to Internet (2008) ^{###}
BroadbAccess	Number of people with internet broadband connection (2008) ^{###}
TotalAccessWeb	Transformed variable: ADSLAccess + BroadbAccess

* See footnote⁵⁷

** See footnote⁵⁸

*** See footnote⁵⁹

See footnote⁶⁰

See footnote⁶¹

See footnote⁶²

⁵³ Authors calculations.

⁵⁴ Emigration flows: Eurostat data 2006. Related variable: *migr_eminxt* - Emigration by sex and country of next residence.

⁵⁵ Immigration flows: Eurostat related variable: *migr_immiprv* - Immigration by sex and country of previous residence.

⁵⁶ These data were collected by the Member States in the frame of the *Council Directive on tourism statistics 95/57/EC* of statistical information in the field of tourism and report to the number of tourists who stay at least four nights in a collective or private accommodation in the place/country visited. Eurostat related variable: *tour_base*

Main findings

The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the variables *CosmoAtt*, *ProDiaKeepRoot*, *DialNotEnrich*, *DialEnrich*, *DialRatherEnrich*, and *DialEnrichTotal*.

The value of 0,88 was found to be significant at the 0,01 significance level (two tailed test) between the variables *CosmoAtt* and *ProDiaKeepRoot*, and, at the same significance level, the value 0,65 between the variables *CosmoAtt* and *DialEnrich*.

Analyzing the existence of underlying behavioral country clusters and according to Simonet's Management Chart (1992), the high centralized and formalized countries (United Kingdom, Netherland, Sweden and Denmark) have a more cosmopolitan attitude, except for the United Kingdom, whereas

⁵⁷Number of respondents that considered having a "cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue" or an attitude "in favor of intercultural dialogue, but keeping cultural roots" measured on a nominal scale in the Flashbarometer report "*Intercultural Dialogue in Europe*" published by the European Commission in December 2007. Number of respondents that considered that cultural diversity "does not enrich life", does "enrich life", just "rather enriches life", measured on a nominal scale in the same report (underlying question: Q4: "Would you say that [COUNTRY]'s cultural life is enriched by people with different cultural background than the majority?").

⁵⁸ Hofstede, G. (1980/1991) *Culture's consequences: international differences in work-related values*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

⁵⁹ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,109033076576&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL.

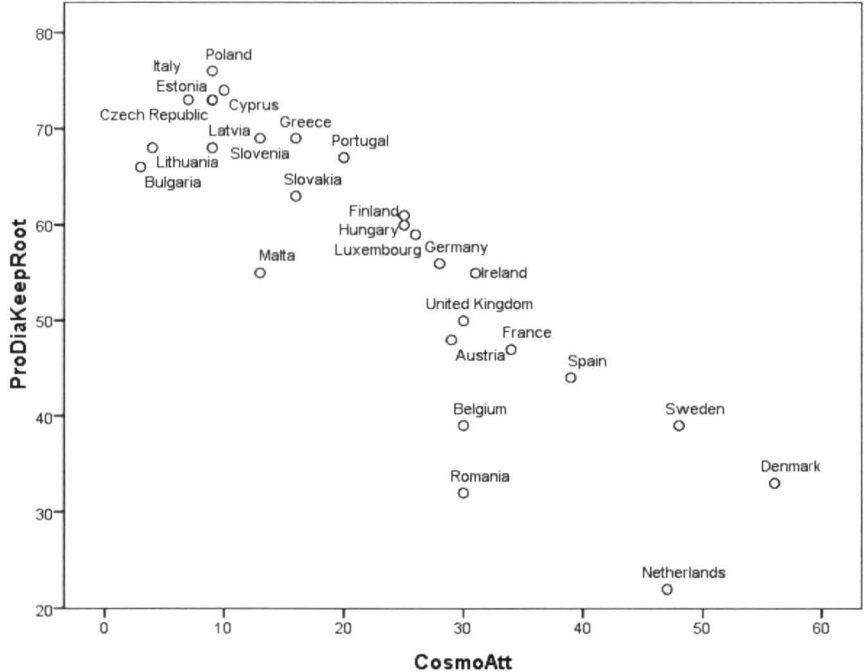
⁶⁰ Eurostat Statistical Book "*Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2008*", European Communities, 2007. According to the *International Student Mobility Report* by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, and the Centre for Applied Population Research, University of Dundee, 2007, language is the first determining factor. Interviews suggest that the desire to travel, to have a cultural experience and to promote self-development are also important personal drivers.

⁶¹ Number of students enrolled in school according to the International Standard Classification of Education (data of 2004). Source: *International Student Mobility - Report* by the Sussex Centre for Migration Research, University of Sussex, and the Centre for Applied Population Research, University of Dundee, 2007.

⁶² Eurostat Statistical Book "*Statistical Portrait of the European Union 2008*", European Communities, 2007.

the high centralized and low formalized Latin countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain), except for Spain, have a more conservative and traditional view of intercultural experiences. Moreover, Central European Countries (Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovenia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania), except for Romania, fall also into this latter category.

Graph 1
Conservative and cosmopolitan attitude towards Intercultural Dialogue



Since the correlation between the two first variables is statistically meaningful, only the variable *CosmoAtt*⁶³ was used for the further research analysis, correlating it with all other *ad hoc* variables.

⁶³ The other possibility - to use the variable *Dialenrich* as the main variable was put aside, since the author felt that a variable measuring a cosmopolitan attitude towards the intercultural dialogue, rather than the degree in which diversity enriches one owns life experience, seemed to be semantically (and probably also in terms of validity) closer in defining the subject under study.

When the variable *CosmoAtt* is correlated with the four dimensions of Hofstede's model for Cultural Differences, namely Power Distance (PDI), Individualism (IDV), Masculinity (MAS) and Uncertainty Avoidance (UAI), the Pearson coefficient assumes the following values:

Table 2
Hofstede's dimensions

Specification	PDI	IDV	MAS	UAI
CosmoAtt	-,514*	0,395	-,614**	-,633**

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the above table it is visible that there is a significant negative Pearson correlation (-0,514) at the 0,01 significance level between the variable *CosmoAtt* and Hofstede's Power Distance index. As verified by Hofstede himself, there is a negative correlation between the Power Distance index and Individualism, except for three countries, namely France, Belgium and Costa Rica. If the society of a particular country is highly stratified it is expected that unfamiliar risks are avoided, meaning that the level of Uncertainty Avoidance also has to be high. In such cultures, the existence of several hierarchical levels may provide protection against risks and instability of environments. As verified, the openness to different cultural experiences is low. There was also found a significant negative relationship with the dimensions Uncertainty Avoidance (-0,633) and Masculinity (-0,614). As a conclusion, equalitarian, feminine (more concerned with the quality in life, than with the quantity) and uncertainty embracing cultures create the proper ground for a more tolerant and universal attitude towards cultural diversity.

Regarding the proximity to different neighboring countries⁶⁴, based on the assumption that closeness can lead to an enhanced acceptance of the

⁶⁴ Measured by the number of neighbor countries.

“other”, the “foreigner”, the “stranger”⁶⁵, and the familiarity with different languages, both variables - quite contrary to the findings of the mentioned report on student mobility⁶⁶ -, were not related with significance to the cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue. However, a significant inverse relationship was measured with the variable “*admittance year*” in the EU27 (-0,468). Interpreting these findings, the earlier a country joined the European Union, the more open it seems to be to cultural diversity and cosmopolitanism. It is noteworthy that the youngest democratic countries were the latest to join the Union.

Table 3
Admittance year, geographic proximity and language knowledge

Specification		Admittance Year	NNeighb Countr	NLanguag Spoken	English	French	German
CosmoAtt	Pearson Correlation	-,468*	-,170	,254	,327	,258	,240
	Sig. (2- tailed)	,014	,396	,221	,138	,234	,269

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Demographic data related to emigration and immigration was collected from the Eurostat statistics regarding the year 2006⁶⁷. Furthermore, the number of tourists in 2007, staying at minimum 4 nights in the country, was investigated⁶⁸. No significant correlation was found.

Among themselves, all these three *ad hoc* variables are related, appearing to be a valid expression of “interculturalism⁶⁹”, but not of multiculturalism: the Pearson correlation coefficient between emigration and immigration measured 0,918 (0,01 confidence level), between emigration

⁶⁵See communication models based on the “proximity” axiom, like the studies on proxemics by Edward Hall.

⁶⁶See footnote 17.

⁶⁷Emigration data for Italy and Portugal refer to the year 2003, as do immigration data for Italy.

⁶⁸The data for Ireland refer to 2003 and for Italy and Sweden to 2006.

⁶⁹Author’s expression

and tourism 0,875 (0,01 level) and between immigration and tourism 0,897 (0,01 level).

Table 4
Emigration, Immigration and Tourism

Specification		Emigration	Immigration	Tourism
CosmoAtt	Pearson Correlation	,124	,291	,176
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,623	,241	,411

The next step in this research consisted in analyzing the role that education plays in the intercultural dialogue debate; the subsequent findings are relevant.

Considering the following table, the total number of students enrolled in each country in 2006, the number of students in 2004 classified in agreement with the International Standard Classification of Education and the numbers of students in mobility - all three variables - are not significantly correlated to the variable under study:

Table 5
Education statistics

Specification	Student	Isced	TotEducExp	StudMobil
CosmoAtt	,135	,186	,754**	-,092

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

On the contrary, at the significance level of 0,01 (two-tailed), the Pearson correlation coefficient has a positive value of 0,754 for the variable “total education expenditures”, summing up public and private amounts. Therefore, the importance of investment in education infrastructures be it public- or privately owned, should not be undervalued by government’s policy making. Analyzing the variables in Table 5 the investments done in infrastructures and the number of educational institutions seems to play a more important row than the enrolled number of students itself. Additionally, student exchange programs, like Erasmus, are still only able to

internationalize a small number of students for an intercultural rich experience.

Last, but not least, the correlation between the “*cosmopolitan attitude to intercultural dialogue*” and variables linked to internet access were analyzed.

Table 6
Access to the internet

Specification	ADSLAccess	BroadbAccess	TotalAccessWeb
CosmoAtt	,681**	,646**	,673**

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Whether the web access of the population is measured separately or together (ADSL or broadband connection), the Pearson correlation coefficient is significant at the 0,01 level in a two-tailed test.

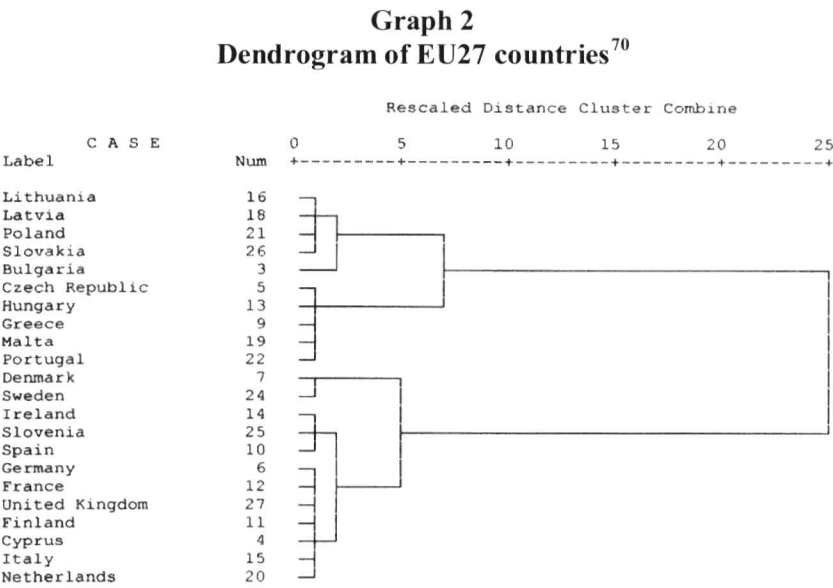
Again, besides the importance of education expenditures, the number of people using the internet to gather or exchange information, or simply to dialogize, is linked to a more universal and less ethnocentric attitude regarding the intercultural dialogue.

The research hypotheses, that affirmed that “there is a relationship between several demographic and geographic variables defined *ad hoc* and the variable “cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue” (*CosmoAtt*), as defined by the Flashbarometer report”, was verified for the variables “*Cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue*”, “*Pro intercultural dialogue, but keeping the roots*”, “*Total public and private education expenditures*”, “*Total access to the internet*” and “*Admittance year in EU27*”.

In order to identify underlying behavioural patterns and to group countries by clusters regarding the intercultural dialogue between citizens belonging to different EU27 Member States, all tested *ad hoc* variables that proved to have a significant Pearson correlation coefficient in association

with the variable “*cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue*”, EU27 member countries were analyzed conjointly.

The variables “*Cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue*”, “*Pro intercultural dialogue, but keeping the roots*”, “*Total public and private education expenditures*”, “*Total access to the internet*” and “*Admittance year in EU27*” were used to classify the EU27 countries according to a Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (using average linkage - between groups) through the method of the Squared Euclidean Distances. The result is observable in the following dendrogram:



According to this graph, at each distance level different countries are clustered together. Starting the analysis already at the second grouping level, four clusters can be identified: the 1st, consisting only of Central European Countries (CEC), namely Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Bulgaria – Group I, and the 2nd, comprising two CEC, to be precise the Czech Republic

⁷⁰Due to the application of the statistical formulas underneath the calculus of the Squared Euclidian Distances, the rescaled distances of the countries Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Luxembourg and Romania are not available.

and Hungary, Greece, Malta and Portugal⁷¹ – Group II. The countries in these two clusters are positioned as having a positive attitude towards intercultural dialogue, nevertheless believing in keeping the cultural traditions (see graph 3 beneath). Regarding the 3rd cluster, joining Sweden and Denmark together, a strong cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue can be clearly identified – Group III. The 4th cluster includes varied countries, namely Anglo-Saxon, Slavic, Latin, Germanic and Eastern countries (Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Finland, Cyprus, Italy and the Netherlands) – Group IV. This latter cluster can be characterized by the fact that all countries are situated along a continuum expressing a negative correlation between the variables “cosmoatt” and “prodialkeeproot” (see graph 4).

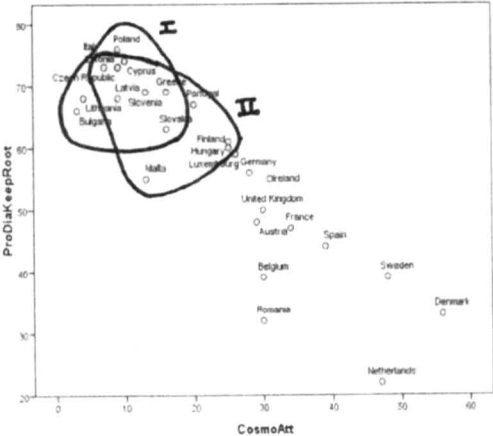
For the sake of a possible graphic representation of these results, the author chose to include the countries belonging to group I and II in the same graph. Even though these two clusters appear to have an overlapping intersection they are mutually exclusive, which means that a country belonging to cluster I does not belong to cluster II, as can be verified from the enumeration detailed above. Given the coordinates of each country according to the two chosen axes, no unequivocal graphical representation is possible.

At a rescaled squared Euclidian distance between 5 and 10, each country belongs either to group A (cluster I and II together) or B (cluster III and IV together). Again, group A and group B are mutually exclusive, meaning that a country belongs either to one or the other group (see dendogram and listing above). This “either / or” classification, which results

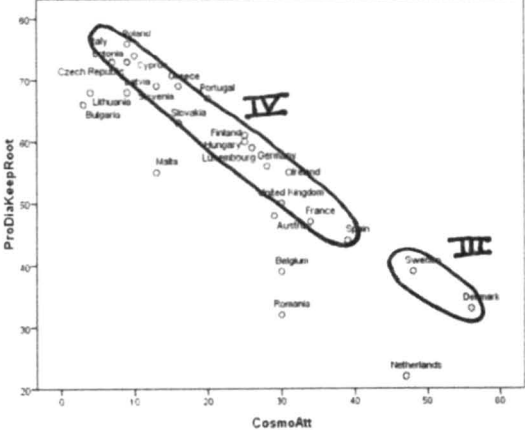
⁷¹It would be interesting to study if the geographic distance plays a role in explaining a more open or closed relationship to intercultural dialogue – Portugal has a peripheral position towards the center of Europe and Malta is an island.

from the hierarchical cluster analysis, can unfortunately only be graphically represented in a two axes graph in this overlapping way.

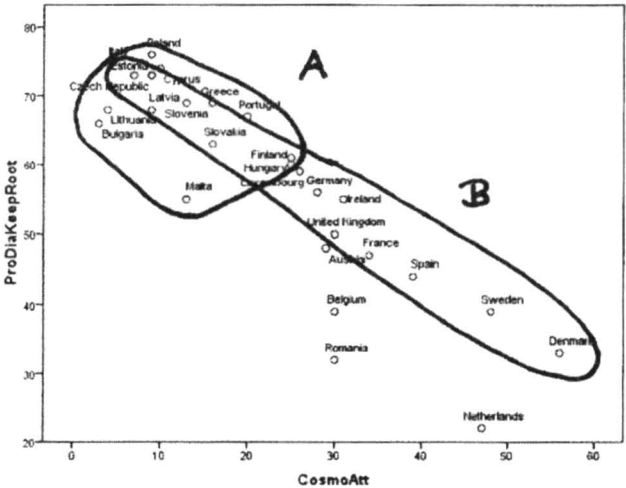
Graph 3
Cluster I and II



Graph 4
Cluster III and IV



Graph 5
Final clusters



Conclusion

Underlying behavioural patterns regarding the intercultural dialogue between citizens belonging to different EU27 Member States were therefore identified, proving the research hypothesis that stated, that there is a significant relationship between several demographic and geographic variables defined *ad hoc* and the variable “cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue” (*CosmoAtt*), as defined by the analysed Flashbarometer report.

A cosmopolitan attitude towards intercultural dialogue between member states seems to be rather a consequence of the effort of individuals or education institutions than an outcome of planned and conscious government policies. It continues to be troublesome that the EU member states concentrate all their efforts on economic and financial issues, leaving the communication quality of social encounters between the members of the population unaddressed. The non-existence of cultural unifying and tolerance based government policies may be seen as a major barrier for the social and cultural integration of the European Union’ citizens, making it very difficult for them to find an European identity to be proud of.

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RESUME

Le dialogue interculturel est primordial pour une société multiculturelle et devient particulièrement important pour l'UE où la géographie humaine change rapidement. Le Parlement Européen et le Conseil Européen ont consacré l'année 2008 au Dialogue Interculturel en Europe. L'ordre de l'an 2008 a été soumis aux événements

organisés par les Etats Membres et leur Partenaires, tels que le projet de navires/amirals. Le dialogue interculturel est considéré comme influencé par : l'éducation nationale, son économie, la consommation dite culturelle, le tourisme, l'accès et l'emploi de la technologie d'information. Notre recherche se concentre sur l'analyse de l'année 2008 dans les 27 Etats Membres de l'UE en vue de dévoiler un schéma de comportement.

SUMMARY

Intercultural dialogue is the basis for any multicultural society, becoming particularly important in the rapidly changing human geography of a growing European Union. The European Parliament and Council established 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The agenda of the year was set by several events organised by the Member States and Partners, mainly consisting of co-financed flagship projects. The Intercultural Dialogue is known to be influenced by several different factors, namely the country's outline on education, its economy, the amount of cultural consumption, tourism and the access and use of information technology. The aim of this research paper is to focus on the significant realities that became alive during 2008 in the 27 Member States of the European Union, searching for underlying behavioural patterns.