Diversity in Europe *In varietate Concordia (EC, Brussels, 2000)*

- issue 3

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« These strangers in a foreign World	*« Ces Etrangères, en Monde inconnu*
Protection asked of me-	*Asile m'ont demandé*
Befriend them, lest yourself in Heaven	*Accueille-les, car Toi- même au Ciel*
Be found a refugee"	*Pourrait être une Réfugiée »*

Emily Dickinson (Quatrains II-2, 1864-65, Amherst, Massachusetts, Etats-Unis)
traduction en français de Claire Malroux (NRF, Poésie/Gallimard, Paris, 2000)

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From Paris to Switzerland

The Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (Iriv) has published since September 2016 a newsletter dedicated to migration- *Regards Croisés sur la Migration*.

The first issues (September 2016 - March 2018) were dedicated to a comparison between Paris and Berlin on the basis of testimonies gathered among migrants interviewed in Paris and Berlin.

Since 2018, our newsletter has been entitled "Diversity in Europe" as the main aim is now to tackle the issue of diversity- the motto chosen by the European Union (EU) since 2000 and definitely in 2004 after the last biggest enlargement of the European Union (from 15 to 25 EU members).

The first issue (November 2018) was focussed on diversity at school with Rotterdam (The Netherlands) whose inhabitants coming from abroad represent more than 70 % of the total population which is both a challenge and an opportunity to experience new approaches.

The second issue (March 2019) was dedicated to religious & cultural diversity, with a focus on the Jewish community. If the Judaeo-Christian roots of the European Union are obvious, the European Union is a secular project with a genuine cultural identity open to all religions- "*United in diversity*". The issue 2 suggested a comparison between Paris and Thessaloniki that was called "city of Ghosts" as only ten per cent of its Jewish community survived after the Shoah. Paris also suffered from the racist and anti-Semitic laws of the Vichy government (1940-1945) ; the Memorial to the Shoah in Paris reminds of these troubled times.

This third issue (November 2019) tackles the issue of interreligious dialogue with articles on diversity in Switzerland and France. This is especially important in secular countries where all religions have to be respected together with the right to be free from any religious belonging or belief. The secular approach may have been questioned in the past thirty years with the revival of extremisms both on a political and religious level. Religion has become part of private area thanks to the secular approach in order to enhance a strict separation of the Church and State. This "republican" approach has allowed a civil peace for the past century in most of our European societies (but during Second World War). The arrival of people coming from abroad with a stronger religious belief or practice may have questioned this republican secularism. The issue is when one religion presents itself as "main stream" and exclusive from other cultures or religions.

Culture seems to be a pertinent approach to tackle the issue of religious diversity in our European societies often referred to as "post-modern" as religious practice has declined. Nevertheless the feeling of belonging may be sensitive if people from our religious background are attacked or persecuted. This is part of our identity. As reminded by special rapporteur in the field of cultural rights (Karima Bennoune, since 2015) the first report to the Human Rights Council, submitted in June 2010, underlined that there wasn't any official definition of cultural rights. Therefore it was decided to investigate, in an exploratory manner, how best to distinguish which human rights may be considered cultural and to further define the content of these rights. In this perspective, cultural rights were meant to "protect the rights for each person, individually and in community with others, as well as groups of people, to develop and express their humanity, their world view and the meanings they give to their existence and their development through, inter alia, values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, institutions and ways of life."(1)

Religious diversity is also part of civil and political rights, and the "main" law (Constitutions) in European countries have meant to organise social life - the so-called "contrat social". In this issue 3 of our newsletter, we have tried to present religious diversity in two perspectives. In Switzerland, two trends are at stake: secularisation and religious diversification and a public political discourse focussing on migrant religions (especially Islamic groups) and their capacity to accommodate to the institutional frameworks of the secular nation-state. For France, the article is more focused on the Republican principle of "laïcité" which has to be combined with the catholic ecumenical movement enhanced by Concile Vatican 2 (1962-1965) and the necessary respect and mutual understanding of non-Catholic religions, with a focus on the interreligious dialogue that had to be renewed with the Jewish community after the Shoah.

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Including without Othering

Since 1848, when the country became the nation state as we know it today, Switzerland has applied various official forms of regulating immigration. Interesting enough, however, at that time the regulations were not restrictive, but rather open and each canton could decide for itself. Anyone of another nationality was free to settle as long as there was reciprocity. Swiss cantons were happy to grant the right to immigrate to anyone as long as their own citizens were allowed to settle and work somewhere else as well. There was no federal law. The liberal era lasted until the First World War. By 1914, 17.3% of the population was Non-Swiss (1).

After the First World War, the global economic crisis and the establishment of the welfare state provided a fertile ground to restrict immigration and to regulate it on a federal level. In 1931, the first federal law is characterized by an overall fear of "foreigners" which at the time also meant Jewish people who were said to be unwanted because of their incapacity to assimilate. Even though Switzerland was not actively involved in the Second World War, it adapted to the anti-Semitic discourses, reproduced them and (with a few exceptions) actively denied asylum to Jewish people. Restricting and controlling immigration in fact meant selecting people who were considered adaptable and favorable to the Swiss economy (2). Hence, right after the Second World War in 1948, Italy signed a bilateral agreement with Switzerland. To promote economic advancement Italian workers were recruited and placed mostly in the construction industry, as well as the machine and textile industries. This was the beginning of the so-called *guest worker* period. Workers entered Switzerland for short periods of time and were then forced to return to their home countries and replaced by other guest workers. This rotation system lasted until the oil crisis in 1973. By 1970 guest workers were coming from Spain, Portugal and the former Yugoslavia, although Italian workers still constituted more than half of all immigrants. With the recovery of the economic situation at the end of the 1970s, immigration grew again, from 14.8% of the total Swiss population in 1980 to 19.5% in 2000 and to 25.1% nowadays (3).

Meanwhile, the picture has changed again. The signings of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons (AFMP) between the EU and Switzerland in 2002, and the Schengen Treaty in 2004, meant that Switzerland became part of the Schengen Area in 2005. Free movement within the Schengen Area became the law, and strict border control for non-EU citizens was enforced. This change of law has led to a restricted diversity, because immigrants are coming mostly from European countries with the exception of people with a very high professional qualification who are recruited from third country states on the basis of an annual contingent and the rather small number of asylum seekers

Concerning the cultural and /or religious diversity in Switzerland, there are two trends that can be observed. On the one hand, there is a trend towards secularization. This means that the traditional religious groups or churches like the Roman-Catholic and the Reformed-Protestant ones are constantly losing members. A quarter of the population in Switzerland above 15 years state that they do not belong to any religious group or church. On the other hand, there is a strong tendency towards religious diversification, which means that other Christian religious groups as well as other non-Christian religious groups are on the increase. For instance, the number of people who belong to a Christian group other than the two traditional ones (mostly evangelical, Pentecostal and other charismatic churches) is about the same as the number of people who state to belong to an Islamic religious group. While members of the first groups are mostly Swiss, members of the second groups are mostly immigrants.

As in every modern nation-state where freedom of religion is part of the basic rule of law, statistics on religious belonging reflect migration driven diversity. The fact that the Roman-Catholics still constitute the most numerous religious group is a legacy of the above mentioned active recruitment of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese immigrants as well as the free movement from these Catholic countries nowadays. The fact that there are – albeit small, but still – Hindu and Buddhist communities in Switzerland (0.6% and 0.5%) is due to more recent (asylum) immigration. Yet, an important factor tends to be forgotten: There are more Non-Swiss people i.e. immigrants among the seculars (without a religion) namely 30.2% than Swiss nationals themselves (23.3%) (4).

The crucial point is not so much the growing religious diversity as such, since the federal constitution of the secular Swiss state grants freedom of religion, but the fact that the public political discourse focusses on migrant religions (especially Islamic groups) and the ongoing question on their capacity to accommodate to the institutional frameworks of the secular nation-state. One such point in question is the formal i.e. legal recognition as a religious community. In Switzerland, legal recognition is regulated *not* on the federal, but on the cantonal level. Furthermore, not "religions" as such are recognized but religious institutions or communities. Being legally recognized as such an institution or community allows access to data of the tax authorities in order to effectively impose its own taxes. Such a step requires a change in the cantonal constitution and hence a general vote by the public! The other way of being publicly recognized but still privately organized is less complex and does not imply to get access to tax relevant data. The executive body examines the community's form of organization, its respect for religious peace, gender equality and financial transparencies, yet the legislative body makes the decision. In the Canton of Basle-City one of the migrant religions, the Alevites, gained such recognition in 2012. In the same year, the New apostolic Church was recognized as well (5).

Any liberal democracy has developed measures to include various political and civil rights in its institutional framework. In our diverse post-migrant societies, these measures must be used to discuss religious plurality as such without reducing migrant religions to aspects of ethnic belonging and therefore (re)producing dynamics of othering.

Enhancing interreligious dialogue as a touchstone of diversity

France is a Republican country with secular principles expressed by the French motto "*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*". The legal basis for French secularism is the strict separation of religious things from the public area since 1905 with the Law on the Separation of the Church and State. "*France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic, guaranteeing that all citizens regardless of their origin, race or religion are treated as equals before the law and respecting all religious beliefs*" (French Constitution, 1958). The "freedom to practice religion" has been recognized for more than a century with the Law of 1905. This is not a "weapon against religion", as this text of reference returned all religions to the private sector and established state secularism in the public sphere. It means that the French State does not favour any religion but guarantees their peaceful co-existence in respect of the laws and principles of the Republic. The 1905 law abolished the Concordat of 1801 and put an end to the system of "recognised religions". It was the beginning of so-called French secularism, which proclaimed the freedom of conscience and guaranteed the freedom to practice religion **(1).**

From a theoretical perspective, interreligious dialogue has been enhanced in many ways. French historian Jules Isaac in 1948 writes "Jesus et Israel" in order to struggle, after the Shoah, against despise and hate speech. His main aim was to promote a fair treatment of Israel in Christian education **(2)**. He insisted on the Christian roots of anti-Judaism and asked for a real and fair dialogue between Jews and Christians. Indeed the so-called "Blood Legends" where Jews were accused of killing Christian children have been quite popular in many European countries such as Poland from the 12th to the 18th Centuries as reminded by Polish anthropologist Johanna Torkarska-Bakir **(3)**. These legends were also underlined by Primo Levi in the appendix of his book "*Se questo è un uomo*" to answer the many questions he was asked by students on the occasion of speeches he delivered in high schools **(4)**. The critical issue of such fake legends is that they may be used as "traditional or popular belief" with the risk of being considered as part of "real past or history". This was the purpose of Johanna Torkarska-Bakir to combat this reference to a so-called "popular belief" in the propaganda of some conservative trends in Europe nowadays.

Another book has been a main reference for an open dialogue between Christian and Jewish religions- "*Le dernier des Justes*"- written by André Swartz-Bart who won the Goncourt price in 1959 **(5)**. His book was a main success with more than 45 000 sales after the author attended a television show "*Lectures pour tous*" by Pierre Dumayet. It has been considered as a main testimony on the Shoah from a personal perspective as there has been some confusion after the war between "death camps" and "concentration camps". The confusion was maybe on purpose in times of reconstruction with European and French people reluctant to hear any more on the Second World War and specifically on its most tragic part, the Shoah. For this reason, in times of "cold war", André Swartz-Bart's book was strongly attacked with a hate speech coming from medias such as "*Arts*" or other anti-Semitic newspapers or reviews with words that could be used by people specializing in hate speech in social networks nowadays. **(6)**

Jules Isaac and André Swartz-Bart's books have been main references for the work conducted by Concile Vatican II (1962-1965). An interreligious dialogue was renewed as early as 1959 by Pope Jean XXIII who suppressed the expression "perfidious Jews" in the catholic pray "*Oremus et pro perfidis Judaeis*" **(6)**. In its first part, Concile Vatican II insisted on ecumenism defined as a « movement or tendency toward worldwide Christian unity or cooperation. The term, of recent origin, emphasizes what is viewed as the universality of the Christian faith and unity among churches. The ecumenical movement seeks to recover the apostolic sense of the early church for unity in diversity, and it confronts the frustrations, difficulties, and ironies of the modern pluralistic world. It is a lively reassessment of the historical sources and destiny of what followers perceive to be the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church of Jesus Christ » **(7)**

One of the most decisive contribution of Concile Vatican II remains the approval of a document condemning "hatred and persecutions of Jews, whether they arose in former or in our own days," affirming the validity of Judaism as a religious way of life with which Catholics must establish relations of "mutual knowledge and respect," . The text also repudiated the idea of "the Jewish people as one rejected, cursed, or guilty of deicide." It marked a turning point in the history of the Church, for in and through it a tacit but definitive judgment was passed on countless generations of Popes, Kings, Church Fathers, Saints, writers, theologians, and ordinary Christians; on them and on their attitude to Jews and Judaism"**(8)**. This text has been a main victory against a conservative Catholic mind whose outlook was to be found reflected in any official Roman Catholic manual of theology and which governed the thinking of the Papal government, or Curia. Its adoption was itself of « major historical importance and signified the culmination of a bitterly intense struggle ». This is still an ongoing debate if we consider some conservative trends in Catholic Church nowadays

Mutual respect and understanding of each other, with or without any religious belonging is a crucial challenge for diversity. The canonization of Cardinal John Henry Newman, last October 2019, by Pope Francis, a former Protestant educator converted to Catholicism during the 19th Century, and first Briton to be declared a saint in over forty years, was the occasion to remind of his original approach. He saw "differences as places of encounter rather than exclusion". One main question he suggested was "what should be the relationship of faith to a skeptical, secular age? » In his poem '*The Dream of Gerontius'* he wrote that "Harmony requires difference ». The concept remains at the very heart of Christian theology in the concept of the Trinity. **(9)**

This is not only a catholic or religious perspective as difference is also at stake in diversity, as a main characteristic of our modern societies, sometimes referred to as "post-modern". Whatever the word used, and whatever our cultural or religious background, it is impossible to take into account only one part of the world - with a single culture or religion. We would be deprived of key elements of understanding to overcome the main issues we are faced to in everyday life from the struggle for environment to the day to day life with others. There is a specific disease of the brain where the patient can only see half of his/her plate- this is the same kind of social or cultural disease we would suffer from if we didn't include other religious or cultural perspectives in our perception: only half of the world would be understood

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Club de l'iriv at the Cité des Métiers

The iriv offers a monthly club at the Cité des Métiers in Paris is an illustration of a pedagogical approach to enhance diversity on the ground among a public with a migrant background
"Valuing a migratory path–from experience to competence"

In a first step, participants are asked to introduce themselves (short biography) during a roundtable.

In a second step, diverse tools & pedagogical strategies are explained. On the basis of the Migrapass portfolio (circular approach from experience to competence), other strategies are suggested and discussed.

In a third step, the pedagogical supports are dispatched among participant after the session
The participation at 3 clubs together with the sending of one's resume open the way to an official attendance certificate provided by iriv - it may also enrich the resume (as a training path)

Several European projects in the migration field have been tested at the Cité des Métiers since 2012- Migrapass (2012), Valbuk (2013), ALLinHE (2013-2014), Vintage (2015-2016), Key Tutors (2015-2017), Revalue (2017-2019), MiFamily (2019)

Further information : www.club-iriv.net

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