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For the purpose of the conference held by Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010 Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> century pronounces and suggests:

### **Cultural integration or integration culture?**

No culture is static. Ideas, technologies, products, and people move from one place to another. When cultures come into contact through migration, trade, or the latest telecommunications devices, they influence each other. Sometimes cultures cross-pollinate, exchange foods, music, sports. At other times, say critics of globalisation, a culture swamps another like an invasive, fast-reproducing weed. Cultures have evolved in response to contact for thousands of years. But the pace has changed. In the past the influences of distant cultures came slowly, delayed by long journeys. Today, because of the telephone, the television, the Internet, telecommunications satellites, world trade, and long-distance travel, cultural influences can spread across the planet as fast as the click of a mouse. Cultural integration also concerns the adoption of a mass consumer culture where everything from fashion to sport, music to television, becomes integrated into the national culture, often without challenge. Through technology and trade, a seemingly borderless world is created. Globalisation affects economic, political, social, cultural and environmental decision-making. Will local cultures inevitably fall victim to this global "consumer" culture? Will English eradicate all other languages? Will consumer values overwhelm peoples' sense of community and social solidarity? Or, on the contrary, will a common culture lead the way to greater shared values and political unity?

Historically, lingua franca has been a functional communication means which has always been used in certain regions as a bridging language independently of the linguistic history of the native language. In Europe, for example, German has served as lingua franca in large portions of Europe for centuries, being one of the official languages of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. French was the language of diplomacy and still it is a working language of many institutions. English is the current lingua franca of international business, science, technology and aviation. Moreover, English serves as a common platform for various international meetings and forums. In order to prevent misunderstandings and misleading usage of homophones, Forum for the 21st century suggests to develop an unitarian functional system of the English language, being used as lingua franca for the global communication, especially for the purposes of communication among the international and global institutions, as well as among countries. In order to establish such an international standard for the language, also referred to as Global English, Forum for the 21st century suggests to create a commission formed by native English speaking professionals from the academic field, along with the representatives of the institutions, with the aim to set a terminology which would be



# The Model Conference

## Cross-Cultural Issues in the Global Context

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internationally comprehensive and would express the same meaning in all languages. The objective is to enhance and facilitate the communication, therefore Forum for the 21st century strongly recommends to educate the representatives of international organizations on the national level.

The political, military, and economic pillars of a global world cannot be fully supported without the fourth pillar -- a global religion -- standing beneath the fourth corner, lest the structure collapse. Religious differences are seen as the final barrier, separating various ethnic populations. Until these differences are broken down, divergent cultures will never fully meld into a one global world. Religions need to accept the validity of all beliefs to attain world peace. The Catholic Church would favor one religion in the world - if it were Roman Catholicism. Assorted grand muftis and other true believers hold the same view, again so long as it is their faith that is universally recognized. The Forum for the 21st century therefore proposes the process of secularization, as done mainly in Europe, where an increasing majority of the European population has ceased to participate in traditional religious practices (on a regular basis) while still maintaining relatively high levels of private individual religious beliefs. In this respect, Forum for the 21st century advises unchurched and religious individualization, rather than of secularization. The main feature of this process is "believing without belonging".

Today's global trends of migration, growth of minorities, and increased consciences about rights are some of the main factors that have brought multiculturalism onto the social scene. As a term it has provoked public and professional attention, commencing significant scientific and political debates related to its implications on the redefinition of the traditional concept of the State. Cultural diversity is not a contemporary phenomenon. The history of the world testifies that multiculturalism can be traced back to the empires of Alexander the Great or the Roman Empire. Furthermore, it can be identified in the new age empires of the Austro-Hungarian and Turkish Empire. Also, multiculturalism can be identified in twentieth century communist federations such as the Soviet Union and Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. One of the most significant arguments against multiculturalism, is that it stands for the respecting and supporting of cultural differences that potentially can lead to serious obstruction of universally accepted values. Multiculturalism as a form of organization of the State is not sustainable unless there are binding elements identified in supra national, supra ethnical, supra cultural, supra racial, and supra religious level. The power of these elements should surpass the particular interests of one group. With respect to this notion, Forum for the 21st century suggests to outline a set of such elements on a national level, in order to create and maintain favorable conditions for sustainable multiculturalism.

Nowadays, the state as a carrier of a dominant cultural core and as an exclusive unit of loyalty is challenged and being redefined in the vortex of a massive globalization process in



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migration and digitally-driven communications. Cultural re-tribalisation is stridently asserted, but paradoxically at the same time, split identities are becoming more common, multiple identities are negotiated, dual citizenship proliferates and a global network of shared symbols render cultural exclusivity less tenable. The contemporary multi-ethnic state is now a site of relentless interrogation of the validity of any sort of cultural consensus or attempts to impose one. Intercultural dialogue is crucial in preventing and ending conflicts. As Ban Ki-moon said on the Security Council, May 26, 2010, intercultural dialogue could promote reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict and could also introduce moderate voices into polarized debates. At a time when prejudice and hatred are all too common, when extremists seek new recruits through incitement and identity-based appeal, when politicians use divisiveness as a strategy to win elections, dialogue can be an antidote. In order to prevent ethnic conflicts and misuse of cultural differences, Forum for the 21st century considers crucial increasing intellectual engagement among scholars and nongovernmental organizations about possible approaches for preventing and resolving intra-national conflicts. Drawing attention to self-determination movements and issues that would likely lead to violent conflict in case of absence of international attention also play an important role in preventing conflicts. Moreover, building a foundation for an active international network of experts (from university, policy, NGO, and think-tank sectors) that can advance new thinking and policies about the self-determination-sovereignty-governance conundrum.