



Diversity in Europe

— *In varietate Concordia (EC, Brussels, 2000)*



SUPER DIVERSITÉ

issue 16 - Diversity and the Overton Window

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*« These strangers in a foreign World  
Protection asked of me-  
Befriend them, lest yourself in Heaven  
Be found a refugee »*

*« Ces Etrangères, en Monde inconnu  
Asile m'ont demandé  
Accueille-les, car Toi-même au Ciel  
Pourrait être une Réfugiée »*

**Emily Dickinson** (Quatrains II-2, 1864-65, Amherst, Massachusetts, Etats-Unis)  
translation in French by **Claire Malroux** (NRF, Poésie/Gallimard, Paris, 2000)

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## Artificial Intelligence- diversity of the challenges for Europe

Since November 2018, the Institute for Research and Information on Volunteering (Iriv) has published a newsletter entitled «Diversity in Europe». It is expressed in the motto chosen since 2000 by the European Union *In varietate Concordia* with the enlargement of the European Union from 15 to 25 members in 2004.

The first issue (November 2018) was dedicated to school with Rotterdam (Netherlands) whose inhabitants with foreign origins represent more than 70% of the total population. Paris also has students with very diverse profiles in its classrooms.

The second issue (March 2019) addressed religious and cultural diversity, and the Jewish community with a comparison between Paris and Thessaloniki, cities sharing a tragic history during the Second World War.

The third issue (November 2019) raised the issue of interreligious dialogue with articles on Switzerland and France. In secular countries, religious freedom is the right not to believe or to belong to any religion.

The fourth issue (March 2020) was dedicated to interfaith education and dialogue in multicultural countries. A first article analysed inclusion and diversity in the United States. A second article recalled the example of Sarajevo, a model of peaceful existence between religious communities.

The fifth issue (November 2020) addressed diversity in the Mediterranean. Its eastern part is a crossroads between Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Strategies are contradictory and the role of the EU is changing.

The sixth issue (March 2021) discussed artistic diversity and intercultural education with an article on Mexico and the great richness of its crafts; a second article addressed intercultural dialogue and education.

The seventh issue (November 2021) illustrates francophone diversity at the heart of the Francophonie with multiple facets, including literary.

The eighth issue (March 2022) is dedicated to Ukraine at war with a reflection on diversity of learning.

The ninth issue (November 2022) addresses diplomatic diversity-war is an admission of failure. ?

The tenth issue (March 2023) is dedicated to the diversity of the Suds - cooperation between the countries of the South and the universal character of the Francophonie.

The eleventh issue (November 2023) is dedicated to media diversity and plurality

The twelfth issue (March 2024) is dedicated to sports diversity with the Olympic Games in Paris in July-August 2024.

The thirteenth issue (November 2024) is dedicated to Olympic diversity with the Paralympic Games in Paris.

The fourteenth issue (March 2025) is dedicated to digital diversity, a major challenge for pluralism, transparency and democracy.

The fifteenth issue (November 2025) is dedicated to the diversity of the challenges raised by artificial intelligence (AI)

The sixteenth issue (March 2026) is dedicated to the future of diversity in 2026 in a turbulent world - diversity and Overton window

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## Diversity and the Overton window

The "Overton's window" was suggested by US lobbyist Joseph Overton to refer to a window, or the spectrum of acceptable political discourse in a democracy. After his death, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy (2) enriched and popularized this concept by adding gradations - from the unthinkable to the popularity of an idea that becomes a public policy. In a democracy, female and male politicians define the Overton window to limit radical ideas, other actors always push radicalism further into speeches and actions. The Overton window has opened to ideas that do not respect neither republican values nor democratic principles. Extremist parties are accustomed to this.

The global geopolitical context has radically changed over the past 10 years. Diversity seems to have become a thorny issue even in democratic countries. It was once an indicator to measure the state of democracy. The more diversity was defended and protected, the more the country was democratic. The number of countries considered democracies in the world has decreased. Democratic indicators include: respect for the rule of law, pluralism in politics and the media, equal opportunities, universalism, freedom in all its facets (speech, association, assembly,...) with respect for human rights (freedom of expression does not include hate speech). The Democracy Index, published annually since 2006 by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), provides a detailed analysis of political trends at national, regional and global levels (3). It suggests a comprehensive overview of the state of democracy in 165 independent states and two territories, almost all the population of the world and the vast majority of states, only the micro-states are excluded. Rated on a scale from 0 to 10, the Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government (governance), political participation, political culture and freedoms European integration is a project of peace and reconciliation after the disaster and moral defeat of the Second World War.

Based on its scores for a range of indicators within these categories, each country is classified as one of four types of regimes: "full democracy", 'imperfect democracy', 'hybrid regime' or 'authoritarian regime'. According to the 2024 democracy index published in 2025, only 45% of the world's population lives in a democracy, 39% under an authoritarian regime and 15% in "hybrid" regimes that combine electoral democracy and authoritarian tendencies (2).

The 2025 democracy index should confirm a democratic decline. In 2024, the average score fell to 5.17, its lowest since the beginning of the index in 2006, compared to 5.23 in 2023

In the Western world, the United States of America and the European Union have encouraged and defended diversity over the past 60 years. In the United States, the struggle for civil rights in the 1960s against racism and all forms of discrimination allowed the creation of a demanding framework with the concept of "positive discrimination". It allows students with special profiles that are sources of discrimination (social, economic, cultural indicators...) to be financially supported to pursue their studies or employees from disadvantaged communities to access specific jobs. In the European Union, since its creation in 1957 (Treaty of Rome), diversity has been a cornerstone and a transversal subject for becoming a member. A demanding framework has been developed. Diversity has become a "European indicator" since 2000 with the adoption of two directives against discrimination linked to gender, ethnic or cultural origin, religion, social background or education (4). The European currency has been "united in diversity" since 2000 with the entry of 10 new members of the EU, formerly under the influence of the USSR. The democratic question and respect for diversity are paramount to joining the European Union. Before the creation of the EU, the European Convention on Human Rights adopted in 1950 was the first compass for all EU members and European democracies.

Geopolitics has a direct impact on respect and defense of diversity. The war has been back in Europe since 2022 with the attack of an authoritarian regime, Russia, against a sovereign country, Ukraine, which has redoubled its efforts since 2014 to join the European Union. Russia is reluctant to diversity and differences. Discrimination has multiplied since 2000- against women (sexist and virilism statements), against the LGBTQIA+ community (homophobic policies), against cultural or religious minorities (5)... In the «Global South» (6), and in particular the allies of Russia and China (Iran, North Korea...) diversity is used as a weapon to denounce the «end of moral values» that would characterize the Western World, or a «double standard», where diversity would be defended by the West to reinforce Western values, a kind of hidden neocolonialism (7)

.Diversity is a sensitive issue that has sparked emotional debates and internal struggles, with a dangerous identitarian withdrawal of some communities considering themselves 'threatened'. Modern societies are characterized by a melting pot of diverse communities (cultural, religious, educational, social, geographical...). Conflicts in the world have encouraged migration, which is a universal phenomenon since the origin of humanity. The development of technologies, the Internet and social networks, with their algorithmic strategy, have accentuated fragmentation and communitarianism. Artificial intelligence (AI) should reinforce these "stereotypes" if users are not aware of the limits and threats of such a technology based on published data that is sometimes neither appropriate nor correct with the explosion of misinformation (no filters nor regulation)

The Overton window, and its amplitude, is a good indicator for measuring the degree of threat to our democracies. In the United States as well as in Europe, apprentice sorcerers fuel hateful and sectarian discourses that do not respect humanistic and universal values. They have allowed the Western world to fight totalitarianism (Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism, Maoism...) whose goal is to impose a caricature of citizens with a standardized profile, respecting the 'good' criteria (gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation ...). Let's open «doors and windows» to diversity and difference, not to the «disruptive» and hateful speeches claiming to defend «freedom of expression». (7) Let's regulate the Overton window....

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## References

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- (2) Institut Mackinac- <https://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow>
- (3) The Economist Intelligence Unit Limited 2025-  
<https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2024-confirmation/>
- (4) Arsenal juridique anti-discrimination de l'UE-  
[https://commission.europa.eu/topics/equality-and-inclusion/equality-and-inclusion-key-actions/acting-against-discrimination\\_fr](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/equality-and-inclusion/equality-and-inclusion-key-actions/acting-against-discrimination_fr)
- (5) The Russian Constitution henceforth imposes being orthodox to be a "good" Russian
- (6) a conceptual construction of Russia and China, which includes a very heterogeneous community, this concept was forged in 2024 by the Russian and Chinese leaders who intended to rally the 'South' countries in their fight against the 'North' countries
- (7) the Islamic Republic of Iran has been denouncing since 1979 the supposed "Western decadence" by multiplying terrorist attacks against the Western world and its allies - the United States, Israel, Europe (France in the first place)... in particular through its proxies (Islamist militias in Lebanon, Hezbollah, in the Gaza Strip, Hamas, in Yemen, Houthis...)

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