

# INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT: ANALYSIS OF SELECTED EUROPEAN CURRICULA

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*Summary* – The first part of the article analyzes the most important stages in developing intercultural education and looks into the theoretical background of this specifically European educational concept. The author emphasizes the declarative orientation of European countries towards an intercultural approach (primarily through the work of the Council of Europe and other European institutions), but at the same time the approach is not yet well-established in practice, which can be seen from the fact that there is no common European model of intercultural education yet. Starting from this observation, the second part of the article provides an analysis of the way several national curricula in Europe promote cultural diversity in their own contexts. On the basis of the analysis of elements of intercultural education in the selected curricula, the author emphasizes the diversity of approaches and classifies them into three basic types: liberal, multicultural and intercultural. According to the author, this typology corroborates the thesis that intercultural policies are still the by-product of the respective general national educational and cultural policies.

*Key words:* intercultural education, multicultural education, identity, language, compensational education, minorities, cultural diversity, educational policy

## Introduction

In the years following the Second World War almost 20 million foreign workers, predominantly from the Mediterranean area, migrated to the industrially developed countries of Western and Northern Europe. At the same time, migrations from the former overseas colonies to the mother countries Netherlands, Portugal, France and Great Britain took place as well. The consequence of these extensive migration flows was a transformation of ethnically “homogeneous”<sup>1</sup>

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1 Societies that went through the process of cultural homogenization due to the formation of nation-states at the end of 19th and the beginning of 20th century.

Western European societies into societies with a significant proportion of immigrant ethnic communities and cultures (a total of about 20 million, out of which 8 million from Islamic countries) (Katunarić, 1994; Salt, 2001).

However, societies in Western Europe were not prepared for the permanent settlement of the immigrant population. Writer Max Frisch wrote the following comment on this situation: “A workforce was called, but humans came”. Humans with needs: with the need for education, for entertainment, religion etc. The first “reflex” reaction of the host countries was a policy of tacit assimilation. However, assimilation processes were soon recognized as being insufficient, and the lack of social and cultural integration of immigrant workers had become a reality (Cinar, 1993). This unsatisfactory state of affairs resulted during the 1970’s and 80’s in the development of integration policies more sensitive to cultural differences. Different terms have been in use for these policies (multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, interculturalism etc.)<sup>2</sup> but their common standpoint is that cultural assimilation and majority domination should be replaced by the affirmation of cultural diversity<sup>3</sup> (Čačić–Kumpes i Heršak, 1994; Costa-Lascoux, 1995). A significant role in these “affirmative” efforts was from the very beginning assigned to intercultural conceptions of education (Katunarić, 1994).

This paper will particularly be focused at the latter, with the first section elaborating the theoretical background of this specific European pluralistic approach to education. The second section presents an analysis of selected European curricula with reference to cultural diversity and the affirmation of minority identities.

### **The intercultural approach to education**

An important pedagogical reaction to the new multicultural context and the insufficient integration of immigrants was the development of an educational approach tailored to the specific needs of minority pupils. This approach was developed in Europe (partly under the auspices of the European Council) under the term “intercultural education” (Interkulturelle Erziehung und Bildung), whi-

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2 Some authors use the terms intercultural/multicultural, or interculturalism/multiculturalism, as synonyms with different linguistic origin, while others argue for substantial conceptual differences between the two. According to this view, multiculturalism would be a static model primarily emphasizing the preservation of cultural variety, while interculturalism would be more oriented towards exchanges between cultures (Spajić-Vrkaš et al., 2001; Čačić-Kumpes, 2004). In our opinion, this conceptual differentiation is not appropriate when one refers to public policies (eg. multiculturalism, liberalism, conservatism), hence the term *multiculturalism* is used as an overarching concept covering a wide range of institutional practices (aimed at the affirmation of minority identities). In line with this conceptual framework, interculturalism is understood as a specific educational approach within multicultural public policies.

3 Multiculturalists particularly criticise the liberal presumption on ethical neutrality of individual rights. They argue that neither the state nor other political institutions are “diversity-blind”, which results in majority domination, or the “quiet” discrimination of minority cultures and identities.

le in anglosaxon countries (Great Britain, Canada, USA etc.) it is mostly known under the term “multicultural education”. Both terms are frequently used as synonyms, although terminological differences suggest some content differences as well. According to some views (Katunarić, 1994; Nieke, 2000; Čačić– Kumpes, 2004), multicultural education primarily emphasizes the presentation and promotion of cultural diversity, particularly mother tongues, while the intercultural approach is more focused on relations between societal majority and minorities, i.e. their interaction and cultural exchange.<sup>4</sup> However, the common starting point of the two approaches is a belief in the affirmation of minority identities and cultures and in the reduction of ethnocentrism in young people, finally resulting in the reduction of discrimination in society (Katunarić, 1996). The first step in this direction was the integration of incoming immigrant children into the domestic school system. This process was accompanied by the development and implementation of compensation programs.

The experimental classes program was based on two premises<sup>5</sup> (Perotti, 1995; Leiprecht, 2001). The first priority was to address the pedagogical deficiencies of immigrant children such as insufficient knowledge of the language spoken in school, insufficient prior education, specific socialization experiences etc. The purpose of the programs was filling the gaps and thus allowing the integration of immigrant children into the educational system of the host country. The second priority was related to the children’s presumed temporary migration status, implying the need to preserve their original cultural identity as reflected in language, tradition and customs of their country of origin. The first priority was addressed through the organization of special educational programs, such as preparatory (“experimental”) classes with bilingual teaching, extracurricular activities and programs aimed at improving the knowledge of the language spoken in school. Special programs for the teaching of mother tongue and culture were organized to address the second priority, implemented mainly by teachers from the immigrants’ countries of origin.

However, the compensation programs soon become a target of criticism. It was argued that those programs act as a tool for segregation and stigmatization. Instead of compensating for educational deficiencies and preserving the original cultural identities, these programs treated immigrant children as separate groups with special needs (Steiner– Khamisi, 1994). Low status and marginal position of minorities in the school system and in society in general was reflected in the implicit assumption of these programs about immigrant children. They were treated as “deficient persons” whose “deficits” and “needs” should be compensated for. Moreover, programs for the “culturally different” encountered insolvable conceptual problems. Ideas of the cultural identity of immigrant children were mostly

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4 This view of the differences between the two terms is adopted in this paper.

5 This concept was outlined in the European Council resolution issued in November 1970 (Auernheimer, 2003).

based on homogeneous and static views of culture, overlooking the complex interplay between immigrants and the majority culture. Elements of foreign cultures were taken out of their original context and put together having lost their original meaning. The phrase “cous-cous culture” used in France adequately reflects the practices of this period.

A new era in the development of intercultural education started at the beginning of the 1980's, when family reunion and high birth rates of the immigrant population resulted in increased multiethnicity and multiculturalism of Western European societies. A large number of immigrant families decided on permanent residence and the immigration processes had an increased impact on the domestic population. In the mid-1980's the Council of Europe abandoned the idea on special education for the “culturally different”, replacing it with general education (for all children) with a “cultural supplement” (Perotti, 1995). The critiques of the “pedagogy for foreigners” (Ausländerpädagogik) and its “deficit-compensation” orientation allowed for the gradual elaboration of the concept of intercultural education. Louis Porcher, one of the pioneers of interculturalist education, coordinated from 1977. to 1982. a panel of experts with the aim to develop recommendations for the improvement of the education of European migrants (Previšić, 1987). Results and recommendations of this five-year work were adopted as a common model for the migrant education by the Permanent Conference of European Ministers of Education in Dublin in May 1983. The most important implication was that education had to change its former focus on special needs of immigrant children in order to adapt to the needs of the new, multicultural society. In other words, the focus was redirected to the issues of living together and developing multicultural identities, both for the immigrant children and the majority children. Educational systems, particularly school systems, are now expected to transfer knowledge and develop abilities that would allow full participation in society for all citizens, regardless of their background, and prepare them for living in a multicultural society.

The outlined principles served as the foundation for the development of various pedagogical approaches taking into account specific national and social context. This refers to the differences in origin, proportion and legal status of the migrant population; differences in migrant flows in the countries of origin and host countries; differences in political views on the background, meaning and consequences of migrations, particularly in the host countries; various experiences of political, social and pedagogical encounters with migrants, and theoretical elaborations of these experiences (Hohmann, 1989). Nieke (2000:204) summarizes the various approaches to migrant education into ten universal goals of intercultural education, where every goal determines subsequent ones. The goals are: 1) the recognition of one's own, unavoidable ethnocentrism; 2) dealing with the foreign; 3) the establishment of tolerance; 4) the acceptance of ethnicity; attentiveness to the minority languages; 5) problematising racism; 6) emphasis on commonalities in order to avoid the threats of ethnicising; 7) encouraging solidarity; taking in-

to account the asymmetry between majority and minority; 8) practicing non-violent conflict resolution in response to cultural conflicts and cultural relativism; 9) raising awareness of the potential for mutual cultural enrichment; 10) elaboration of “we-identity”: surpassing the limits of one’s own group in global responsibility and in affirmation of universal humanity. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that intercultural education is a form of social learning (Perotti, 1994; Nieke, 2000) and represents a teaching principle for all subjects and teaching activities (Hohmann, 1989).

The outlined goals are reflected in three clusters of recommendations on the changes of European educational systems, put forward by the European Council experts (Perrotti, 1994: 13-14). At the level of knowledge dissemination, they outline the need to develop communication abilities in pupils and to foster the establishment of relationships between individuals and communities. In doing so, the need for critical evaluation of separate identities is pointed out (i.e. religious, national, ethnic etc.), relative to the universal (human rights and dignity) and specific historical development. At the level of abilities and aptitudes, the recommendations underline the need to reduce ethnocentrism, a critical approach to prejudice, emphasizes the relations between nation-states and the recognition of the achievements of various civilizations and cultures. This principle should be reflected primarily in the teaching of history and geography, as well as in other social sciences and humanities subjects dealing with cultural understanding, socialization processes, economical, political and ideological consequences of power inequalities between countries, etc. Furthermore, students should be informed about technological advances, particularly in the field of mass media. Knowledge on human rights should also have a prominent role, revealing sources of intolerance and xenophobia. At the level of educational and cultural institutions, the Council of Europe underlines the importance of cooperation between all stakeholders in the educational process (school, family, local communities, media, universities etc.) and suggests a coherent politics with economic, political and social agents jointly promoting the equal opportunities for individuals and cultural communities as well.

Despite the declarative commitment to intercultural education, stated primarily in the documents of the Council of Europe and European Union bodies, the practice in various European countries shows a “lack of enthusiasm” for its fundamental principles (Perotti, 1994; Leiprecht, 2001). As Hohmann (1989) points out, national educational policies have the authority over the development of educational systems, while supranational bodies such as the European Commission, refrain from using this term due to its political connotations. As Campani and Gundara (1994:8) discuss, “*the differences among the school systems, whether centralized or decentralized, have resulted in differential ways of implementing or ignoring [intercultural]<sup>6</sup> policy issues*”. The consequence of this state of affairs is

6 Italics added by the author.

that the main immigrant countries in the European Union (e.g. Germany, France, Belgium, Holland) still do not have a common model of intercultural education (ibid.). Furthermore, research studies show that, when implemented, intercultural education is still considered as a form of social activism or naïve idealism where principal figures try to impose their ideas to a xenophobic school environment (Perotti, 1994).

Subsequent sections of this paper will present an analysis of selected European curricula. Since a common European model of intercultural education has not been introduced yet, our attempt is to determine whether the selected curricula aim to support cultural diversity and minority identities.

## Discussion

A comparative analysis on European experiences in curriculum design for compulsory education was carried out on the sample of 11 countries (Sweden, Finland, Norway, Scotland, Ireland, England, Holland, Germany/Nordrhein-Westfalen, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia). Subsequent sections will present the analysis of curriculum contents related to intercultural education.

*Table 1. Elements of multicultural/intercultural education for particular countries<sup>7</sup>*

	Sweden	Finland	Norway	Scotland	Ireland
Separate programs in minority languages	*	*			Teaching in the original Gaelic language, combined with English
Minority language as first or second language of teaching, combined with the majority language	*	*	*		
Mother tongue for the pupils of foreign origin (optional additional subject)	*	*			

<sup>7</sup> Holland was omitted due to the insufficient data: brief outlines of the content areas and attainment targets are given at the national level, not allowing for accurate classification.

<b>The value of cultural diversity emphasized in curriculum</b>	*	*	*	*	*
<b>Education of ethnic/national minorities as an outstanding element of the curriculum (general aims, foundation values etc.)</b>	*	*	*		
<b>Minority education and the respect for cultural diversity as a separate teaching principle</b>		*			
<b>Dominant discourse focused on the shaping of minority identities</b>	multiculturalism: "preservation of diversity"	multiculturalism: "preservation of diversity"	multiculturalism: "preservation of diversity"	liberalism: "tolerance of diversity as an individual right"	liberalism: "tolerance of diversity as an individual right"
	<b>England</b>	<b>Austria</b>	<b>Germany (NRW)</b>	<b>Hungary</b>	<b>Slovenia</b>
<b>Separate programs in minority languages</b>				*	*
<b>Minority language as first or second language of teaching, combined with the majority language</b>		1			2
<b>Mother tongue for the pupils of foreign origin (optional additional subject)</b>		*	*		
<b>The value of cultural diversity emphasized in curriculum</b>	*	*	*		

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- 1 Additional teaching of German language as "second" language is available to the pupils with mother tongue other than German
  - 2 Pupils who attend minority programs (Italian, Hungarian) learn Slovenian as second language

<b>Education of ethnic/national minorities as an outstanding element of the curriculum (general aims, foundation values etc.)</b>		*	*	*	*
<b>Minority education and the respect for cultural diversity as a separate teaching principle</b>		*	*		
<b>Dominant discourse focused on the shaping of minority identities</b>	liberalism: “tolerance of diversity as an individual right “	interculturalism: “intercultural competences for all pupils”	interculturalism: “intercultural competences for all pupils”		

Based on the elements outlined in Table 1 a diversity of approaches to the preservation of cultural variety in curriculum documents is summarized into three basic types. For this purpose they were labeled “liberal”, “multicultural” and “intercultural” approach. Slovenia and Hungary do not fit into any of the three categories, so they will not be further considered. We will illustrate the approaches outlined above with the example of one typical national curriculum. The “liberal” approach is illustrated with the Irish curriculum, the “multicultural” approach is represented by the Finnish curriculum, while the “intercultural approach” is elaborated using the example of the Austrian curriculum for compulsory education. All the instances where cultural diversity and minority identities are represented in the sample curricula were subjected to the analysis.

### The liberal approach

In some countries (Scotland, Ireland and England) the value of cultural diversity is adopted in general curricular aims and specific aims for certain subjects and subject areas. However, those countries do not offer minority education in the form of special programs in minority languages or intercultural/multicultural education as a separate teaching principle. The values of tolerance and respect for diversity are acknowledged in the curricular documents. However, this declarative orientation is not reflected in the specific educational offerings tailored according to the specific socio-cultural background of migrant children. This approach is expressed through the dominant discourse that, for the purposes of this analysis, we labeled “liberalism”. This refers to the relatively “neutral” conception of cultural diversity, where minority identities are treated as a part of general respect for human rights and liberal democratic principles. This conception is primarily expressed in general educational aims, as will be illustrated with the typical examples of the Irish curriculum.



*Ireland*

The introductory part of the very well integrated Irish Primary School Curriculum elaborates general and specific aims, principles and defining features of the curriculum for primary education. The issue of cultural diversity is set out in the chapter on key issues in primary education, referring to quality of education, literacy and numeracy, a sense of Irish identity, *pluralism*, the spiritual dimension, lifelong learning etc. Cultural diversity is outlined in the section on specific aims and general objectives as well. The elaboration of the issue on pluralism states that *"The curriculum has a particular responsibility in promoting tolerance and respect for diversity in both the school and the community"* (p. 27). It is pointed out that *"Children come from a diversity of cultural, religious, social, environmental and ethnic backgrounds, and these engender their own beliefs, values and aspirations."* Furthermore, *"The curriculum acknowledges the centrality of Christian heritage and tradition in the Irish experience and the Christian identity shared by the majority of Irish people. It equally recognizes the diversity of beliefs, values and aspirations of all religious and cultural groups in society."* (p. 27).

In line with this orientation, the section on specific aims and general objectives outlines a specific aim *"to enable children to develop respect for cultural difference, an appreciation of civic responsibility, and an understanding of the social dimension of life, past and present"* (p. 34). This aim is elaborated in specific objectives, i.e. skills and knowledge a child should acquire in primary education, for example:

- *"extend his or her knowledge and understanding of, and develop a range of skills and interest in, the cultural historical, geographical and scientific dimension of the world"*
- *"develop a positive awareness of self, a sensitivity towards other people and a respect for the rights, views and feelings of others"*
- *"develop a knowledge and understanding of his or her own religious traditions and beliefs, with respect for the religious traditions and beliefs of others"* (pp. 35-36).

Cultural diversity is therefore treated normatively, as a cluster of knowledge and skills (specific aims and general objectives) and is elaborated as an universal principle including the right to religious expression. The acknowledgement of minority identities is related to *"positive valuing of citizen responsibility"*, and to the respect for a wider range of fundamental individual rights.

A similar outlook on ethnic minorities and cultural diversity is expressed in the goals and elaborations of two curricular areas of primary education. Elaboration of the *"Social, personal and health education"* states that the curriculum *"in the context of social, economic, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity seeks to foster in the child attitudes and behaviour that are characterized by understanding, empathy and mutual respect"* (p. 56). The curriculum sets out *"the issue of equi-*

*ty and human rights*” and encourages the notion that “*rights have associated responsibilities*”. “*Concepts of democracy, justice and inclusiveness*” are nurtured through the learning experiences offered, and through organizational structures of school and classroom (p. 56).

Elaboration of the curricular area “*Religious education*” states that “*Irish society recognizes the right of the individual to choose the particular form of religious expression that reflects the spiritual aspirations and experience he or she seeks. It acknowledges, too, the importance of tolerance towards the practice, culture and life-style of a range of religious convictions and expressions, and aspires to develop in children a tolerance and understanding towards the beliefs of others*” (p. 57). The same conclusion could be drawn as for the general purposes: curricular areas elaborate cultural diversity in a rather “neutral” way, related to the issues of “*equity and human rights*”. Specific features of minority cultures are not elaborated; the space for their expression is ethically indeterminate. Learning practices in line with the socio-cultural particularities are not included in the curriculum<sup>8</sup>.

### **The multicultural approach**

A second group of countries, including Sweden, Finland and Norway, convey the value of cultural diversity in general educational goals as well as in specific subject goals, and also in various forms of minority education. These are, for example, special programs in minority languages, additional learning of the mother tongue for pupils of foreign origin, programs where native language is taught as first or second mother tongue combined with the majority language and intercultural/multicultural education is treated as a separate didactical principle. Programs of these countries repeatedly emphasize the multicultural character of their societies and pay particular attention to the protection, development and acknowledgement of minority cultures and identities, both indigenous and immigrant. For the purpose of our classification, this approach was labeled the “multicultural approach” and will be illustrated with the relevant quotes from the Finnish curriculum.

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8 Note: In Primary School Curriculum the issue of cultural diversity is explicitly stated or indirectly referred to and positively valued in the explanation of the curricular area “*Language*” (p. 42), curricular area “*Social, environmental and scientific education*” (p. 48), directions for the teaching of *geography* (p. 49) and in the elaboration of the curricular area “*Arts education*” (p. 51). The Curriculum at Junior Cycle cultural diversity is referred to in the general aims section (“*Junior Certificate Programme*”) (p. 2), and in the aims of the subject “*Social, personal and health education*” (p. 5), goals of *foreign language* (p. 61), subject “*Environmental and Social Studies*” (p. 3) and in the goals of the subject “*Civic, social and political education*” (p. 14) of the “*Junior Certificate Syllabus*”.

*Finland*

The Finnish Framework Curriculum for the Comprehensive School outlines the mission and underlying values of education in the introductory part. An element of the stated “mission” is to “support each pupil’s linguistic and cultural identity and the development of his or her mother tongue” (p.7). The section entitled “Underlying values of basic education” sets out human rights, equity, democracy, natural diversity, environmental protection and “endorsement of multiculturalism” (p. 6). In the elaboration of the multiculturalist position it is stated that “in the instruction, special national and local attributes, the national languages, the two national churches, the Sami as an indigenous people and national minorities must be taken into consideration”. It is particularly emphasized that “The instruction must also take into account the diversification of Finnish culture through the arrival of people from other cultures”. Furthermore, “the instruction helps to support the formation of pupils’ own cultural identity, and his or her part in Finnish society and a globalizing world. Therefore it “also helps to promote tolerance and intercultural understanding” (p. 6).

A number of minority education programs are offered in support of the “formation of pupils’ own cultural identity”. They are presented in the section entitled “Instruction of cultural and language groups”, where priorities for each of the cultural groups are elaborated: Sami, Roma, immigrant children and users of sign language. Guidelines for the education of the indigenous Sami people state that it “must take account of the fact that the Sami are an indigenous people with their own language and culture” (p. 17). In line with this, the entire instruction could be in Sami language, but the teaching of Sami as a foreign language is also an option (it is noted that, in practice, the language of instruction is most often Sami). “The school must provide pupils with conditions conducive to developing healthy self-esteem, so that they will be able to preserve a Sami identity without being absorbed into the main population” (p. 17). The importance of Sami history, traditional way of life, musical, narrative and handicraft traditions are particularly emphasized in the curriculum with the “key instructional objective for Sami-speaking pupils... to support growth towards active bilingualism and multiculturalism” (p. 17). Guidelines for Roma education also emphasize a need to provide instruction in Roma language (Roma as mother tongue), and the opportunity to learn about their own history and culture. The aim is “the formation of a double identity” (p. 18), as well as enhancement of the quality of schooling and social integration. Aim of the instruction for the sign language users is “to reinforce the pupils’ sign language identity and to teach them to value their own language and culture as equal with the majority language and culture” (p. 18). Guidelines for the education of immigrant children outline the principal aim of supporting “the pupil’s growth into active and balanced membership of both the Finnish linguistic and cultural community and the pupil’s own linguistic and cultural community” (p. 19). Furthermore, “instead of the mother-tongue-and-literature instruction

*determined by the school's language of instruction, immigrants learn Finnish or Swedish as a second language if their skill in Finnish or Swedish is not viewed as being on a par with that of native speakers in all areas of language proficiency". However, "as possibilities allow, immigrants also receive instruction of their own native tongues".*

It is noticeable that the cited guidelines of the *"Instruction for cultural and language groups"* are primarily focused at *"reinforcing pupils' identity"*, with less emphasis on the compensation of educational deficits. Compensation is referred to in the case of Roma and immigrant children, although the primary goal of education for these two groups as well is the *"establishment of a double identity"* and active bilingualism. The notion of social identity is broadened and surpasses the common ethnic criterion with the inclusion of sign language users as a separate cultural group. This directly supports the fundamental premise of intercultural/multicultural education, i.e. that affirmation of group (not only ethnic) and cultural identities deserve particular attention, leading to higher self-esteem and confidence in one's own abilities (Banks, 1989; Johansson, 1996).

The aims outlined above could be reached through the implementation of diverse teaching activities and in various subjects (Hohmann, 1989). Multiperspectivity is particularly emphasized in the section on integrated instruction and cross-curricular themes. They should be incorporated in compulsory and optional subjects and treated from the perspectives specific to those subjects (cross-curricular themes integrate instruction by providing various perspectives on the same topic, elaborating themes and emphasizing general educational goals). One of the seven cross-curricular themes is *"Cultural identity and internationalism"*, with the goal *"to help the pupil to understand the essence of the Finnish and European cultural identities, discover his or her own cultural identity and develop capabilities for cross-cultural interaction and internationalism"* (p. 20). Specific objectives state that the pupils will:

- *"Come to know and respect their respective cultural inheritances, spiritual and material, and to see Finnish cultural identity as an element of indigenous, Nordic and European cultures";*
- *"Come to understand the roots and diversity of their own cultures and to see their own generation as a continuer and developer of previous generation's way of life";*
- *"Get an introduction to other cultures and philosophies of life, and acquire capabilities for functioning in a multicultural community, and in international cooperation";*
- *"Come to understand the component factors of cultural identity and their meaning for the individual and the community" (p. 20-21).*

It could be considered indicative that the title of the cross-curricular theme (*Cultural identity and internationalism*) does not explicitly refer to Finnish identity, but the cultural identity per se. This approach opens the opportunity to estab-

lish the cultural identity not only at the group level, but at the individual level as well (Katunarić, 1994). In doing so, this viewpoint implicitly suggests the possibility/legitimacy of diverse ethnic and cultural identities in the contemporary Finnish society. In line with this approach, emphasis is on the development of “*capabilities for functioning in a multicultural community, and in international cooperation*”.

A survey of literature (Golnick & Chinn, 1990; Perrotti, 1994; Nieke, 2000; among others) shows that learning and improving mother tongue is of principal importance for the preservation and affirmation of minority identities. Finnish curriculum lists 11 programs for this subject (p. 25), therefore promoting active bilingualism (Auernheimer, 2003) in the best multicultural tradition (Mesić, 1998). The languages are: *Finnish, Swedish, Sami, Roma and Finnish sign language as mother tongues, other mother tongues, Finnish and Swedish as second national languages (A, B and native-level syllabi either for Swedish or for Finnish), Finnish for Sami pupils and Finnish and Swedish for sign language users*. These programs are combined as mother tongue and other national language, with Finnish or Swedish being compulsory either as mother tongue or as the second national language. This approach stresses the importance of mother tongue instruction, repositioning it from the relatively peripheral position of optional subject/activity into the core curriculum subject.

The dual function of language (Perotti, 1994), as a tool for communication and a means of shaping cultural identity, is additionally underlined in the Appendix 5 of the curriculum, entitled “*Core curriculum for instruction in the native languages of immigrant pupils*” (pp. 228-229). The description of the subject positions instruction in the native languages of immigrants as a supplement to basic education. It stresses that “*together with instruction in Finnish or Swedish as a second language, instruction in the pupil’s own language strengthens his or her identity and creates a foundation for multicultural and functional bilingualism*”. Therefore “*the task of the native-language instruction is to get the pupils to take an interest in their own languages, to use and develop their skills in their respective languages after basic education too, and to appreciate their own backgrounds and culture*” (p. 228). Mother tongue instruction “*creates a foundation for multicultural and functional bilingualism*” in this case as well.

In general, the mission and value positions stated in the introductory part of the curriculum and the forms of minority education based on these premises demonstrate rather high-level acknowledgement of minority cultural identities<sup>9</sup>. However, taking into account the premises of the intercultural approach outlined in the introductory part (as a form of social learning treating we-identities as rath-

9 Note: Cultural diversity is explicitly stated and positively valued in description and/or goals of numerous other subjects (Framework curriculum for the comprehensive school): “Second national language” (p. 91), “Foreign languages” (p. 108), “Environmental and natural studies” (p. 132), “Geography” (p. 141), “Religious education” (p. 155), “Music” (p. 173), “Arts” (p. 176).

er complex and variable determinants), it is to some extent surprising that the curriculum does not refer either to the interaction of the majority and minority pupils, or to the cultural contacts in school.

### **The intercultural approach**

A third group of countries, represented by Austria and Germany (Nordrhein-Westfalen), particularly promotes specific types of learning, stressing intercultural communication and development of intercultural competences for all. The premises of this approach are similar to those of the multicultural approach (the importance of development and acknowledgement of minority identities). However, there is less emphasis on cultural differences and more emphasis on mutual relations and interaction. This approach promotes a process of joint learning, i.e. understanding and acquisition of culturally specific and common values of pupils from various cultures. Characteristic quotations from the Austrian curriculum for primary school will serve as an illustration of the intercultural approach.

#### *Austria*

The first part of the Austrian learning plan for primary school (Lehrplan der Volksschule) elaborates the general purpose of primary education (Allgemeines Bildungsziel), underlining the central role of intercultural communication: *“A special social and pedagogical task is assigned to primary school in teaching intercultural education, since it jointly educates children with German mother tongue and children whose mother tongue is other than German”*. It is pointed out that *“intercultural education is not limited to the study of other cultures”*, but *“it is, at the first place, common learning, understanding, experiencing and creating of cultural values”* (p. 3). In this sense, it is pointed out that interest and curiosity for other cultures should be developed in children, as well as respect for cultural diversity. This way *“intercultural education contributes to better mutual understanding, respect, and recognition of common features and to the minimization of prejudice”* (p. 5). The need to relate intercultural education to the didactical principle of social learning and political education is particularly underlined. The citations suggest that the values of tolerance and cultural diversity are not isolated from the context of the instruction process engaging pupils with diverse cultural background. The moment of *“common creation of values”* is underlined, making the goal to just *“meet the other cultures”* insufficient. Intercultural education is not limited to the meeting of other cultures itself, thus allowing for the creation of horizontal ties between cultures (Katunarić, 1994).

Intercultural education is a didactical approach permeating all subjects and instructional activities (Hohmann, 1989), as it is elaborated in the description of 12 cross-curricular teaching areas (health education, education for reading, media education, art education, political education, *intercultural learning*, sexual ed-

ucation, speech education, environmental education, traffic education, economic education, education for gender equality) (p. 10). Their educational goals can be reached only through the instructional activities in diverse subjects. Subjects should be *“considered as the combination of content, methodological end educational tasks”* (p. 10).

A subject entitled “German for the pupils with mother tongue other than German” (or German as second language) represents a support for the education of pupils with mother tongue other than German (Lehrplan der Volksschule) (p. 14, 144). This element of the curriculum is not elaborated separately for each grade. It is conceptualized as a *“long-term educational concept adapted to the individual needs of pupils with insufficient knowledge or without any knowledge of German language”* (p. 14). Instruction is additive or integrated in the instruction of compulsory subjects. It is important to stress that additional learning of German is not considered as a mere compensational learning, since the subject is presented as part *“of diverse intercultural forms of learning, referring to the common and mutual learning of people from various cultures”* (p. 144). A departure from compensational learning is reflected in the emphasis on *“specific living conditions of pupils whose mother tongue is not German”* (p. 144) and the need to *“reduce prejudice, regard one’s culture relative to others and act in line with these insights”*. Furthermore, *“intercultural learning in school should be used as an opportunity for the social enrichment of all pupils and as a preparation for the living in multicultural world community”* (p. 144). This approach does not separate minority groups with “special needs”, suggesting integral instruction for all. This quote repeatedly underlines the importance of language and cultural identity. At the same time, it supports the idea of the social character of intercultural learning and indicates educational goals of empathy, tolerance, conflict-resolution, cooperation and solidarity (Auernheimer, 2003). Instruction should take into account cultural and socio-cultural aspects of all cultures in one class (culture of origin, migrant culture, culture of receiving country), thus stressing the importance of intercultural mediation. The ultimate goal of instruction is to *“integrate pupils, as active participants, into the new language and cultural community, without denying their native cultural and language identity”*.

The motive of identity is also dominant in the program of mother tongue for pupils with mother tongue other than German. The main goal of the subject is *“to learn mother tongue for the continuity and support of personality and identity development in pupils, with respect to the parental cultural tradition”*. Furthermore, *“a positive attitude towards mother tongue and the bicultural process (in Austria) should be encouraged. The equal treatment of mother tongue and German should be promoted in teaching. Pupils should have an opportunity to develop appreciation for bilingualism and biculturalism.”* (p. 274). The integrative function of language is underlined both in the program of German as second language and in the program of German for the pupils of foreign origin. At the same time, a significant departure from the classic compensation programs can be noticed. The first pro-

gram underlines the importance of “*cooperative mutual learning*” of pupils from diverse cultures, while the second one stresses the role of language for the “*continuity and development of personality and identity of pupils*”<sup>10</sup>.

## Conclusion

The introductory statement on the absence of a common European model of intercultural education was supported by the analysis of selected European curricula presented in this paper. All the countries subjected to this analysis aim at affirming cultural diversity at the programmatic level. Furthermore, the Council of Europe and other supranational bodies such as the European Commission issued a number of resolutions on this issue. However, the variety in approaches points to the conclusion that intercultural/multicultural education is still primarily regulated by national (educational) policies. It could be therefore expected that the treatment of cultural diversity in educational policy would be primarily influenced by the wider political agenda and not exclusively by scientifically grounded ideas and normative models. Or, as Katunarić states: “The choice of the specific form of multicultural education is limited due to the fact that multicultural education policies are a by-product of general educational and cultural policies...of the most developed countries” (1994:164). These educational and cultural policies are under a wide scale of influences, ranging from general features of the social and political context (i.e. the relation of “old” and “new” minorities, proportion, legal and political status of the migrant population, political views on the background, purpose and consequences of migrations etc.) to financial and organizational issues. At the same time, official reports and recommendations treat educational and cultural policy principally as a political and not cultural or educational issue (Katunarić, 1994).

It is therefore not surprising that countries with historic, traditional and geographic resemblance<sup>11</sup> are rather similar in their treatment of cultural diversity and demonstrate clear distinction from the “more distant” countries. For example, the rather abstract discourse of the Irish curriculum (Scotland and England are in the same group), treating cultural diversity primarily as an individual right, is very different from the Finnish curriculum, which emphasises the protection of minority languages and cultures and the multicultural affirmation of diversity

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10 **Note:** The discussion above equally refers to the lower secondary program (Lehrplan AHS). This plan also underlines mutual relations more than cultural differences and integrates intercultural approach in the instructional process. Due to the limited space we did not present quotations from this plan. Furthermore, the issue of cultural and ethnic diversity is elaborated and positively valued in the goals of foreign language teaching (p. 224) and in the plan for the lower general secondary education (Lehrplan AHS) in description of subjects and goals of art education (p. 1), German language (p. 1), geography and economy (p. 1) Evangelic (p. 1) and Catholic religious education.

11 Therefore their political agendas are presumably “closer”.



and difference (with Sweden and Norway in the same group). The Austrian curriculum (along with the German region Nordrhein-Westfalen) represents a sort of “aberration” in this context, most consistently incorporating the guidelines of the European Council for intercultural education (the exchange of cultural values between pupils from various cultural groups; intercultural competences for all pupils). However, it should be noted that the similarities outlined above could not be strictly considered as approaches<sup>12</sup>, as they are – if our conclusions are correct – principally a consequence of contextual factors and not the conscious and planned activity of educational actors.

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12 Austria and the German region Nordrhein-Westfalen represent an exception, with the most clearly adopted guidelines of the European Council. However, the influence of contextual factors could not be overlooked.

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