Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion. Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe

Reporting

Project Information

ACCEPT PLURALISM
Grant agreement ID: 243837

Closed project

Funded under
FP7-SSH

Overall budget
€ 3,444,706.77

EU contribution
€ 2,600,230

Coordinated by
EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE
Italy

Start date
1 March 2010

End date
31 May 2013

This project is featured in...

RESEARCH*EU MAGAZINE
Close-up on nanotechnology

NO. 37, NOVEMBER 2014

Executive Summary:

ONE PAGE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the lens of the concept of tolerance and the practice of toleration, ACCEPT PLURALISM has explored a set of contemporary diversity challenges mainly in the fields of education and politics in 15 European countries. Tolerance is a contested concept that is subject to disputes and challenges that change over time. The forbearance of toleration is of normative and pragmatic value – as many minorities know historically and today – and, to disparage toleration because it falls short of, say, respect is politically short-sighted. ‘Gritted-teeth tolerance’ is the most practical solution in many circumstances, and it makes little sense to denounce it in situations where more demanding notions are unavailable. Thus we should view tolerance and acceptance/respect not in a hierarchical relation – i.e. as if respectful accommodation is always better and tolerance a lesser solution – but rather as fit for different purposes. The limitations of tolerance need also to be acknowledged. Tolerance involves power, the power of the majority to suppress the minority. And it also implies non-acceptance or non-respect. To tolerate means to live and let live but it may also mean to look down upon and disapprove. In other words, in some cases tolerance hides inequality and domination. In seeking a form of equality in a context of diversity, we may prefer a non-evaluative respect for others in which people, especially fellow citizens, have a right (which is not a gift of the powerful) to be included. We need to find ways to agree on those cultural and religious differences for which minority groups may require these more advanced forms of acceptance and find the appropriate forms of institutional accommodation.

In all cases where intolerance, toleration and respect are possibilities, we need to acknowledge that positions are not beyond contestation, and that the objects and boundaries of toleration are historically changing. We must also acknowledge that a political concern with the relationship between tolerator and tolerated is required in order to even out elements of power, authority and domination. This is a particularly urgent task in light of rising intolerance across Europe in recent years. This rising intolerance is being expressed both through liberal or ethno-nationalist arguments, and the ‘common sense’ character of these arguments make pragmatic solutions for achieving tolerance or acceptance appear less tenable and difficult to achieve.

The case studies undertaken in the ACCEPT PLURALISM project have argued that there are two groups that mostly attract negative attention in the public debate because of their presumed inability to integrate into mainstream European secular, modern, democratic societies. These groups are the Muslims and the Roma. Our project results suggest that Muslims and the Roma acquire a renewed significance in the post-1989 period in Europe. With the implosion of the Communist regimes and the re-unification of Europe particularly after the 2004 Enlargement, there is a need for new Others against whom to reassert a positive identity for this reconnected and enlarged Europe. Muslims and Roma people offer this convenient Significant Internal Other against which Europe can assert its common values. This is particularly important as these values are relatively universal (peace, human rights, equality, freedom) and hence do not offer a strong enough emotional basis on which to forge a political community. Thus these “Others within” offer the necessary
outgroup that makes the commonality among Europeans politically and symbolically relevant. Our studies have also shown that perhaps the form of cultural diversity that presents the highest challenges is that of religious diversity. The findings of this project confirm that there are no simple “threshold” answers as to how many immigrants, what percentage of minorities, or what kind of claims should be accepted or should not be exceeded. One finding that emerges rather clearly is that the 15 European countries studied moderately secular as the presence of a dominant religion unavoidably frames discourses, institutional structures and norms if not in direct often in indirect and subtle ways. The study of different countries and cases however shows that not all minorities demand the same type of solutions. Thus, while some Muslim or Roma students in Sweden, Germany, the UK or Bulgaria may ask for special accommodation for their religious dress code, in cases studies in France or Greece, immigrants (Muslims in France, but not Muslims in Greece) ask to be treated on the basis of equality and secularism, asking however that concessions are made neither for the minority nor for the majority religious faiths. Our project has also clearly suggested the need not only for exchanging good practices and policy learning among countries and between the wider fields of migrant and native minority integration policies. It has also clearly pointed to the need for effective monitoring and assessment on how each policy measure, targeted programme or grassroots initiative contributes to a more tolerant and more cohesive society. The project has thus created the Tolerance Indicators Toolkit, a set of indicators that can be applied in specific policy areas (mainly in school life and in politics) within different countries, with regard to specific periods of time and/or with regard to specific issues, providing an overview of how a country is doing in that specific field, by comparison to other states, or by comparison to itself in the past.

Project Context and Objectives:

FULL EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through the lens of the concept of tolerance and the practice of toleration, ACCEPT PLURALISM has explored a set of contemporary diversity challenges mainly in the fields of education and politics in 15 European countries. Toleration is a contested concept that is subject to disputes and challenges that change over time. There exists a plurality of concepts and terms as regards the possible ways of dealing with cultural diversity and the challenges that it raises in Europe today. These include terms such as integration, accommodation, insertion, assimilation, equality, respect, recognition, and acceptance. These terms vary in their meanings and uses from one country to another, as well as from one language to another. They usually are embedded in related conceptions of the nation that can be based on ethnic and cultural elements or that emphasise a common civic culture and a common territory. Conceptions of the nation may either emphasise unity and homogeneity, or be inclusive of internal cultural diversity and the existence of minority groups and/or even minority nations within a multi-national state. Similarly, conceptions of citizenship and more open or restrictive citizenship acquisition policies and histories of emigration and immigration are also important factors that inform the debates and the concepts used in each country to speak about cultural diversity and the way through which minority groups’ and immigrants’ claims may either be accommodated or rejected.

In relation to these conceptual concerns, the conflation of tolerance along with more demanding concepts (such as respect) may be both normatively problematic and analytically unhelpful. While we are sympathetic to the strategy of developing a more demanding normative vocabulary, we believe that there is a risk of conceptual confusion, which may result in losing the normative value of toleration. More specifically:
The forbearance of toleration is of normative and pragmatic value – as many minorities know historically and today – and, to disparage toleration because it falls short of, say, respect is politically short-sighted. ‘Gritted-teeth tolerance’ is the most practical solution in many circumstances, and it makes little sense to denounce it in situations where more demanding notions are unavailable. Thus we should view tolerance and acceptance/respect not in a hierarchical relation – i.e. as if respectful accommodation is always better and tolerance a lesser solution – but rather as fit for different purposes.

There are indeed things that we should not tolerate but we should be able to discuss in the public sphere. These include racism and sexism but also more specific issues that have been at the forefront of public debates on cultural or religious diversity such as clitoridectomy, marriage at the age of puberty and/or under duress, polygamy and so on. There are also issues that should be tolerated, and hence should not be outlawed, but for which it is not necessary that we all come to agreement and afford recognition and substantive equality. We need in other words to be clear about what we do not tolerate, what we tolerate, and what we agree to accept, respect and accommodate in public life.

The limitations of tolerance need also to be acknowledged. Tolerance involves power, the power of the majority to suppress the minority. And it also implies non-acceptance or non-respect. To tolerate means to live and let live but it may also mean to look down upon and disapprove. In other words, in some cases tolerance hides inequality and domination. In seeking a form of equality in a context of diversity, we may prefer a non-evaluative respect for others in which people, especially fellow citizens, have a right (which is not a gift of the powerful) to be included. We need to find ways to agree on those cultural and religious differences for which minority groups may require these more advanced forms of acceptance and find the appropriate forms of institutional accommodation.

In all cases where intolerance, toleration and respect are possibilities, we need to acknowledge that positions are not beyond contestation, and that the objects and boundaries of toleration are historically changing. We must also acknowledge that a political concern with the relationship between tolerator and tolerated is required in order to even out elements of power, authority and domination. This is a particularly urgent task in light of rising intolerance across Europe in recent years. This rising intolerance is being expressed both through liberal or ethno-nationalist arguments, and the ‘common sense’ character of these arguments make pragmatic solutions for achieving tolerance or acceptance appear less tenable and difficult to achieve.

The case studies undertaken in the ACCEPT PLURALISM project have argued that there are two groups that mostly attract negative attention in the public debate because of their presumed inability to integrate into mainstream European secular, modern, democratic societies. These groups are the Muslims and the Roma. Interestingly, while Muslims are for their most part a post-immigration minority, the Roma are natives of Europe (or indeed are supposed to have immigrated to Europe from India about a thousand years ago). During the past decade, the fact that Muslims in Europe should largely be seen as European Muslims and particularly also as (for example) French, British, German, Dutch, Swedish, Italian or Spanish natives has gained recognition. As the second generations have been growing in various European countries, Muslims have come to be accepted as an ethnic minority, as citizens that demand certain rights or raise certain claims. The Roma, who have suffered discrimination and exclusion as a native minority, have attracted negative attention during the last years mainly because of their status as intra EU migrants. Their EU citizenship has been overshadowed by the questioning of their right to freely move and establish themselves in other EU member states.

Thus we note that what matters probably is not the migrant or native minority quality of each group but rather the ways in which it is perceived to be culturally, ethnically or religiously diverse and thus put to the
test social cohesion and society’s dominant norms and practices.

Our project results suggest that Muslims and the Roma acquire a renewed significance in the post-1989 period in Europe. With the implosion of the Communist regimes and the re-unification of Europe particularly after the 2004 Enlargement, there is a need for new Others against whom to reassert a positive identity for this reconnected and enlarged Europe. Muslims and Roma people offer this convenient Significant Internal Other (Triandafyllidou 1998; 2001) against which the unity of the European nations can be reasserted and their cultural distinctiveness emphasised. These two Europe-wide minorities present in most EU countries, offer a mirror against which Europe can assert its common values. This is particularly important as these values are relatively universal (peace, human rights, equality, freedom) and hence do not offer a strong enough emotional basis on which to forge a political community. Thus these “Others within” offer the necessary outgroup that makes the commonality among Europeans politically and symbolically relevant.

One of the aims of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project has been to compare tensions arising in different countries by different types of minorities, notably native historical minorities vs. migrant populations, with a view to highlighting common features and possibly common practices and policies for addressing such tensions. In other words, we have aimed at facilitating exchange of good practice and policy learning. Such cases have been identified albeit in a small number of countries. For instance, a tradition of autonomy in education and the possibility to set-up “free schools” in Denmark or the Netherlands that satisfy the request of parents to have their children educated according to their own philosophy and beliefs, have opened up the possibility for setting up Muslim faith schools in both countries. In Sweden, the tradition of minority dialogue and exchange of good practices and the longer and more successful experience of some minorities as regards integration in the school environment and combating discrimination has spread to the Roma people. Minority organisations’ meetings sponsored by the Swedish state have facilitated cooperation and mutual learning among different minority groups helping them to learn from each other’s experiences as well as unite their voices for issues of common concern. Our studies have also shown that perhaps the form of cultural diversity that presents the highest challenges is that of religious diversity. The question that often agitates politicians, policy makers or also lay people pose is how much – or indeed what kind of – religious diversity can be accommodated in European moderately secular democratic societies. The findings of this project confirm that there are no simple “threshold” answers as to how many immigrants, what percentage of minorities, or what kind of claims should be accepted or should not be exceeded. One finding that emerges rather clearly is that the 15 European countries studied moderately secular as the presence of a dominant religion unavoidably frames discourses, institutional structures and norms if not in direct often in indirect and subtle ways. However, the question of secularism or laïcité in France arises mainly in relation to minority religions, and particularly Islam, and not in relation to the expression of a majority, institutionalized religion which is often rendered invisible because it is the “default” option. Thus, for instance, school children in Italy have to ask to attend “intercultural classes” instead of catechism, or in Greece they have to ask to be exempted from religion class. There is no automatic provision that would render the majority religion also an option. Examples of Muslim minority mobilization from the UK and France actually show that Muslim activists ask to be treated like any other minority rather than as an exceptional case. They want to be seen as ‘normal’ political actors with broad interests and motives that are not exclusively Muslim. In France, many Muslim-based activists contend that Islam should be treated like any other minority religion much like Protestantism and Judaism is instead of being seen as alien to French values. The study of different countries and cases however shows that not all minorities demand the same type of
solutions. Thus, while some Muslim or Roma students in Sweden, Germany, the UK or Bulgaria may ask for special accommodation for their religious dress code, in cases studies in France or Greece, immigrants (Muslims in France, but not Muslims in Greece) ask to be treated on the basis of equality and secularism, asking however that concessions are made neither for the minority nor for the majority religious faiths. Not only are minority claims of different order in different countries, but the level and type of accommodation that each country can make are also different and respond to their specific historical experience (for instance of colonialism or slavery in the case of the United Kingdom, or an ethnic and even at time still irredentist nationalism in Greece). Thus, while in the UK concrete steps have been taken to discuss the recognition of slavery in British history and education curricula (on the occasion of the 200th anniversary from the abolition of slavery), in Greece the revision of an elementary school history textbook has caused a major political debate as the authors were criticised of trivialising the national struggle for independence in the 19th and early 20th century.

This makes clear that the general principle of equality of treatment for minorities and immigrant groups “translates” into different practices and policies with a view to accommodating national sensitivities without however compromising the principle as such. It is here that we see the notion of tolerance as holding particular promise as it guarantees a first step towards non-discrimination and neutralises power inequalities. The question of accepting and accommodating cultural, ethnic and religious diversity comes then as a second step and in line with the history and claims of each minority group or migrant population. However, as if matters were not complicated enough, our study has shown that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between ethnic or religious discrimination on the one hand and socio-economic disadvantage on the other. In the case of Roma populations, the question for alleviating poverty, improving access to basic services (housing, health services, education for children) and employment appear as a first step of any policy aiming at combating ethnic discrimination and actual segregation of this group.

Indeed, in countries like Hungary, Poland, Italy or Greece we have found attitudes and practices not only of intolerance but also of segregationist acceptance (arguing that by leaving the Roma to their own devices one respects their way of life and their culture). Indeed, these are hard to disentangle from socio-economic inequality (poverty, illiteracy, unemployment) and any policy aiming to address the situation needs to tackle both dimensions simultaneously.

Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges play out at local, national and EU levels. Indeed the importance of the local level cannot be over-emphasized. Integration takes place at the local level even if policies are national and guidelines are European. Nonetheless, our case studies have shown that sometimes not only integration and accommodation but also intolerance and exclusion are promoted at the local level by local political groups (as in Italy and Spain for instance) with the aim of gaining votes by blaming immigrants for urban decay, insufficient welfare resources, or simply the economic crisis. Especially in the case of the Roma, local authorities and actors actually more often than not hamper national policy efforts for integration and accommodation. In fact, despite repeated decrees and circulars and policy programmes promoting the integration of Roma children in mainstream schools, local authorities and parents associations strongly resist such de-segregation efforts. Such problems were documented in Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Poland.

Alongside the local level, the national level remains most important for addressing cultural diversity challenges and proposing solutions. Indeed the relevant civil society actors, experts, politicians and policy makers see the national authorities and the national legislation as the most important arenas where such claims are addressed. The EU offers opportunities for networking for civil society actors and public administration, funding and an additional political arena for mobilization (e.g. for native minorities like...
Silesians in Poland, Circassians in Turkey or Hungarians in Romania, the European Parliament and diaspora politics become relevant political arenas where to promote their claims). Minority organisations seize the opportunity of framing their claims for equality and justice in relation to “European standards” and European values counteracting “national security” discourses.

Our project has also clearly suggested the need not only for exchanging good practices and policy learning among countries and between the wider fields of migrant and native minority integration policies. It has also clearly pointed to the need for effective monitoring and assessment on how each policy measure, targeted programme or grassroots initiative contributes to a more tolerant and more cohesive society. The project has thus created the Tolerance Indicators Toolkit, a set of indicators that can be applied in specific policy areas (mainly in school life and in politics) within different countries, with regard to specific periods of time and/or with regard to specific issues, providing an overview of how a country is doing in that specific field, by comparison to other states, or by comparison to itself in the past.

Project Results:

1. PROJECT CONTEXT AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

1.1 Background: The Challenge of Cultural Diversity

Since the turn of the century, Europe has experienced increasing tensions between national majorities and ethnic or religious minorities, more particularly with marginalised Muslim communities as well as with intra EU migrants of Roma ethnicity. Conflicts with migrants and ethnic minorities of Muslim religion have included violent clashes in northern England between native British and Asian Muslim youth (2001); civil unrest amongst France’s Muslim Maghreb communities (2005); and the Danish cartoon crisis in the same year following the publication of pictures of the prophet Muhammad in a Danish newspaper. Muslim communities have also come under intense scrutiny in the wake of the terrorist events in the United States (2001), Spain (2004) and Britain (2005) which also contributed to growing scepticism amongst European governments with regard to the possible accession of Turkey into the EU, a country which is socio-culturally and religiously different from the present EU-28 (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, 2006). The first decade of the 21st century has also been marked by local mosque building controversies in Italy, Greece, Germany or France (Saint Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005) and the 2009 referendum in Switzerland which introduced a constitutional amendment banning the building of new minarets in the country.

Tensions have further risen after the tragic events in Norway in the summer of 2011 when an extreme right wing supporter put a bomb at the centre of Oslo and then opened up fire in a summer youth camp in the Norwegian island of Utoya, killing in total more than 80 people and injuring hundreds of others. It can be argued that the challenges that cultural and religious diversity pose in European societies have come full circle engaging both Muslim fundamentalists and right wing extremists in violent actions expressing feelings of marginalisation and alienation from a mainstream culture.

During the same period, the EU integration process as such and the motto “united in diversity” have been put to the test by intra-European mobility and the related cultural diversity and socio-economic challenges that such mobility brings. After the 2002 launch of the common currency and the 2004 big bang enlargement euphoria, and as the global financial crisis settled in, the right of free movement for EU citizens has been testing the reflexes of several EU governments, mainly among the older member states. Concerns have arisen with regard to the so called “Polish plumber” and unfair competition in the provision...
of services, but in the cultural diversity field, the most important challenge has been posed by Roma people from the new member states moving to other member states. While concerns about the exercise of the right to free movement have been registered in several countries including Britain and the Netherlands, the harshest reaction targeting Roma people in particular came from the French government which repatriated thousands of Romanian and Bulgarian citizens of Roma ethnicity in 2009 and 2010. The issue attracted criticism not only by civil society organisations but also by the EU Commissioner on Justice, Viviane Reding, who asked for written explanations by the French Minister of Interior. The whole issue drew attention to the challenges that intra EU mobility creates as well as to the discrimination that Roma people experience in everyday life and their disadvantaged socio-economic situation across the EU.

During this first decade of the 21st century, politicians and academics have been intensively debating the reasons underlying cultural and religious diversity tensions and what should be done to enhance societal cohesion in European societies. The question that has been posed, sometimes in more and others in less politically correct terms, is how much or rather what kind of cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies. A number of thinkers and politicians have advanced the claim that it is almost impossible to accommodate certain minority groups, notably Muslims, in European countries because their cultural traditions and religious faith are incompatible with secular democratic governance. Others have argued that Muslims can be accommodated in the socio-political order of European societies provided they adhere to a set of civic values that lie at the heart of European democratic traditions and that reflect the secular nature of society and politics in Europe. Others still have questioned the kind of secularism that underpins state institutions in Europe. Some writers have also argued that citizen attitudes towards religion in Europe are not secular but rather lean towards individualised forms of religiosity. Hence the tension with Muslims lies at the level of public or private expression of religious feelings rather than on religiosity as such.

The debate has been intensive in the media, in political forums as well as in scholarly circles. In policy terms, the main conclusion drawn from such debates has been that multicultural policies have failed and that a return to a civic assimilationist approach (emphasising national culture and values) is desirable. The Netherlands for instance that has been a forerunner in multicultural policies since the 1980s has shifted, at least symbolically, already since the early 2000s, towards such a view. As such it has established integration courses for newcomers to the Netherlands and more recently a civic integration test to be undertaken by prospective migrants before departure from their country of origin (Ter Wal, 2007; Vasta 2007).

In the face of mounting civil unrest among second-generation immigrant youth in the mid-2000s, the French government has reasserted its Republican civic integration model banning religious symbols from schools by law in 2004 (Kastoryano, 2006; Guiraudon, 2006). Germany, home to one of the largest Muslim communities in Europe, is a somewhat ambivalent case. On the one hand, politicians officially acknowledged in the early 2000s that Germany is an immigration country and a multicultural society making integration the new buzzword; on the other, the restrictive implementation of the liberal citizenship law of 2000 led to a decrease in naturalisations (Schiffauer, 2006; Green, 2004; 2005). Nonetheless, the annual forum on integration promoted by the German government has been considered a step forward in the accommodation and recognition of ethnic and religious minorities and their place in German society (Miera, 2012).

Britain and Sweden are perhaps the only European countries that have maintained in practice (even if they changed the terminology used) a political multiculturalism approach (Modood, 2013). Concerns for
cohesion, however, and an underlying need to retrieve an inclusive understanding of Britishness - particularly in the aftermath of the July 2005 London bombings - have led the former Labour government to introduce a ‘Life in the United Kingdom test’ (a civic integration test) and civic ceremonies for naturalisation (Meer and Modood, 2008). More recently David Cameron, current UK Prime Minister, has called for a need to re-assert a “muscular” version of liberalism, which he defined as a liberalism that is confident of its own civic and political values and asserts them towards minorities who may contest them. While traditional immigration countries in Western Europe experienced an identity crisis confronted with jihadist terrorism and social unrest among immigrant communities, the southern European countries that have become immigrant hosts in the last 20 years, notably Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal and also Cyprus, have been left to their own devices. The so called “multiculturalism crisis” came at a time when these countries had started acknowledging their de facto multicultural and multi-ethnic composition. The perceived failure of the cultural diversity approach adopted by the ‘old hosts’ has discouraged multicultural integration policies in southern Europe, reinforcing the view that immigration may be economically a good thing provided that immigrants become assimilated into the dominant national culture (Zapata-Barrero, 2006; Triandafyllidou, 2002; Calavita 2005). With the onset of the crisis, the motto has changed even further: immigrants are expected to simply go home.

The question of migrant and ethnic minority integration becomes more complicated, perhaps paradoxically, due to the European integration process. Old and recent member states strive to accept cultural diversity within Europe as well as to define their geopolitical and cultural position within the enlarging European Union. National identities are under pressure by the Europeanization process – especially as regards the former Communist countries that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (Kuus 2004, Triandafyllidou and Spohn 2003, dell’Olio 2005; De Bardeleben, 2005). The question of Turkey’s accession into the EU has given rise to fervent debates on the following issues: the Christian roots of European values; the compatibility between a predominantly Muslim country with a secular constitution and an Islamic governing party and the rest of the EU; and the borders of Europe – the question of where does Europe essentially end? (Kaya, 2013). The Eurozone economic crisis that is now well into its fifth consecutive year has further eroded social and economic solidarity among member states. The crisis has actually revitalised nationalism in all spheres of life: towards the EU and the Euro, which are often portrayed as the main culprits for the Eurozone crisis, and towards immigrants who are no longer welcome (Burchianti and Zapata Barrero, 2012; Triandafyllidou and Kouki, 2012).

The process of European integration has been coupled with identity negotiation and geopolitical re-organisation within the member states. In this context, the question of immigrant minorities comes as an additional layer of cultural diversity and complexity, which, if anything, is less desirable and more alien than intra-European cultural diversity. Although the EU indirectly and sometimes even directly supports minority protection and combats discrimination, the overall Europeanization process has certainly not made the integration of immigrant minorities, and especially Muslims, in specific member states any simpler. On the contrary, long-term migrant residents socially integrated in their country of settlement discover they are sometimes at a disadvantage compared to citizens of other EU member states who may be newcomers but who enjoy the advantages of European citizenship. The fact that some intra EU migrants are of Roma ethnicity further complicates these challenges.

In this context, the case of Central and Eastern European countries that have joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007 is particularly interesting. These countries have had to adopt, among other measures,
specific policies protecting native minority rights in order to fulfill the Copenhagen criteria for accession. At the same time, they have had to adopt migration policies that are geared towards securing the external EU borders disregarding regional specificities of cross-border trade and labour mobility. The 2004 member states do not face a serious challenge of incoming migration; hence migrant integration is not a prominent issue on their agendas. Rather, their concern has been with emigration of their own nationals towards other member states. Any preparatory and forward thinking policies about how to prepare for future migration inflows have been abandoned as the global financial crisis and the more acute Eurozone crisis have set in. At the same time, the EU migration policy emphasis on border control contributes to making these countries reluctant to address cultural diversity issues. Thus, while the rights of native minorities in these countries are guaranteed, there are no provisions for integrating newcomers under similar conditions of tolerance and/or respect. There is a clear division between cultural diversity that is considered to belong to these countries in historic terms and ‘alien’ (migration related) cultural diversity (Vidra and Fox, 2010; Buchowski, 2010).

In Southeastern Europe, in the Balkan peninsula and in Turkey, the issue of ethnic and cultural diversity is further complicated. While these countries aspire to become members of the European Union, they are still struggling with issues of internal cohesion, accommodation of ethnic, cultural or religious diversity in their institutional make-up and respect of human rights, not to mention collective minority rights. In most cases, democratic consolidation is still incomplete and overcoming the violent conflicts that broke up Yugoslavia and that still torment Turkey with regard to its Kurdish minority is not an easy task. Nonetheless, these regions have an important (albeit neglected today) heritage of tolerance and accommodation of cultural and religious diversity which is part of their imperial legacy. The Ottoman Empire to which most of these countries belonged, recognised and tolerated – as this concept was defined and understood in that particular historical context - religious and cultural diversity, elevating religious communities to political self-governing entities (the well-known millet system). Thus, it is relevant to consider whether and to what extent this heritage may not be lost, since it appears to have been overshadowed by the ideological hegemony of the nation state and its presumption of cultural and ethnic homogeneity within a state (Kaya, 2013; Hajdinjak and Kosseva, 2010). In other words, there are probably important lessons to be learnt from the history of the wider Southeastern Europe region even if the present situation appears quite bleak in terms of tolerance and respect for cultural diversity.

Against this background, this publication presents the theoretical framework and main comparative findings of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project. In the section that follows, we outline the main objectives of the project, while Section 2 presents the Research Design and Methodology. Section 3 discusses briefly the theoretical framework that we have developed for the purposes of the project. Section 4 outlines the main comparative findings while Section 5 concludes with some brief remarks on the overall achievements of the project. Section 6 outlines our key messages for relevant stakeholders and the impact achieved while Section 7 offers an overview of our dissemination strategy.

1.2 The Framework and Objectives of the ACCEPT PLURALISM Research Project: Defining and Assessing Tolerance

It is in the socio-economic and political context outlined above that the ACCEPT PLURALISM project has
set out to explore and understand tolerance in European societies.

The ACCEPT PLURALISM project has been equally concerned with native and immigrant minorities, depending on their relevance in each country. A distinction between ethnic minorities and migrant populations is in order here as usually these two different types of minorities enjoy different sets of rights and different levels of public recognition. Native minorities are defined as populations that have been historically established in a given territory and which took part in the formation of the (national or multi-national) state in which they live. Usually, their participation in state-building is recognized in the legal constitution and they are guaranteed special rights regarding the preservation of their cultural, religious, or linguistic heritage. In some countries, there are special provisions regarding the political representation of a native minority in cases where that minority is numerically so small that it risks being left out of the political system.

Immigrant populations emerge as a result of international migration. Receiving countries assume different approaches towards these populations, some encouraging not only socio-economic but also political integration of immigrants and their offspring. Other countries have restrictive policies that keep immigrants and sometimes their second-generation offspring in a status of denizen-ship. Even when the members of a given immigrant group have acquired the citizenship of the country of settlement, collective minority rights do not always automatically follow. In other words, any concerns that immigrant communities may have with regard to the safeguarding of their cultural traditions or language remain ongoing after they obtain citizenship rights and usually have to be negotiated with the country of settlement.

It is worth noting that immigrant populations who come from former colonies may be considered as an intermediate category between native minorities and immigrant groups because they have special historical, cultural and political ties with the country of settlement. In fact, in several of the countries studied here (e.g. Commonwealth citizens in Britain, Algerians in France, Surinamese in the Netherlands) post-colonial migrants have enjoyed in the past and to this day a special status as a recognition of their historical relationship with the country of settlement.

The distinction between different types of minorities and immigrant groups invites also a clarification on our use of the term diversity. ‘Diversity’ is a broad term that essentially means variety, i.e. made up of differing elements or qualities. In the EU slogan ‘United in Diversity' the term is used in its widest sense. For our purposes, the term is meaningful in relation to specific contexts involving ethnicity, race, culture and religion. Here are some basic definitions of diversity within those contexts:

- **Ethnic diversity:** differences in ethnic descent among individuals or groups
- **Racial diversity:** different physical characteristics among individuals or groups
- **Cultural diversity:** individuals or groups having different cultural traditions, customs and languages
- **Religious diversity:** multiple religious faiths being practiced within one society.

Ethnic and cultural diversity are often used as synonymous terms as they both relate closely to different cultural traditions, customs and values. Generally, these are not hard and fast distinctions, either in theory or practice. It is often hard to tell whether a given minority group, the Roma for instance, is discriminated against on the basis of ethnic, cultural or racial diversity, or whether prejudiced behaviour towards a British Pakistani or a French of Algerian origin has a religious or ethnic basis. The ACCEPT PLURALISM project is concerned with all these types of diversity but for stylistic purposes we use the umbrella term cultural diversity to refer to all of them, while we distinguish between ethnic, religious and racial diversity when this is relevant for our analysis.
The project has covered five European regions (western, Nordic, southern, central-eastern, southeastern Europe. It has discussed the different historical experiences of the countries and regions under study during the post-war period, highlighted their specific contexts and traditions of toleration of cultural diversity, investigated the concepts, practices, and institutional arrangements that inform different policies for dealing with cultural diversity in Europe, and proposed key messages and recommendations for European institutions, national and local policy makers, non-governmental organisations, educators, media professionals and other stakeholders (e.g. citizen groups, trade unions).

In the ACCEPT PLURALISM project we have particularly concentrated on the following research questions:

- What tolerance means (the relationship between concepts such as multiculturalism, liberalism, pluralism, understanding, preservation of national heritage and traditions);
- What kind of conflicts and disagreements arise in European societies today with regard to cultural diversity – what views and practices are/can be tolerated, accepted and even more so respected? And what kind of opinions or ways of living are deemed unacceptable, intolerable and inassimilable?
- What are the institutional arrangements, the daily practices and the principles put forward by different actors (state authorities, minority groups, different stakeholders) when there is a conflict? How successful have they been?
- What kinds of tolerance exist in practice in European societies?
- What kind of tolerance policies and practices need to be further developed (how can European societies become more tolerant, respecting and accepting of cultural diversity)? What are the key messages arising from the project for European and national policy makers; for civil society; for minority groups and organisations?

References to the notion of tolerance or the existence of tolerant societies, or analysis of trends suggesting that a specific society may be becoming or moving towards more or less tolerance, need to be carefully considered. First of all, we need a working definition of tolerance. Second, we need to draft the contours of our empirical research task: When we say a society is more or less tolerant, then what or when are we comparing it to? Is it in reference to a previous period in its history? In which case, is the assessment made against its own development and historic pathway, or with respect to others? And where do we set the bar from which to measure whether and to what extent there has been a move towards more or less tolerance? According to what criteria? Might there be a move towards more tolerance in one group / segment of society while another may be moving in the opposite direction? I.e. if trends towards both directions can be discerned within different population groups then what are the criteria that may define such opposite directions? Thus, it is necessary to question whose tolerance is measured. And, is tolerance expected (only) on the part of the majority? In addition, might particular incidents be ‘indicative’ in defining a society’s tolerance and pluralist nature? Finally, what are the limits of tolerance? Are there social or political practices and attitudes that cannot be tolerated by a western democracy? And on what basis are they not tolerated?

2. Research Design and Methods: A Truly European Study

The ACCEPT PLURALISM project has been organised in three main phases corresponding to three different main tasks: creating our theoretical and empirical framework; conducting innovative empirical research and developing new findings; drafting key messages for policy makers and civil society and...
disseminating our findings. Phase 1 concentrated on the theoretical and conceptual analysis of tolerance and discussed the relationship between concepts of tolerance, in the relevant scholarly literature, with concepts such as pluralism, multiculturalism, liberalism, understanding, respect, recognition of difference, national heritage/traditions and their preservation. Our aim has been to critically examine liberal and egalitarian views of tolerance and consider different attempts to theorize the accommodation of cultural diversity. Is it politically or ethically necessary to find a theoretical approach that resolves all the conceptual and political dilemmas involved in the ‘tolerance’ of difference? Are more ‘advanced’ concepts of acceptance, such as recognition and respect, superior solutions for the accommodation of culturally diverse populations? Or is there a place for more minimalist positions of forbearance and for ‘gritted teeth’ tolerance? This is a crucial theoretical and political question that some of our partners (eg., Modood 2007) but also other thinkers (e.g. Galeotti 2007) have addressed to a certain extent but that we would like to open up again for debate going beyond national intellectual traditions and policy models, towards a European reflection on tolerance and cultural diversity.

During the same phase, we also surveyed secondary sources (scholarly literature, policy documents, media discourses, grey materials) with a view to identifying in each country two or three contested cases where cultural diversity was seen as a problem and where the initial tension was resolved in one way or another. Our desk research covered a 20-year time span, with a view to looking at the end of the Cold War period and the 1990s decade when sweeping geopolitical changes took place in Europe, and to the last decade marked by the threat of international terrorism, a degree of disillusionment with multicultural citizenship policies and, as the project developed, the unfolding of an acute global financial crisis. These important events that have taken place in recent years and that have shaped our understandings of cultural diversity and the ways that it can or should be tolerated, recognised, or indeed absorbed or even rejected, have informed our public engagement. During this phase of the project we entered into a preliminary phase of contacts with stakeholders (including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), migrant associations, minority organisations, policy makers, local authorities, journalists and intellectuals) in each country under study in this project with a view to exploring their views on what kind and how much cultural or religious or ethnic diversity can be accommodated or tolerated in their society and what are the limits (if there are any) to tolerating cultural diversity. The aim of this initial dialogue with stakeholders and the related organisation of national “launch events” was twofold. First, we aimed to obtain some initial input on the views of stakeholders on the ways in which we framed our research questions. Second, we established early on within the project our networks of contact and interaction with users of our research results with a view to maximising the impact of our final output, notably of our policy briefs as well as our Tolerance Indicators Toolkit and its application in each specific country at the later stages of the project (see section 7 and 8 in this report).

By offering a sociological/empirical and a theoretical/conceptual overview and critique of past and current discourses and practices of tolerance, Phase 1 prepared the ground for Phase 2 when original comparative empirical research took place. Phase 2 of the project looked at specific religious, cultural and political contexts in which tolerance is at stake today: it is contested, debated, settled or left unsettled, defined, interpreted or rejected. The project has looked at how tolerance has been thematised at three parallel levels of social reality: as (a) an abstract value, (b) as everyday practice, and (c) as public policies and institutional arrangements.

The ACCEPT project has studied 15 countries that cover five of the wider regions that can be identified in Europe: southern Europe has been covered through the study of Greece, Spain and Italy. Southeastern
European (countries that have recently joined the EU or that are still candidate countries) cases include Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey. Central Eastern Europe cases were included through the cases of Hungary and Poland. Sweden and Denmark are studied among the Nordic countries, while western and northern European countries studied included France, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Ireland. We thus made sure that our project had the widest possible (within the limits of the budget and manageability of the consortium for a small/medium collaborative project) European coverage, looking at different regions of the continent, to countries with different relations with the EU (founding, early, recent member states, candidate countries), and with different socio-economic features.

The selection of our country cases was also based on an effort to include all variants of migration experience that currently exist across the European continent. Thus, the project included ‘old’ host countries like France, Britain, the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden; ‘new’ hosts like Italy, Spain, Ireland, Cyprus and Greece; ‘emerging’ hosts like Poland and Hungary, and countries that are mainly emigration and transit migration countries such as Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

Our selected cases represented a variety of historical experiences of nation state formation, national identity understandings, and native minority challenges: countries where the state was consolidated before national identity took shape (e.g. France or Spain), states with a strong ethnic definition of their identity (e.g. Germany, Greece, Cyprus), states with uncertain national identity (e.g. Italy), states with a mainly civic understanding of the nation (e.g. France, UK or Sweden), post-communist states (Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania), states where national identity is inextricably intertwined with religion (like Italy, Greece, Turkey, Poland), states that were predominantly secular during Communist times but are currently re-discovering the importance of religion for their national identity (Bulgaria and Romania), states with strong national identities but also large native minorities (Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Spain only to name a few) and states with important regional identities (see for instance the cases of Germany, Spain, the UK or Italy).

In relation to the above, the selected countries included states with different institutional arrangements of church and state relations as well as states with centralised or de-centralised political and administrative systems. The above dimensions that guided our selection of country cases were not used as conceptual dimensions predefining our efforts to explain discourses or regimes of tolerance. Our study, as we shall explain in more detail below was built from the ground up and was constructivist in its perspective.

Nonetheless, we also carefully considered structural and historical factors so as to ensure that the project included a wide variety of cases and hence a high relevance for comparative purposes.

The range and evolution of understandings and practices or policies of intolerance / tolerance or acceptance have been studied empirically through the identification of key challenging events that gave prominence to the question of how much and what kind of cultural, religious or ethnic diversity a society can tolerate or accept. It is our contention that such ‘key challenging events’ can modify our understandings of acceptance or tolerance of cultural diversity and our related practices or policies. An obvious key challenging event of this sort that appears to have kick-started a new era in the tolerance and cultural diversity discourses in both sides of the Atlantic is 9/11. However, there are also a number of key challenging events located in Europe that mark the evolution of tolerance and multiculturalism discourses during the last 30 years. These include for instance the Salman Rushdie affair back in the 1980s, the ‘affaire du foulard’ in the early 1990s and again in the beginning of this decade, as well as the bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the murder of Dutch cineaste Theo Van Gogh (2004), the Mohammed Cartoons affair in 2006, the violent protests in the French banlieues in 2005, but also the outbreak of the Second Gulf War (2003), the attack on Afghanistan in 2001, and the racist massive murder in Utoya in
These are key challenging events of international character that may have stronger or milder repercussions across these European countries. There are however also national key challenge events that may provoke intensive debates about tolerance and cultural diversity, national heritage and respect for minorities. Such national key challenging events may be a local outbreak of racist violence (e.g. the El Ejido case in Spain in 2000, or racist violence against Muslims immigrants in Athens, Greece in 2011-2012). They may also include a local issue such as the building of a mosque or the setup of a faith school (see Saint Blancat and Schmidt di Friedberg 2005), the acceptance of religious symbols at school, the increase of honour killings of young Muslim women of Middle-Eastern or Asian origin in Italy, Germany and the UK, the affair of the schoolteacher wearing the Muslim face veil (niqab) in Birmingham in 2006 or the rise of an overtly xenophobic political party in local or national elections (e.g. the Front National in France, the Vlaams Blok later renamed Vlaams Belang in Belgium, the Lega Nord in Italy, or Golden Dawn in Greece).

Summing up, Phase 2 of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project developed into two sets of case studies. In the first set, we selected in each country relevant contestations and challenges that concern school life, while in the second set we concentrated on challenging political events (focusing thus on political life). In each set of case studies conducted in parallel in the 15 countries participating in the project, we selected a recent key challenging event. We analysed the public and political debates arising around this event. We considered the discourses of the different social and political actors involved: for instance in the case of schools we spoke with parents and teachers associations, youth organisations, local authorities and school authorities, national ministries if relevant and analysed relevant policy documents and media materials. In the case of politics, we spoke with politicians, media professionals, civil society and trade union representatives, local authorities and also intellectuals. Preliminary findings during Phase 2 were presented and discussed with stakeholders (see our national policy workshops in section 7 and 8 below).

In Phase 3 of the project, we developed a Toolkit of Tolerance Indicators that can serve as a tool for monitoring the levels of tolerance or intolerance of cultural diversity in two specific areas of public life (notably in school life and in politics). We applied these indicators in specific policy fields in each of these two areas assessing the situation currently and within a time span of ten years. The indicators may also be used however to analyse the situation in the past and to assess the trend in each area in each country as regards social practices and policies of tolerance. In our Implementation study we compared among countries offering a synchronic assessment of tolerance levels in selected areas of school life and politics. While we acknowledge the limitations of a quantitative approach to evaluating a complex concept and a multifaceted reality (many levels on which tolerance is expressed and applied, many groups that tolerate or are tolerated, different contextual understandings of tolerance), we believe that based on our in-depth and qualitative contextual analysis of meanings and practices of tolerance, we have created a valuable policy tool in the same way that the Civic Citizenship and the Migration Policy Index have been useful exercises raising awareness about issues of migrant integration and the policies that prevent or promote it (Carrera, 2008; Geddes and Niessen, 2005; Niessen et al., 2007). Tolerance indicators are a useful tool for evaluating and shaping policies as well as raising public awareness.

3. Theoretical Framework: The Value of Tolerance

Our conceptual point of departure for ACCEPT Pluralism is the distinction between (1) intolerance, (2) toleration, and (3) various other, more demanding arrangements that exceed the minimalism of tolerance. On the basis of this minimalist distinction between three ‘classes’ of acceptance, we draw attention to
boundary issues – claims, conflicts and contestations – that arise in between the refusal and the concession of tolerance and between toleration and more demanding responses, such as full equality, or contested conceptions of a more demanding type of ‘acceptance’, including recognition and respect. The empirical work that has been completed in the project has established a considerable variety of ways in which boundaries of acceptance become an issue, often in response to claims put forward by minority groups but also when more narrow boundaries of tolerance are drawn in response to allegedly intolerable minority demands. In this context, the present report revisits and adds our perspective on three conceptual problems of tolerance/toleration that have been discussed extensively in social and political theory. Instead of offering a comprehensive review of the literature on these issues, we ask what lessons can be drawn from our project for the conceptual, theoretical and philosophical study of tolerance.

First, normative theorists regularly argue about what it means or whether it makes sense to go ‘beyond toleration’ – a question that has also been of considerable interest within the ACCEPT Pluralism project. The issue is usually addressed by way of a discussion of the conceptual structure of toleration and whether it can accommodate certain positions that tip the balance of ‘reasons’ that toleration contains in a more positive direction. Anna Elisabetta Galeotti’s (2002) work on toleration-as-recognition and her suggestion that, to obtain ‘equal terms of inclusion’ (2002: 193), this has to include the public destigmatization of stigmatized identities represents perhaps one example for how conceptual boundaries of tolerance are over-stretched. Beyond the concern with toleration’s conceptual scope, however, there are qualms that the promotion of recognition and respect for ‘difference’ means renouncing less demanding but more viable arrangements of toleration and, hence, harms the objective to preserve a form of ‘moral minimalism’. Such concerns have been put forward in addition to questions about how to best characterize minority claims, whether they are for toleration, recognition or respect, and what the state can or should do in response to such claims. The concern with options ‘beyond toleration’ thus points towards issues that may be resolved differently, depending on whether one’s starting point is the conceptual scope of toleration, the empirical presence of claims for recognition or respect, or some understanding of the type of political response that one would expect from the state, state agencies or to be embedded in social relations or civic institutions. We revisit the issue in this report and offer our perspective on the need to go ‘beyond’ toleration and related problems.

A second set of issues concerns the socio-historical place of tolerance and its political functions. Wendy Brown (2006: 36) has defined one such function as ‘to contain potential crises [...] that threaten to reveal the shallow reach of liberal equality and the partiality of liberal universality’. Brown acknowledges that the understanding of tolerance as governmentality does not require us to abandon the idea altogether (2006: 174–175); in her account an appropriately historicized perspective on tolerance offers a new humility and improved prospects for civilizational encounters. But the implications of critical charges on tolerance by Brown and others remain somewhat unclear. What is left after the regulatory functions and liberal presuppositions of tolerance have been revealed? As much as the concept may be tainted by its role in how Western civilizational superiority is affirmed and ‘others’ are stigmatized, its role in supplying a language for political claims by minorities and for conceptualizing decent responses to cultural pluralism should not be discounted on the basis of this critique. In a second step, we thus explore recent deployments of tolerance in elite political discourse before revisiting the critique of tolerance.

The third issue arises in relation to the balancing of reasons that forms part of how toleration is commonly understood. Current advances in tolerance theory often pay particular attention to what reasons count as eligible, either as negatively ineligible or as justifications for forbearance that can override the impulse to reject. Such considerations have been amended by scholars of toleration who stress the significance of
perceptions, of pre-existing and ongoing relationships between tolerator and tolerated, or of communication and deliberation. For the most part, acts of everyday intolerance, from the casual discrimination that individuals may suffer in employment to racist violence in the streets, do not raise questions about reasons, and why they weren’t balanced, but about socialization, the internalization of norms of conduct and social institutions, as well as the wider social climate that fails to provide safeguards against or even precipitates intolerance. This would speak for a sociologically grounded view on values and attitudes and a concern with learning, as Veit Bader (2007; 2013) has suggested, to complement the preoccupation with ideal reasons and their justifications. Our response is to argue for a combination of approaches and we highlight the way in which the ACCEPT Pluralism project has provided new perspectives on discourses, policies and practices of tolerance. In a third step, we illustrate this with a review of two significant strands of non-acceptance in contemporary Europe: liberal and ethno-cultural intolerance.

3.1 Beyond toleration? Comments on the classes of acceptance

The concept of tolerance/toleration is characterized by some inherent problems and limitations. In its conventional conceptual understanding, it is widely considered a non-ideal state of affairs as it is compatible with various degrees of inequality and oppression. Yet it has also been argued that toleration is necessary and may even be, in challenging circumstances, a desirable solution. It is unlikely that the presence of culturally diverse populations in European countries will cease to be challenging in all sorts of ways, and we are not the first to suggest that the minimalism of toleration is infinitely more attractive than many alternatives. As a result of increasing diversity, value pluralism means that we need a way of reconciling ourselves with differences we disagree with, which may be deep and difficult to bridge. Respect for the other’s individuality, reason and human standing, or the fact of common citizenship, can provide grounds for putting disagreement into perspective and thus for tolerance. Tolerance is objection that is balanced by reasons for acceptance, and this balancing is not just a practical necessity in the absence of better options. The attitudes it requires are virtues that pluralist societies cannot do without.

There are reasons, however, to consider the inherent logic that is contained in such virtues, which in some cases points ‘beyond’ toleration and towards a situation where difference is normalized and ‘does not make a difference’ (Schiffauer, 2013), or where ‘negative’ becomes ‘positive difference’ (Modood, 2007: 61). David Heyd (2003: 205) suggests that ‘by acquiring a tolerant disposition, we progressively move towards full recognition of at least some of the opinions and practices of other people’. This trajectory beyond toleration would seem to correspond with Goethe’s suggestion that – since ‘to tolerate is to insult’ – ‘tolerance can only be provisional and must lead to recognition’ (cited and discussed in Forst, 2007). Yet this conception fails to hold up. Tolerance is not a mere stopgap that we condone while waiting for superior normative arrangements to emerge. The movement from tolerance towards recognition or full equality is uncertain and there are many circumstances where, even after exhaustive opportunities to revisit one’s objection, this does not happen and peacekeeping, rather than reconciliation, remains a priority. While the movement beyond toleration is anything but necessary – we are provided with numerous examples where minimally tolerant arrangements disintegrate into violent persecution – it remains a possibility. The civic equality and confessional pluralism that European states achieved (for the most part) only became possible after the consolidation of various non-ideal, yet minimally tolerant, arrangements in the aftermath of Europe’s wars of religion (between the 16th and 18th centuries). Toleration thus protects a minimalist ‘modus vivendi’, yet it comprises attitudes and reasons that exceed minimalism and contain not a
necessary drift but at least intimations of more demanding moral arrangements. A different way of unpacking the relationship between tolerance and recognition or respect is to suggest along with Veit Bader (2013) that, while it makes little sense to introduce a hierarchy of classes of acceptance, toleration needs to be backed up by more demanding principles and virtues in order to be a stable and reliable arrangement. This would seem to provide for a reasonably complex view on the ‘classes’ of acceptance, none of which we can expect to be socially prevalent at any point in time. Multiple normativities are expressed in social attitudes, conceptions of values, political institutions and laws. This suggests that, rather than discussing the relative merits of any particular concept of ‘acceptance’, we should explore how different normative classes interact and sustain societies that are, in one combination or another, as tolerant and respectful of cultural diversity as possible.

In the debate about whether it makes sense or is desirable to ‘go beyond’ toleration, it is in particular some concern about the dispersal of such norms and the role of the state that leads to disagreement. The challenge is about the role that the state and public institutions can play in fostering or demanding certain attitudes and virtues on behalf of its citizens, its residence and its communities. Respect or esteem are difficult to generalize and impossible to require on an individual basis for the same reasons that Locke referred to in his defence of the freedom of conscience: these are ‘opinions and actions that are wholly separate from the concernment of the state’ (Locke, 2006: 288). Additional concerns, such as whether it makes sense to conceive of the state as an agent that dispenses tolerance or recognition (see Lægaard, 2013), seem perhaps less urgent than the claim that a universal regime of state-sponsored recognition may be not just impractical but ultimately undesirable and intrusive (Webber, 2010).

Theorists of recognition, however, stress that the exercise of recognition is not limited to state action. States have a role to play – but only within much larger social processes. For Taylor (1994), recognition is dialogical and cannot be left to politicians or captured in legal instruments; it consists of two (or more) collectivities with a history of domination-subordination that acknowledge each other within a shared political sphere. They seek to move beyond that historical relationship through allowing each to be true to oneself – ‘deep diversity’ – while developing commonalities through mutual understanding – a ‘fusion of horizons’. Galeotti (2002) argues that toleration in a context of contemporary cultural diversity cannot simply be a form of benign neglect but requires active policies of equal opportunities and inclusivity. While the state must lead this implementation of equality, she believes that the media, intellectuals, employers, trade unions, the churches, neighbourhood associations and so on have to participate in their own way for equality – ‘toleration as recognition’ – to be realized. Similarly, for Modood (2007), multicultural recognition is a civic idea, meaning that it is created and exists in horizontal relations among citizens and not just in the vertical spaces between the state and citizens.

While the fundamental difference between minimalist toleration and more demanding forms of acceptance is that the latter, but not the former, requires sustained action against the negative perceptions of the ‘other’, the state is not the exclusive agent in attacking ‘negative difference’. Such activist forms of acceptance are not simply focused on minorities. They require an affirmation of minority identities – namely, of those identities that are of importance to minorities – but they also require a remaking and a pluralizing of the common identity, the greater ‘We’.

Finally, a strict distinction between the governing of behaviour and practices and a laissez-faire as regards beliefs and opinions is unsustainable where intolerance flows out of beliefs such as racism. On such matters liberal states do not claim to be neutral. In liberal theory, state institutions/governing actors use a combination of law, public censure, debate and education (including state schools) to channel beliefs and attitudes away from, for example, sexism and racism and towards forms of acceptance and equality that
these ideologies deny. Yet for some liberals, the problem with recognition and respect as political concepts is not just that they push the state from regulating behaviour to ‘thought-control’ but also that they introduce notions of collective identities, such as blacks, or Roma, or Muslims, which are not sensitive to the heterogeneity that exists in all groups (see Brubaker, 2012).

In addition to the interest in relations between different ‘classes’ and normative options, we wish to highlight the significance of perceptions of difference and that toleration is a device that structures the relationship with perceived ‘others’. Werner Schiffauer suggests that the conventional conception of toleration needs to be amended to explore how visibly ‘abnormal’ differences may become ‘normal’ and thus potentially invisible. The question is how such differences are socially defined as tolerable and intolerable and why some, and not others, become the subject of heated debates. In the current situation, changing types of liberal-intolerant argumentation play a particular role in shifting the boundaries of tolerable difference. As Mouritsen and Olsen (2013) argue, the challenge is to ‘desecuritize’ the assumptions and scenarios that underpin the liberal turn towards intolerance and to develop a more inclusive position than perfectionist liberalism and its stigmatization of others as intolerably illiberal.

When considering the ‘classes’ of acceptance, such as in the context of political efforts to make liberalism ‘more muscular’, we are dealing with contexts that are characterized by established relationships and attitudes towards ‘significant others’. There are conceptual frameworks and languages of minority accommodation that have developed over time. In fact, intolerant outcomes in a number of European contexts seem to result at least partially from perspectives on minority ‘difference’ that prioritize the experience of one group but fail to take account of divergent experiences and claims. Responding to this difficulty, Triandafyllidou (2013), for example, argues that the challenge for countries in South-East Europe is to ‘open up their diversity spectrum’ and to arrive at a form of ‘plural nationalism’ that takes notice of established minority groups as well as of more recent newcomers.

It is a more general phenomenon that limited spaces on the ‘diversity spectrum’ account for intolerant outcomes. In Great Britain, there is a tendency among urban geographers and cultural theorists to posit the novelty of minority experiences (highlighting, for example, their newly networked, cosmopolitan or ‘super-diverse’ character) and to forget that such experiences are usually multifaceted and diverse both between different as well as within particular groups (see Walzer, 1997; Modood, 1998; Modood and Dobbernack, 2013). Conceptions of toleration or respect and recognition, inasmuch as they prioritize particular understandings of minority ‘difference’, can be questioned for whether they cover the spectrum of actual cultural differences and identities. Self-evidently, acceptance is easier to obtain for ‘differences’ that are politically privileged while it is more difficult to achieve for those that aren’t registered as part of the official nomenclature of visible and valid minority difference.

Collectively, our project work shows that there has to be a double interest: in the indispensable role of minimal and more demanding concepts of toleration and acceptance in relation to contemporary diversity challenges, as well as in the significance of such concepts in organizing debates, drawing boundaries and structuring relationships between majority and minorities. To appreciate the role that tolerance can play as a concept and as a practice, it is important to consider its opposite, notably intolerance.

3.2 Examining contemporary intolerance

In this section we briefly review two contemporary sources of intolerance – liberal and civic versus ethnic and national. We discuss the relationship between these two sources of intolerance and use this review to offer some suggestions for the analysis of acceptance and intolerance in social and political life. Across
much of Europe, there has been a new focus in the political resistance to cultural pluralism. Rather than rejecting the presence of minority groups for their affront to ideas of racial purity and ethno-national homogeneity, it has become more common to highlight their incompatibility with liberal norms and values. It is an assertive, perfectionist or ‘muscular’ liberalism that plays a particular role in mobilizations against ‘Islamization’ and various aspects of the Muslim presence in European countries. This liberalism comes in a number of contextually specific flavours and, rather than representing a wholesale paradigm shift in the debate about ethnic minority integration, often harks back to older ethno-nationalist ideas (see Mouritsen, 2013). Indeed, the insistence on liberal principles, and the threat that Muslims are seen to represent, has become the central plank of formations such as Geert Wilders’ Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) or the English Defence League (EDL). These groupings contrast their hostility to ‘Islamization’ with an endorsement of racial diversity, which they seek to attest through demonstrations of their ‘race-blindness’, not anti-racism. Within the political mainstream and elite discourse, as we have suggested above, the language of ‘muscular liberalism’ sees national identities of European states re-defined to limit the presence of ‘illiberal’ others. The new case for principled intolerance towards those others goes hand in hand with the vocal appreciation of the diversity of cosmopolitan lifestyles, which are not narrowly based in ethno-religious or group identities. In all this, tolerance is a key element that is defined, contested and mobilized, often in line with the logic of the clash of civilizations: it is their intolerance that makes us revise our toleration. This binary perspective has been applied for example as part of the trade-off that allegedly has to be made between religious freedom and the freedom to express sexual identities. A new logic of intolerance targets civilizational ‘others’ that are said to be intolerant of the liberal ‘self’ (Butler, 2010; Lentin and Titley, 2011: 224-5).

While ‘liberalism with guts’ (Bolkestein, 1991) is anything but new, its themes have become more popular and have come to constitute one of the main ways in which minority integration is discussed and political responses are conceived. David Cameron’s (2011) reference to ‘muscular liberalism’ at a speech in Munich exemplifies one such way in which liberal values – such as gender equality, ‘moderate’ religiosity or the rule of law – are asserted in relation to challenging experiences of cultural diversity. Characteristic of similar interventions across Europe, Cameron introduced ‘muscular liberalism’ in terms of a departure from the ‘failed policies of the past’, notably those that failed to insist on substantial standards of liberal conduct. He pointed to how it had become ‘hard to identify with Britain ... because we have allowed the weakening of our collective identity’. The ‘doctrine of state multiculturalism’, he has argued, had encouraged segregation and there was no ‘vision of society’ to which young Muslims feel they could belong. Minority status and ‘political correctness’, in turn, had shielded some groups from criticism for their illiberal practices. In his opinion, there should be more activism, engagement and liberal assertiveness. Some of this could be obtained through ‘a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone’. Beyond the rhetorical shift towards muscular liberalism, it is not always very clear what the concrete changes in minority accommodation policies are that result from the new emphasis. In the British case, this appears to be a gradual departure from a cooperative engagement with Muslim organizations. This type of intolerance, which is presented in the form of a liberal concern with individual autonomy, equality and reasonableness, appears as distinct from other types of intolerance that are at work in different parts of Europe. In countries such as Greece, rising intolerance emerges in the form of a reactionary nationalism in the context of a multifaceted crisis. This intolerance can be attributed to the ‘ethno-cultural’ conception of nationhood dominant in national traditions of belonging, and to the ‘Eastern’ heritage of the country. The conceptual and argumentative background of this intolerance, which assumes an ‘ethno-cultural’ conception of belonging to the nation, and the liberal intolerance that highlights
universal and value-based forms of belonging, seem rather distinct. Yet in both cases, intolerance is presented and requested in the form of a re-balancing of (or backlash against) more generous arrangements of immigrant and minority incorporation. This backlash of intolerance in different countries is based upon similar conceptual grounds: an increasing sense of crisis that makes notions such as equality and tolerance irrelevant and fosters hierarchies between in- and out- groups; a manipulation of the immigrants, those ‘significant others’ so as to boost social cohesion; a cynicism towards ‘politically correct’ perspectives of multiculturalism, ‘too much diversity’ and human rights; a concern with cultural homogeneity and cultural practices which implies a resistance to minority accommodation while assigning blame to their ‘difference’. The most recent economic and political crisis in Greece, for example, marks a shift of political discourse in an ethno-cultural direction of closure and intolerance. Interestingly social and political actors turn tolerance on its head, just like it happens with liberal intolerance, arguing that it is precisely to protect democracy and the nation that they cannot tolerate migrants, their ‘inferior’ culture and religious tradition. Even if the case of intolerance found in Greece cannot be conceived as ‘liberal’, it is, though, ‘principled’, and justified by a conception of the national political order. It is ‘new’ as it follows from and reverses positive developments related to an opening up of migration and naturalisation policies favouring migrants integration (Pavlou, 2009; Christopoulos, 2012).

There is little doubt that the civic/ethnic distinction as regards nationhood, and the liberal/nationalist dichotomy for tolerance, is helpful in partially clarifying the issues at stake. However, such dichotomies also simplify a more complicated reality where radical intolerance towards ‘others’ takes various shapes in different countries. Recent studies show that although different national traditions of nationhood significantly influence the citizenship models countries produce, these are constantly in interaction with broader geopolitical and economic developments, migration flows, politics, diaspora and colonial settlements, or power relations within each nation state (Christopoulos, 2012). It is often the case that the same citizen can defend a model of belonging to a nation that entails civic and ethnic elements, at the same time as national traditions most often entail both ‘trends’ (Medrano and Koenig, 2005). ‘There is no sustainable concept of political culture without history; all civic and democratic cultures are unavoidably integrated in specific national histories’ (Bader, 1997: 780). The East-West divide in the conception of citizenship, as well as stark distinctions between liberal and ethno-cultural foundations for European intolerance, are equally put into question (Bauböck and Liebich, 2010). Different national traditions of citizenship are mobilized so as to justify a common trend, that of a rising intolerance towards the immigrant ‘other’. European nation states put forward intolerance not as an exception to their political tenets but as emanating from those.

The analysis of the ‘nationalist’ intolerance within the wider European context sheds some light also on liberal intolerance in countries in the North and North-West of Europe. Even if appealing to general liberal principles, such principles are drawn on in defence of cultural particularities, national institutional contexts and essentially, a narrow definition of European belonging. The generalized discourse of intolerance towards diversity, using a variety of arguments (more or less liberal, more or less nationalist) emerges as a ‘real’ and ‘pragmatic’ response to multicultural threats that have been silenced due to a politically correct discourse on diversity. Intolerant positions across Europe do not even need to be justified as a the result of political choices, but are introduced as ‘objective’ necessities in order to restore ‘normality’ to the natural state of affairs that has been temporarily distorted by multicultural, or otherwise ‘excessively’ tolerant, arrangements for minorities.

Analytically, this reinforces the need for a multi-disciplinary perspective. Studies that exclusively deal with
the fate of ‘national models’ of minority integration – civic-universalist versus ethno-cultural, republican versus multiculturalist – are at risk of ignoring developments beneath the surface level of public proclamations (see Bertossi and Duyvendak, 2012). Regarding the exclusionary rhetoric that is directed at either illiberal or ethno-cultural outsiders, the point is not just that it is often exactly the same population that is targeted from both directions (‘illiberal’ outsiders also tend to be phenotypically different and it is Muslims that are seen to represent a challenge not just to liberal principles but also to ethno-cultural cohesion). Furthermore, when the belonging of such populations is put into doubt this occurs in the process of the construction of ‘We’ identities that in both cases operate according to broadly similar logics of exclusion and identity-creation. Repetitive and ritualized hints to the ‘failure’ of past models of immigrant integration, especially of multiculturalism, and the attack on ‘political correctness’ are widely shared. They should be studied for their discursive dynamics, yet we should also remain interested in the various activities and practices in which participants in the debate about the boundaries of tolerance take up ideas, interpret them but also change and shape their situation. This means adopting, as we have done in the ACCEPT Pluralism project, a hybrid approach and the combination of sociological, political and normative-theoretical concerns to respond to the contemporary situation of cultural diversity in Europe.

In this situation, debates about what can and cannot be accepted are more fluid than ever. While identities, lifestyles and practices that were previously stigmatized are publicly embraced, the boundaries of tolerance are drawn more narrowly for others, in particular for populations that allegedly do not live up to liberal-democratic standards. Such changes may be a reflection of sociological trends and how these are perceived and politically acknowledged. They may be the result of changing perspectives on race, of the reconsideration of ethno-religious difference within the liberal state, and of new anxieties in particular about Europe’s Muslim populations. It is difficult to identify what is driving the re-evaluation of ‘difference’, yet it seems clear that diverse ‘modalities’ of acceptance or non-acceptance, sociological formations of difference and their treatment in political discourse have to be brought into focus in order to catch up with European debates about cultural pluralism.

Social science and political theory have responded differently to this reality. The pluralization of differences has been of concern in sociology, ethnography and cultural theory, where emerging features of urban landscapes are seen to challenge the categories that guide the political accommodation of minorities. The concern with values and principles of minority accommodation is frequently absent in these accounts, which generally do not purport to evaluate prospects for tolerance or respect and are more concerned with the potentials of geographic or demographic situations. In turn, normative theory seems not particularly willing to register features – be they ‘old’ or ‘new’ – of the European multicultural condition. The balancing act of ‘reasons’ that normative theorists identify in toleration is frequently conceived without regard for sociological realities or the political debates in which the scope of tolerable and intolerable ‘difference’ shifts and is determined.

A more complete account is needed not least because political exchanges about how much and what kind of cultural difference should be tolerated are usually multifaceted; sociological findings – such as national census data on cultural diversity – are normatively evaluated and questioned for their political repercussions. Complex patterns of European diversity are newly registered by participants in the public debate on the scope of acceptance in the liberal state.

We have suggested that it is necessary to consider normative modalities of acceptance or non-acceptance, their correspondence to sociological formations of difference and their treatment in political discourse. Without seeking to arrive at conclusions that would exhaust the issues that have been raised
here, we have come to the following suggestions:

• In relation to normative-conceptual concerns, the conflation of tolerance and more demanding concepts is not just normatively problematic but analytically unhelpful. While sympathetic to the strategy of developing a more demanding normative vocabulary, we believe that there is a risk of conceptual confusion here, one result of which is that we may lose the normative value of toleration.

• The forbearance of toleration is of normative and pragmatic value – as many minorities know, both historically and today – and to disparage toleration because it falls short of, say, respect is politically shortsighted. ‘Gritted-teeth tolerance’ is the most practical solution in many circumstances, and it makes little sense to denounce it where more demanding notions are unavailable.

• There are indeed things that we should not tolerate as well as those that we should be able to discuss. These include behaviours most people do not want to condone, such as racism and sexism. In addition, there is a host of issues that have to do with post-immigration ‘difference’ itself that are rightly discussed in this context. These include clitoridectomy, marriage at the age of puberty and/or under duress, polygamy, and so on.

• Regardless of one’s position on these, we do need a normative-conceptual space where what is tolerated and what is outlawed can be clearly discussed without being confused with recognition, respect and substantive equality. We need to separate intolerance from toleration as well as toleration from more demanding positions.

• Having noted the continuing value of toleration, we cannot ignore its limitations, namely the element of disapproval and the fact that tolerance is consistent with – and in some cases hides – inequality and domination. In seeking a form of equality in a context of diversity, we may prefer a non-evaluative respect for others in which people, especially fellow citizens, have a right (which is not a gift of the powerful) to be included without assimilation or privatisation of their ‘difference’. We need to find ways to give expression to this respect in social relations and institutional accommodation.

In all cases where intolerance, toleration and respect are possibilities, we need to acknowledge that positions are not beyond contestation, that the objects and boundaries of toleration are historically changing, and that a political concern with the relationship between tolerator and tolerated is necessary as it entails the elements of power, authority and domination. Such relationships, if they are concealed, need to be brought out and queried, for the boundaries that are drawn and for how decisions are made about what can and what can’t be tolerated. This is a particularly urgent task in light of the new ‘liberal intolerance’, which overlaps with, rather than replaces, remaining forms of ‘ethno-nationalist intolerance’. Both of these make pragmatic types of accommodation appear more fragile and difficult to achieve.

Taking the above conceptual framework as its point of departure, the ACCEPT PLURALISM project has conducted two sets of case studies in two important areas of public life where contestations and conflicts on cultural, religious and ethnic diversity issues often arise: schools and politics. Section 4 below presents our comparative findings in the domain of school life and education, while Section 5 further below presents our main findings on tolerance or intolerance of cultural diversity in the field of politics.

4. Key Comparative Findings on School Life

At the outset of this analysis, four aspects of the field of education deserve to be highlighted. First, education is not merely one of the various spheres of society, it is also one of the major institutions of socialization in modern societies. Teachers and educational officials need to relate to demands coming
from society at large and from the state; they need to relate to ideas and wishes of parents and cultural or religious communities, as well as the values and objectives they want to pursue in education.

Second, in schools we are dealing with maturing children, not with adults, and for issues of identity, values, ideas, cultural and religious practices, convictions and choices, it matters that school-life is a period of “growth towards maturity” and “gradual increase in autonomy”. Parents have a strong interest in school-life since their concern often is to reproduce specific cultural or religious traditions. Also, teachers play a dualistic role given the pedagogical nature of their relationship with pupils; they are both to guide and correct, and to show respect for the ideas and wishes of pupils (and parents).

Third, schools are institutional environments in which challenges of diversity tend to become relatively acute and unavoidable since nearly all countries have compulsory education. In the school context, social interaction is intensive and extends across a fair amount of time (in terms of school days, but also in terms of years over a life-time). Moreover, the school is an arena for different stakeholders (teachers, parents, community leaders, state officials) who may advocate specific ways of dealing with challenges of diversity and issues of (in)tolerance.

Finally, education is an institutional sphere that is marked by important power asymmetries. At the level of society as a whole these include differences in power between majorities and minorities, between established, native minorities and immigrant communities, between religious and ethnic communities that are seen as crucially belonging to the nation or as constitutive of the national identity and those who are positioned as “outside” of the national community.

The research carried out in this project, in the field of education analyzes the shifting meaning and practices of toleration by conducting qualitative case studies on “key events.” These events may either be controversies or issues that (1) resulted in public debates, interactions and forms of governance in the respective country; (2) were felt to be genuine concerns for (at least some) practitioners within the schools or educational system; and (3) resulted in actions and/or forms of governance that were justified in terms of (in)tolerance and respect. The time-frame for the selection of these key events was between 2000 and 2011.

In order to address this diversity in the type of challenges that arise in relation to education, a first step was to distinguish between three types of issues. The first type of issues is related to the presentation of self and interactions in the school context. In educational institutions specific forms of interactions occur and issues arise about ways of engaging with specific self-presentations (in dress, symbols, practice, speech) and with practices, interactions and encounters in this context (for example with regard to the request to perform prayer in the school). This type of issue is about whether and how the school (individual schools, the school system, teachers, pupils) should practice and institutionalize (in)tolerance and respect. A second set of issues is related to the way in which the content and practice of education and teaching (in a broad sense as involving curriculum, pedagogy, educational culture) involves questions of engaging with difference. A third set of issues is about the ways in which the education system as a whole institutionally addresses diversity (e.g. by granting autonomy to religious schools, by setting up separate classes for immigrant or Roma children, etc) and how this is related to tolerance, social integration and equality.

The empirical case studies were subsequently grouped into four clusters in order to bring out the relevant comparative observations. The first cluster contains case studies related to issues of curriculum, educational culture and teaching tolerance; the second cluster is about the accommodation of diversity in everyday school life; a third cluster contains case studies on the issue of Roma segregation in educational institutions; and the fourth cluster contains studies on religious schools and tolerance.
4.1 Curriculum, educational culture and teaching tolerance

Our focus in this domain has been on history and civic education curricula and teaching methods and we conducted case studies in Turkey, Germany, Spain, Britain, France, Bulgaria, Italy, Hungary and the Netherlands. Sensibilities and anxieties, as well as institutional frameworks of state education differ among Europe countries, and this is amply illustrated by the variety of experiences and concerns surveyed in our research. The concern with tolerance for cultural diversity is usually one of a number of objectives, among which tends to be the teaching of a cultural canon, practical skills, and a certain relationship with the nation state, defined in various forms as a socio-historical community of normative and emotional significance. The focus is on three broad dimensions that seem relevant for evaluating the place of tolerance in European education: the politics of curriculum reform, claims for national narratives to be pluralized, and the representation of diversity, citizenship and group difference in education. Each of these dimensions contains contestations and exemplifies national particularities, as well as in some cases a limited convergence in how educational systems across European polities respond to diversity challenges.

Often, the political mobilization of minority groups leads to educational practices and curricular content to be changed. However, the politics of curriculum reform across European countries follows varied patterns and speaks to concerns that often seem context-specific. Drawing on examples that we examined in depth from Turkey, Germany and Spain, we consider grievances and claims and how these have been expressed in political campaigns.

In Western European countries in particular, claims for the revision or for the extension of national curricula are put forward in order to increase the weight given to the presence of particular minority groups or to pluralize foundational narratives. Across Europe, conversely, new concerns with social unity and cohesion have been met by attempts to specify national identities in cultural, historical and normative terms. In both cases, education is an important site for the debate of historical representations of the nation. Aspects of the French, British and Bulgarian experience illustrate this dimension.

In various European countries, there appears to be a desire – often expressed with the concept of ‘interculturalism’ – to register forms of diversity amongst school pupils, but to do so without necessitating a commitment to deep diversity in school curricula. The case of the Roma, moreover, exemplifies how conceptions of groupness determine strategies of cultural and socio-economic accommodation. This debate about the status of diversity and identity and the significance of groups has been explored in the Italian, Dutch and Hungarian contexts.

Issues around curriculum reform illustrate a complexity of interests that is present when significant changes to the curriculum are discussed. Institutional rationales for conceding minority claims may be characterized by an interest in prevention and control, which is to be achieved through a strategy of incorporation. It is clear that such rationales offer opportunities as well as risks for minorities. On the one hand, the institutional concern to incorporate may be significant enough for policy-makers to be receptive to minority claims and for educational practices to be pluralized. On the other, incorporation may be perceived as infringement, such as where it is seen to entail additional state involvement in the determination of minority religiosity.

In this regard, tolerance and equal respect require not just the removal of stigmas and of institutionalized disrespect, but some form of minority involvement in the definition of positive or accurate accounts. A recommendation, then, can be made regarding the processes of consultation that need to be put in place. In order for new perspectives or subjects to be perceived as legitimate, a strong element of democratic
participation needs to be put in place. Significantly, minority concerns may be internally contested. Complex constellations of actors and interests, exemplarily highlighted in the cases of Turkey, Spain and Germany, point to the need for robust arrangements in order to have meaningful deliberation and compromise. Where curricular issues are deeply contested, mirroring cultural cleavages as in the case of the debate about citizenship education in Spain, it may be necessary to accompany political negotiations with a meaningful debate about fundamental social principles in a way that avoids misrepresentations and name-calling.

A second area of interest has been the determination of the ‘national story’. While a desire to acknowledge some diversity seems widely shared, the frameworks in which such acknowledgments take place provide for different debates and outcomes. The pluralization of ‘the national story’ in British education has been a concern for some time. Recently, policy makers argue for revisions to be made to the curriculum in order to introduce a consolidated narrative account of British history. While in France there is some willingness to acknowledge aspects of 20th century pluralism, this concern is constrained by apprehensions about how the accentuation of ‘difference’ would be incompatible with ideals of republican citizenship. In Bulgaria, the concern by some is to promote a narrative account of Christian-Orthodox nationhood. Others emphasize a more ‘secular’ story and criticize the potential neglect of non-religious or Muslim Bulgarians in attempts to emphasize or invent a religious heritage.

Historical narratives and accounts of national identities in education often draw on the idea that social fractures, political polarisations or religious conflicts were overcome in order to create a shared purpose. Such narratives, as they are evident across European states, allow for different interpretations of how ‘difference’ should be considered. Inclusive ideals of shared civic aspirations may be accommodating of ethno-religious and national minorities; culturally-enriched understandings of belonging, in particular when their main purpose is to define national identities against the ‘otherness’ of minorities, are not. Where the desire is to emphasize citizenship, national identity and social cohesion, educational initiatives will need to be evaluated for how much space remains for an acknowledgement of social pluralism. This is not (just) a matter of historical accuracy, but of designing public institutions, including schools, in which pupils of all backgrounds feel included and represented.

The third aspect involves issues where ambiguous definitions of ‘groupness’, ‘sameness’ and ‘identity’ have to be considered in order to understand corresponding educational objectives and curricular programmes. Conceptions of the ‘difference’ of minority groups impact on strategies for accommodation. In Hungarian educational discourse, reasons for the marginalization of the Roma are ambiguously conceived and correspond to conflicting and often confused ideas about Roma culture. Depending on how Roma ‘difference’ is perceived and whether socio-economic issues or race and culture are foregrounded, different educational strategies become plausible. Similar ambiguities are evident in the definition of ‘citizenship’ in Dutch education, where three conceptions are at hand. These relate to particular educational strategies to foster corresponding civic attitudes. This case also highlights how official definitions and their practical applications may not be congruent, with the consequence that teachers continue with preferred practices or simply ignore governmental guidelines. Interculturalism in Italian education lacks coherence, too, and the respective programmes are usually formulated by individual schools. The idea of interculturalism is mainly concerned with language issues and everyday encounters, not necessarily with more protracted debates about religious accommodation and difficult cases. These examples highlighted here suggest how issues of minority accommodation in education require some interest in corresponding debates about ‘difference’ and identity.
4.2 The accommodation of diversity in everyday school life

Our analysis of challenges that cultural diversity poses in everyday school life focuses on arguments around the accommodation of religious symbols and practices. Our findings are based on case studies from France, Turkey, Ireland, Sweden, Germany, UK, Denmark, Romania, Poland and Greece. At stake here is how to balance the rights of the child, the parents and the state in regard to the education of children.

In view of recent moves towards ‘civic integrationism’ in many European countries and the centrality of ‘autonomy’ as a key value in education generally, we focus here on whether or not there is a prevalence of ‘liberal intolerance’ towards accommodating cultural and religious diversity in school life. Many of the case studies revolve around if and how to accommodate demands to either express religion or be free from religion at school. Another tension is found between clear national rules clarifying the normative situation with regard to diversity in everyday school life and giving schools and school districts local autonomy in deciding how to accommodate diversity. Considering the multidimensionality and the often opposed interests pertaining to controversies about the rights of education and religion, our empirical findings in these case studies suggest that it makes sense to allow schools to make diversity accommodations based on local experiences and circumstances.

We do find ‘liberal intolerance’ in its various modes in a great number of national debates. However, it is not as prevalent as one might think. It is paired with national intolerance in many cases and countered by similar liberal arguments about respect for the cultural and religious choices of students and their right to attend (mandatory, public) education without ethnic and religious discrimination, as well as by pragmatic arguments for accommodation based on local autonomy, experiences and circumstances, and the overriding goal of finding a workable framework for everyday school life, ensuring the education and wellbeing of individual students. In a small number of cases, we trace toleration debates on education that are reversed in a certain sense. In Poland and Romania, the religious and national intolerance is rather turned against liberal atheism for failing to understand the role of religion in the re-creation of the nation after Communism and as an essential source of human life and morality. However, in Poland, the ‘religious strife’ does not seem to run very deep, since for many, religion is more convention than belief. In Greece and Poland, we likewise trace instances of what we might call ‘pre-tolerance’ or indifference to minority claims contesting the predominance of majority religion. They are simply a non-issue for the majority. A central issue in nearly all the national disputes is the freedom to and from religion in school life; on the one hand, the possibility of expressing one’s religion and attending education with greater or lesser ‘consistency’ with one’s religious beliefs; on the other hand, the freedom from religion: that of the state, that of others and that of one’s parents. If both claims of freedom to and from religion have some legitimacy, then a balance between them needs to be struck. If the constellation of claims, needs, experiences and possible solutions varies from school to school, the ability to address this flexibly might be better than issuing ‘one-size-fits-all’ solutions at the national level.

It is indeed a cross-cutting concern or issue in all of the cases whether or not there should be local autonomy for schools to deal with cultural and religious diversity. Clear national rules have the advantage that individual schools do not have to wrestle with the difficult issues of if and how to accommodate diversity. National rules furthermore clarify the legal situation and individual rights. Hence, it entails legal certainty or security of rights even if the rights may be rather limited in some instances. However, local autonomy may be better at ensuring a workable everyday school life, taking into consideration local
circumstances and experiences, in particular if it is made mandatory for schools to address diversity issues using a procedural model that entails (creating) respect for all parties involved as equal speaking partners. The immediate loss in legal certainty that may follow from local autonomy is regained in terms of the procedural rights to participation in the discussion about if and how to accommodate diversity locally. The aim of the model is to find practical, pragmatic solutions to problems, not to discuss values or identities. It may therefore disappoint aspirations to move beyond toleration and toward ‘positive recognition’. On the other hand, the focus on practical matters makes the model better suited to deal with real and persistent conflicts where they exist.

4.3 Roma segregation in educational institutions

Our research on Roma educational segregation and its aftermaths includes case studies in five countries: Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Romania. In this section we present an overview of the types of educational segregation found in these countries before continuing with a discussion of some of the factors that contribute to segregation. We then consider the predominant response to segregation: socio-economic integration as well as, the failures of integration policies across these countries. This section ends with a discussion of the possible causes for the failures of these integration policies, and the resultant de facto segregation, and the implications of Roma segregation (and its integrationist response) for questions of tolerance.

In our analysis, we advance three main arguments. First, the segregation of Roma in educational institutions continues to be a major problem in all five countries examined. This segregation is both cause and consequence of the severe marginalisation of the Roma. Second, despite a normative consensus that integration is the only acceptable solution to segregation, all noteworthy integration efforts to date have ended in failure. The following reasons for these failures have been put forward: the lack of political will (or in some cases political opposition); resistance from parents and teachers concerned with the quality of their children’s education; and underlying racism and nationalism. Third, official discourse and policy are generally tolerant, but public attitudes toward the Roma question typically remain intolerant. Policies aimed at integrating the Roma, however, whilst usually framed in socio-economic terms nevertheless require the Roma to become more like the majority in cultural terms as well. Comparing these different national attempts at integration suggests that they sit uneasily with promoting tolerance. Individual variation can be found in these and other regards in each of the five countries examined. Despite this variation, however, there is considerable similarity between the countries on all basic counts: the persistence of segregation, the failure of integration efforts, and the mismatch between an official discourse promoting tolerance and public attitudes remaining intolerant.

4.4 Religious schools and tolerance

In the context of increasing religious and cultural pluralisation of European societies the role and functioning of religious schools is an important issue in discussions about the structure of education systems. Public and political debates focus on whether and how religious schools merit toleration or recognition, and/or whether some of their educational and organizational practices are perhaps intolerable. Our analysis here builds on the insights developed in case studies on religious minority schools in
Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland, Italy and Spain.

Educational systems vary widely with regard to the recognition and financing of religious schools, the mix of governmental and non-governmental schools and their relative ‘market share’, the freedom of these schools to shape the curriculum and to select teaching materials, to govern diversity in the school context, to recruit teachers and staff, and to select and admit pupils, as well as the types and degrees of public scrutiny and control. We distinguish between governmental and non-governmental schools. Governmental schools are understood to be owned, run, and financed by (a flexible combination of) governmental (federal, state, municipal) authorities. Non-governmental religious schools are owned and run by (central or local) religious organisations or associations whether (partly or fully) publicly financed or not.

In order to have an idea of the importance of religious schools within different countries one needs to look not only at their legal status, but also at the number of pupils attending these schools and their ‘market share’ compared to other types of schools.

It is highly contested whether religious schools should be publicly funded and, if so, how. Public financing of non-governmental schools in existing educational regimes is perplexingly complex and diverse, depending on who is financing how (i.e. directly and/or indirectly; by contract), when, and what.

Empirically, the overwhelming majority of states with liberal-democratic constitutions, one way or the other, do publicly finance non-governmental religious schools.

The empirical variety of public regulation and control of non-governmental religious schools (and its counterpart: their associational freedoms) is considerable with regard to the selection of staff and of students, the forms of organization and internal governance of ethno-religious diversity, the content of the curriculum and even classes and lessons, the selection of teaching material, didactics, examination, recognition of diplomas, and public inspection. Systems of governance range from strongly centralized and specified nearly full regulation and control with little or no autonomy in nearly all regards, to minimal regulation and control. It is also important to note, that fairly high degrees of associational autonomy in specific regards, for example the associational freedom to recruit teachers or to select and admit pupils, can go hand in hand with nearly no autonomy in other regards, for example the associational freedom to shape the curriculum and select teaching material. The latter is the case, for example, in the Netherlands.

All institutional arrangements and all educational systems have to deal with the following main tensions: (1) The right to freedom of education interpreted as parental choice can conflict with the (proto-) freedoms of pupils, increasingly gaining in ‘autonomy’. (2) The tension between educational/pedagogical freedoms of religious schools and principles and rights of non-discrimination (e.g. in the selection of teachers and students). (3) The tension between associational freedoms of religious schools to select students and principles and rights of equal educational opportunities for all. (4) The tension between educational/pedagogical freedoms of religious schools and demanding requirements of teaching and learning democratic citizenship and democratic virtues. (5) The possible and actual tensions between far going decentralization or autonomy of schools/teachers (in general, for religious schools in particular) and educational performance, as one version of difficult trade-offs and balancing in the organization of educational systems in general. Obviously, the way these tensions are framed and the way in which problems are perceived, does not only depend on such structural tensions but also, maybe mainly on the history and the recent development of the institutional arrangements in different countries.

Although the various empirical studies had a different focus on public debates and contestation around (different types of) religious schools, it is possible to detect three major themes related to issues of tolerance, cultural pluralism and equality. In the first place, there is a debate ongoing in a number of countries on the legitimacy of having religious schools, especially in relation to socio-economic, cultural
and religious segregation and in relation to the more recently established Islamic schools. In the second place, there is debate on the scope of associational freedoms of religious schools. Third, there is a debate on the issue of public financing of religious schools.

Across these various themes three broader concerns and recommendations arise: First, states should primarily be concerned about respect for minimal moral and legal requirements. The value of tolerance is deeply enshrined in European and national institutional arrangements, especially in the domain of education. Even though there are important worthwhile collective goals at stake in education, notably in relation to social equality and segregation, the institutional guarantees of pluralism should be upheld. Also, there is a danger that increasing public scrutiny and monitoring of all aspects of the functioning of religious schools (e.g. requirements with regard to effective teaching of democratic ethos of students, requirements with regard to curriculum etc.) reduce the freedom of these schools to effectively pursue alternative approaches in pedagogy and philosophy, and thus to contribute to the overall diversity of the education system as a whole (notably in Denmark, but also in the Netherlands and Sweden).

Second, it is clear that in dealing with diversity in education there are conflicting principles and rights at stake. There is no context-independent hierarchy. We cannot simply declare, for example, that non-discrimination should always be considered more important than associational freedoms of schools, or that policies of ‘desegregation’ should always take priority over educational freedoms. We need to learn from the reasonable weighing and balancing in specific contexts. A sensible balancing of the liberal principals of non-discrimination and of collective freedoms and associational freedoms is necessary in order to uphold a truly pluralistic society in which there remains room for more orthodox religious groups.

Another possibility, depending on the societal situation, is to give priority to equality of education to counter strong tendencies of socio-economic and ethic segregation. This has been advocated with regards to the Spanish situation based on the material collected in this project.

Third, there is not one ideal or best institutional model or practice, and revisions of (aspects of) educational systems or policies should most certainly not be built upon idealized views of other country’s ‘models’. Still, there are possibilities to learn from one another by exploring the way trade-offs are being made and for what reasons. Also, as is rightfully highlighted in the Irish report, educational systems may well be shaped by the past and constrained by the (social, economic) context, but they are not totally rigid and static and have proven ‘quite capable of accommodating rapid change’. Thus, European educational systems may incrementally learn to cope with present day challenges raised by old and new forms of pluralism, by the multiple and often conflicting goals of ‘education’, and the need to balance different principles, policy goals and interests in societal contexts marked by inequalities and power-asymmetries.

5. Key Findings on the (In)Tolerance of Cultural Diversity in Political Life

The concept of tolerance implies an asymmetrical relationship of power between those entitled to tolerate and those who are object of tolerance. Power-asymmetries are shaping the contours of toleration / non-toleration / respect attitudes and not everyone has (the same) power to exert it. As such, the space of tolerance is entirely embedded in the political space and in politics. The existence of power-asymmetries, political domination, majority-minority relationships but also dynamics of competition, claims over power and minorities agency, which are at the core of politics relate strongly to the way in which tolerance may be exerted and to the transformation of the boundaries of tolerance in society. There is a fundamental tension between disagreement and acceptance at the heart of toleration but only those who have the power to do so can choose to accept or not what they disagree with. Tolerance thus appears as a tool which enables understanding tensions and challenges in the political life when it comes to dealing with difference and
diversity, especially ethno-religious diversity.  
In the European context, the development of liberal-democracies has been strongly associated with the development of a culture of tolerance. The development of tolerance was meant to be part of the public culture as well as of the individual culture of the citizen. With the diversification of societies, notably by migration and the mobilization of native minorities, many institutional arrangements have been made in order to guarantee the acceptance of minorities in political life. This has been the case for ethno-religious minorities but also for other dominated groups such as women or homosexuals. These practices of acceptance, however, have not always gone far beyond tolerance and many claims of minorities have been ignored by the State and the majorities.  
The objective of the research carried out in the frame of ACCEPT PLURALISM as regards to tolerance in the political life has been to investigate key questions such as what kind of cultural diversity is considered compatible with the ‘secular’ politics of European countries? What claims or requests are tolerated? What political practices are considered tolerant or intolerant? And what values and norms are considered to promote or undermine tolerance in political life?  
The studies that we have carried out empirically challenge the concept of tolerance and the three-class concept of toleration, non-toleration and respect. The variety of our case studies and their different findings point to the diversity of the modalities of toleration. Toleration in political life refers to a continuous boundary-drawing activity between those who belong, the legitimate members of the political community, and the ‘outsiders’, those who should not be accepted in the polity, or who should be accepted only under specific conditions (concerning the tolerance or acceptance of their beliefs and behaviour).  
This process of boundary-drawing that we have identified in our studies develops around three core questions: Who is entitled to tolerate or not-tolerate? What is tolerable and what is not in a society? How is acceptance or objection expressed and implemented?  
Our case studies on political life have tackled four sets of issues. The first set concentrates on discourses and practices of intolerance in political life which aim at drawing the boundaries of those who belong and those who should be excluded from the polity. The second set of case studies focuses on the institutional obstacles posed to both minorities and immigrant populations concerning their participation in public life. The third set of issues looks at quests for recognition and the political mobilisation of native ethno-national minorities while the fourth set concentrates specifically on the mobilisation of Muslim organisations in France and Britain and their quest for recognition and acceptance in the public sphere.  

5.1 Rising Intolerance in Political Discourses  
One set of our case studies has analysed political discourses on cultural diversity challenges in a set of five countries: Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Spain. We have focused our analysis on the use of concepts of intolerance, tolerance or acceptances with regard to migrants and minorities participation in public life. The discourses analysed include a variety of positions towards migrants: in some cases, they present overtly anti-immigrant positions (e.g. Greece or Spain) or anti-minority positions (Hungary). In Germany, the discourses focus on the norms that should guide us in accepting cultural or religious diversity in public life. In Denmark, finally, the discourse concentrates on the limits of tolerance discussing how much tolerance should be accorded to those who hold intolerant political beliefs. The individual case studies present how the boundary drawing activity is realized through political and public discourses and how political actors negotiate the limits of acceptance and/or tolerance of cultural diversity.
Despite their differences in terms of experience related to migration and ways of dealing with cultural diversity, all countries under study have experienced important debates about migration and native minorities who are increasingly presented as a problem in terms of tolerance. All five countries have seen the radical right gaining position in the political life. But the weight of these groups in the political landscape as well as in national and local controversies is very different from one country to another. While far right organizations are represented in Parliament in Greece, Denmark and Hungary, extra-parliamentary radical groups and parties manage to influence mainstream politics in Spain and Germany. To understand the dissemination of intolerant discourses in the countries under analysis, the relationship between extreme-right’s overtly anti-immigrant discourse and mainstream politics and parties is determinant. The radical right alone cannot reconfigure the boundaries of toleration. Discourses and debates which intend to define or redefine what can or cannot be tolerated as regards to cultural and religious diversity are effective when they become central in the public arena. In all the controversies and events under examination in the country cases, the discourses effectively succeeded in making tolerance towards migration and native minorities a mainstream concern and subject of contentious expressions. This means that the participation of mainstream political actors as well as mainstream media is crucial to transform isolated expressions of intolerance into a central society debate able to change effectively the limits of tolerance in the society. The national case-studies have explored the process through which discourse on tolerance/intolerance towards cultural diversity has been mainstreamed.

Putting our findings in a nutshell, the objects of toleration or intolerance vary in function of the cases. Three interpretive frames are dominant in all the countries analysed. The frame in which legality (legal status of the migrant or law abiding behaviour of the migrant or minority in general) is a precondition for the majority tolerating the migrant/minority. A second dominant frame is the one that we call ‘law and order’ or security frame, which emphasises that public order must be upheld before any discussion on tolerance of cultural diversity can be made. Last but not least, the third frame identified in all five case studies was that of culture and identity: is this specific type of cultural or religious difference compatible with “our” national culture and “our” national identity (i.e. of the national majority)? When the answer is positive, tolerance or even acceptance can be granted. In most cases, the answer is negative because the minority or immigrant cultural or religion is alien to that of the national majority. In these circumstances, the answers put forward in the political discourse are that only certain kinds of cultural or religious beliefs, those most akin to those of the majority, can be accepted or even tolerated. This culture and identity frame comes also under a liberal guise in cases like Denmark, Germany or Greece, where it is argued that tolerance cannot be granted to those who hold intolerant beliefs, the subtext being that these are the Muslims who are seen as not upholding the principle of gender equality for instance.

Although much of the content of the discourses on tolerance is common to several cases, the discussion on the limits of tolerance in the different country cases is closely linked to the national context, the culture, the history of migration and the definition of citizenship in each country. Despite these national variations and contextualisations, one common feature of all cases is the tendency in political debates to depoliticize tolerance. To put it more bluntly, intolerance towards cultural or religious diversity is considered to go beyond left and right wing ideologies and beyond alternative conceptions of a good life. There is a presumption that the core values upheld in society are common and uncontested and hence the minorities and migrants who put these under question cannot be tolerated, because they attack our fundamental values. In this way, any discussion on what should not be tolerated or what can be tolerated or should be accepted is stiffened and actually often muted.
5.2 Local and national policies of exclusion

The second set of case studies looks at national and local policies of integration or indeed exclusion of migrants or minorities in four different countries, as well as the interplay between the national and local level in: Bulgaria, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands. In response to restrictions introduced or reinforced at national level, local contexts react in different ways. Local policies generally have a significant degree of autonomy and often seek to compensate for the limitations and shortcomings of national policies. In the Netherlands some aldermen and mayors of the Green Party protested against the restrictive national policies, showing a more inclusive approach. In Northern Italy, meanwhile, several mayors of the Northern League Party (and some of other centre right parties, as the People for Liberties Party – Popolo della libertà) adopted more restrictive policies than the national level. The same occurred in Ireland, where the Garda Reserve (a voluntary unpaid body drawn from the local community to augment public services) did not accommodate the request of a Sikh man to wear his turban at work, thereby resisting the more inclusive national approach and legislation. The discrepancy between national and local policies is less evident in the case of Bulgaria, where the restrictive policies enacted at national level are sustained at local level.

Restrictive national policies towards the Bulgarian Turkish minority gained popularity at local level for two main reasons. Firstly, there is widespread resentment in Bulgaria towards the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), a party accused of exploiting ‘election tourism’ (taking advantage of dual citizenship rights). While many Turks and Muslim Bulgarians regard the MRF as their legitimate political representative, resentment over the MRF has produced a negative attitude towards Bulgarian Turks in general. Secondly, the perception of Bulgarian Turks as aliens, as people who threaten the national identity, manifests itself at local level, in everyday interactions. The local level, therefore, accepts and shares the intolerant approach of the national level.

Numerous municipalities in northern Italy have gone beyond national restrictions to take a far tougher approach toward third country nationals. These localities include not only small towns such as Tradate, Coccagno, Montichiari and Ospitaletto but also large cities such as Milan, Bergamo, Brescia. They have introduced stricter measures that limit immigrants’ rights indirectly or directly and promote their exclusion. In most cases these local policies have been introduced with the declared intent of assuring urban safety and suppressing any behaviour considered annoying, indecent or ill mannered (e.g. begging, signposting in foreign languages and praying in rooms which are not specifically designed for this purpose).

Even though the stated purpose is to protect general interests, the policies actually favour immigrants’ exclusion. They hinder migrants from accessing certain services or benefits normally accorded to residents and citizens alike. Nevertheless, the reasons for taking these steps are often well argued and can appear reasonable to the average local citizen. They play upon the interests and rights of natives, intervening in issues that affect the daily life of people and their lives in the local community: they respond to the demand for security and social order (e.g. banning the construction of mosques), they regulate access to social benefits and welfare provisions (e.g. excluding immigrants from ‘bonuses for new babies’), and finally, they are useful tools for defending the Italian identity, history and culture (e.g. banning the opening of kebab shops in city centres).

A good example of inclusive local policies is provided by the Netherlands. In September 2006 local aldermen and mayors of the Green Party (GroenLinks) by-passed the restrictive national guidelines about asylum seekers and irregular migrants, offering them facilities and accommodation, organizing
demonstrations and writing a manifesto in favour of inclusion. These city governments were convinced that people who had lived in the Netherlands for a long time and are well integrated should not be expelled for administrative reasons. Even though the legal status of these persons may not have been regularized, their supporters feel that long-term asylum seekers whose case is eventually rejected should not be expelled to their countries of origin (which they may not remember).

Local authorities have not been alone in mobilising on behalf of asylum seekers, refugees and undocumented migrants in the Netherlands. Several NGOs have joined in contesting the asylum policy of the national government, notably VON, LOS, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Several public demonstrations of support for refugees have been organized at the local level, the largest of which (in November 2006) involved 5,000 people.

A particular case in Ireland has shown that there can be a gap between principles and implementation. Although these restrictive instances are isolated (see example below) they generally show a gap between good intentions and actual practices. Ireland’s national policies are quite inclusive, compared to other European countries. The citizenship law is one of the least restrictive in Europe and in the political arena, anti-immigrant parties do not exist. In contrast with this, claims for recognition on the part of minorities have sometimes not been accommodated; instead, the approach has been that of defending the national identity and maintaining sovereignty.

The main example of this is the case of the Sikh man who applied to join the Garda (Police) Reserve in 2007. Even though minorities were invited by the Garda Reserve to apply, when the man was commissioned he was told that he would not be allowed to wear his turban. The Garda explicitly denied that the turban ban was based on race or religion, but claimed that was based on the imperative to provide an impartial police service, requiring a standard uniform. The implicit argument is that the Garda officers represent the State, i.e. the secular Irish Republic, for this reason veils or turbans are not allowed. The man refused to accept this, and did not take up his post. The issue sparked a significant media and political debate, involving journalists, politicians, NGOs and Sikh communities. The case of the Sikh man is a clear example of the difficulty of recognizing and respecting minorities’ claims, beyond the declared inclusive approach. It also shows that while Ireland is inclusive in principle, it has some problems in practice.

Our studies here have shown that civil society actors react to the national and/or local policies of exclusion in different ways. Factors affecting their involvement include the extent of their own power and visibility as well as structural factors. Churches and religious or humanistic NGOs involved with charity are particularly active in the Netherlands (e.g. INLIA, The Humanistic Alliance) and Italy (e.g. Caritas). NGOs involved with human rights have participated in protests in the Netherlands (e.g. Amnesty International, Defence for Children), while trade unions have protested in Italy, and volunteer lawyers who joined the Pro Bono Lawyers Association (an association promoted by Caritas) have been particularly active in northern Italy, contesting the local policies of exclusion in court. In the Netherlands and Italy non governmental organisations led by native Dutch or Italians are very active and operate on behalf of immigrants. They defend human rights, fight against discrimination, support vulnerable people and promote their inclusion. Some of these actors have expertise in legal issues and actively defend migrants’ rights in court. By contrast, immigrant representatives in Ireland intervene in the public arena. They have little power to influence the policies, but they can intervene and publicly express their opinion. The Irish Sikh Council, for example, is usually engaged in Irish public events, collaborates with several Irish institutions and acts as an advocacy group in disputes. Bulgarian civil society actors show very low levels of engagement against such restrictive and intolerant national policies. In some cases they actually support such policies. The
lack of action is due to many factors: misgivings about Bulgarian Turks allegedly engaging in ‘election tourism’, a strong sense of national identity and the perception that minorities are radically different (culturally, religiously, and ethnically). Bulgaria’s civil society actors feel threatened by the diversity of minorities and react by accepting and sharing the national restrictive policies.

5.3 Quests for recognition by native minorities: the cases of Sámis, Silesians, Hungarians and Circassians

Minorities are often perceived by nation-states as a challenge to their national and cultural security. This explains why far-reaching efforts to protect minorities are generally initiated at international level. Those efforts can be effective, however, only to the degree that nation-states are committed to implementing them. In the European Union (and elsewhere) there are two competing views about how cultural diversity should be managed. On the one hand, ‘unity in diversity’, regards all ethnic groups and cultures as equals, entitled to their own representative institutions and deserving of state recognition. On the other, ‘unity-over-diversity’, holds that individuals should not be granted group-specific rights, as that would conflict with a (liberal) state’s ideal of impartiality and neutrality. The latter view places individual civil rights above the principles of group-centred multiculturalism.

The implications of these competing views are manifested in the cultural diversity management practices of four European countries: Poland, Romania, Sweden and Turkey. Illustrative examples can be drawn from Poland’s response to Silesian minority claims, Romania’s response to Hungarian minority claims, Sweden’s response to Sámi minority claims and Turkey’s response to Circassian diasporic claims.

Closer examination of these cases provides valuable insights into Europe’s challenge in accommodating native minorities and their claims for political recognition. The case studies suggest that benefits could be gained by policymakers openly discussing the fact that their nation is composed of different ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Social cohesion might also be advanced if policymakers recognized the right to ‘difference’ and changed educational curricula to highlight ways that minority cultures enrich a nation.

Before examining these dimensions, we consider it is useful to include some brief descriptions of these minorities in order to provide the background against which they have expressed their claims:

The Sámi people constitute one of the world’s least numerous native peoples, with around 70,000 individuals living in Sápmi, covering parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland and Russia. About 20,000 Sámi live in Sweden. Their minority status is recognized in Sweden through the existence of the Sámi Parliament that has both political and administrative functions. They are also granted special language and educational rights through Sweden’s ratification of the European framework conventions concerning the rights of national minorities. Members of the Sámi people are granted the right to communicate in their own language with courts and other important state authorities in the northern parts of Sweden where the bulk of the Sámi population lives. Sámis have been fighting for the following claims: to maintain the Sámi culture and language; to foster unity among the different sub-groups of the Sami population; and to defend the interests of the Sami hunting, fishing and reindeer industry in Sweden.

Turning to the Romanian case, the country’s population is composed of mostly ethnic Romanians (88.6 percent) and 12 officially recognised minority groups, among which the largest are Hungarians (6.5 percent) and the Roma (1.7 percent). Hungarians constitute the largest officially recognized national minority in Romania. They have been granted specific rights with regard to their political representation at both local and national levels. After World War II, Hungarians living in Communist Romania hoped that they could achieve a high degree of political autonomy. In 1952, during the Soviet Union era, Romania
created the Hungarian Autonomous Region. However, this autonomous region was dismantled in 1968 as a result of an administrative/territorial reorganization.

After Bucharest abandoned Moscow’s policy favourable to minorities, Hungarians became ‘cohabitant nationalities’ or ‘Hungarian-speaking Romanians’. Although Hungarian leaders continued to feature in the Romanian Communist party leadership until the fall of Communism, this did not spare Romanian citizens of Hungarian nationality from persecution. The Ceausescu governments tried to force Hungarians to assimilate through a number of measures. Hungarian schools were closed and people graduating from University were mandatorily assigned to other regions. The overall ethnic composition of the population inhabiting Transylvania in Romania was changed because of internal migration due to the industrialisation process. At present, the Hungarians are actively claiming for collective rights, including cultural autonomy and autonomy for Szekler Land (which has been a territory of historical contest between Romanians and Hungarians).

The Polish case is equally interesting. According to the 2011 National Census, there are more than 800,000 Silesians in Poland (in a total population of 38.4 million). Silesia is a borderland region, and the Silesians attempted to create an independent polity immediately after World War II. They declared their autonomy during the interwar period. Ethnographically speaking, Silesia was a trilingual and prevailingly Catholic region. German was used in secular public spaces such as schools, offices, and business, while Polish was the language of religion. In everyday life and in their private spaces, Silesians usually used their own dialect, which constitutes a Slavic language permeated with many German words and often structured according to the German grammar.

Living near the Polish-German border, Silesians often experienced harsh policies of Polonisation and Germanisation, especially after World War I. Silesians today are not recognized as an official minority by the Polish state. They have often been perceived as traitors and collaborators by the Polish nationalists. Silesians have become more outspoken during Poland’s European integration process. The Polish national majority and state institutions have considered Silesians as a centrifugal force threatening the unity and security of the country.

Turkey includes around 2.5 million people of Circassian origin (the country’s total population is just under 80 million). They are a diverse minority, composed of numerous sub-groups such as the Adygei, the Kabartay, the Abkhazians, the Ubikh and the Chechens. They hail from different republics of the North Caucasus. Remarkably, the linkages between these sub-groups and their homelands have increased since the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Being subject to a long period of structural, political and social-economic exclusion, Circassians became outspoken after the EU’s Helsinki Summit in December 1999 when Turkey was granted ‘candidate’ status for joining the Union. However, their vocal political participation was interrupted after 2005 when Turkey’s Europeanization process become focused on nationalist tensions between the Turkish majority and the Kurdish minority. Since the start of EU accession negotiations in 2005, Turkish nationalism has become a hegemonic discourse effectively silencing minorities, and the country has entered a phase of pronounced Euro-scepticism.

As officially recognized minorities, the Sámis in Sweden and Hungarians in Romania have local and national parliamentary facilities to present their claims such as the quest for cultural autonomy and linguistic rights. The situation is very different for Silesians in Poland and Circassians in Turkey. Lacking their own political institutions, they organise in civic, cultural and folkloric associations to present their claims to the state.

The European integration process, transnational networks and the internet are strategically important for Silesians and Circassians. Both are raising their claims in the public space to create strong communities of...
sentiments. By means of modern technologies of communication like the internet, the Silesians want to create an awareness among their compatriots living in Germany and elsewhere. The Circassians, meanwhile, want to obtain the support of the remote diasporic communities of Circassian origin on matters related to the democratic consolidation of Turkey. Unlike the Circassians, the Silesians are striving for full educational and linguistic autonomy; and they are inclined to generate political movements aimed at achieving it. Circassians, on the other hand, are simply asking for equal treatment in everyday life, and for correction of various stereotypes generated by the Turkish majority society about them.

The case studies reveal three dynamics with respect to mobilizing and gaining recognition for minority claims: First, where a minority is not tolerated, it mobilizes in search of tolerance and/or acceptance. The Circassians fit into this category as they are in search of recognition and respect by the state. Second, where a minority is socially and culturally accepted, it mobilizes in a quest for political recognition and the right to self-determination or incorporation into the institutions. The Silesians fit into this category as they are in search of political recognition. Third, where a minority is already institutionally recognized and respected, it mobilizes with the goal of ending socio-economic discrimination or halting the deterioration of their situation. The Sámis and the Hungarians fit into this category as they are officially recognized but still subject to discrimination and intolerance. It is important to note that a minority’s political integration does not necessarily mean that it does not face discrimination in society.

The Swedish case study reveals that Sámis have so far gained a full-fledged right to political representation in both national and local levels. However, they are still far from experiencing an egalitarian treatment by the state, the media and society as a whole. They are still being stereotypically represented as backwards, irresponsible and too attached to their traditions. Public discourse presents Sámis as in need of ‘parental authority’ They are portrayed as a community dependant on ‘benevolent tolerance’ by the Swedish state in order to participate in Swedish politics. In general, they are seen to be culturally ‘unfit’ for Swedish political life.

Silesians in Poland, Hungarians in Romania, and Circassians in Turkey face similar problems when they raise claims regarding their representation in mainstream political and media discourse. They are commonly portrayed as being corseted by tradition and unfit for national politics.

In addition, Poland, Romania and Turkey resist the claims of their respective minorities for cultural autonomy because they feel this is ‘dangerous’ for the nation. They define the Polish, Romanian and Turkish nation as culturally and ethnically homogenous. Hence, they refuse to recognise the need for cultural (and to some degree political) autonomy that their minorities are striving for. Rather than perceiving the claims raised by ethno-cultural minorities as a quest for justice and equality, Poland, Romania and Turkey perceive them as a challenge to national unity. This mind-set derives in part from historical encounters by the majority with former neighbouring colonial powers. Hungarian claims in Romania and Silesian claims in Poland are partly perceived by the state as acts of secessionism and irredentism. They are considered to be the continuation of the historical conflicts between Germany and Poland on the one hand, and Hungary and Romania on the other hand. Thus, minority claims are characterised as issues of ‘national security’ and are rejected.

The research indicates that Silesian and Circassian claims have become more outspoken in line with efforts to integrate Poland and Turkey into Europe. The EU is certainly perceived as an anchor on the part of these communities, helping them to raise their cultural and political claims through democratic forms of participation in politics. This has also been the case for other segments of Polish and Turkish society, at least in the beginning of the European integration process. Eager to invest in their Europeanization, both countries made some effort to come to terms with their illiberal past.
Technological innovations such as the internet make it easier now for the dissemination of claims in and across the national boundaries. Silesians and Circassians efficiently use these tools in order to make their voices heard in the transnational space. The efforts are aimed at impacting the decision-making processes of the respective states. Enabled by technology, transnational networks seem to be a driving force for minorities that have not yet gained official recognition by their respective states. Organized through the internet and various ethno-cultural associations, these networks help Silesians and the Circassians cope with the hegemony of the nation-states in which they are residing.

There are two competing approaches to diversity management in European countries: Unity in diversity, notably a multiculturalist approach reflecting a republican perspective. It recognizes ethno-cultural, linguistic, national and religious differences of minorities; and unity over diversity, notably an assimilationist approach reflecting a ‘difference-blind’ perspective. It seems the EU is going to continue witnessing a competition between these two models, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages for minority communities. It is not easy to predict which model will prevail. This much, however, is certain: Europe’s democratic consolidation depends on the capacity of states to interpret minority claims as a quest for justice and fairness, and NOT as a challenge to national security. The European process often works in the interest of those minority groups that are repressed by their respective nation-states. The EU is often embraced by such minorities as a political anchor. Hence, it may be expected that such minorities will be repressed in times of social and political turmoil when the EU is in crisis.

5.4 Minority Mobilisations in France and the United Kingdom: the Case of Muslim Organisations

The European Convention of Human Rights provides each European citizen with the right to be politically represented. Exercising this right, however, can be difficult for minority citizens with an immigrant background. The problem is illustrated by the experience of minority citizens in France and the United Kingdom, both European Union Member States with lengthy histories of immigration. In these two countries the interests of minorities are often marginalized. In France and the UK, minority citizens with an immigrant background are frequently obstructed from exercising their right to political representation. The driving force behind this obstruction in both countries is stigmatization.

Stigmatization works differently in France and the UK, reflecting different attitudes towards minority participation and different political structures. The UK is often seen to espouse a ‘pluralist model’ that embraces multiculturalism and the representation of multiple groups. Ethnic and religious backgrounds are recognized parts of civic identity, and ethno-religious interests are generally seen as legitimate reasons for mobilization. In principle, the British framework allows for the political representation of ‘differences’. France, on the other hand, strives for integrationism. There is a belief in a single French identity that all citizens can relate to. The state confines ethno-religious practices to private life and only publicly acknowledges concerns that affect the general population. As stated in Article 1 of the 1958 French Constitution, France ‘shall ensure the equality of all citizens before the law regardless of their origin’, which has generally been understood as an invalidation of any mobilization based on ethnic or religious affiliations.

These differing approaches have shaped the manner in which minorities interact with the political system. In both countries, complete access to political participation is contingent upon obtaining citizenship. In France, 40 percent of the foreign-born population currently holds citizenship whereas in the UK, 65 percent of the foreign-born population holds citizenship rights. This higher percentage results from the
special access to citizenship rights that were given to arrivals from former colonies (India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean). This accounts for why Britain currently has one of the largest ethnic minority populations with citizenship titles and rights to vote in Europe.

Differences are also apparent in the number of ethnic minority representatives, with the UK having more political representatives with ethnic minority backgrounds than France. The House of Commons (the UK’s lower house of parliament) has 27 members with ethnic minority backgrounds (representing 4 percent of the total) while the House of Lords has 48 members (5 percent). At local government level, roughly 3-4 percent of councilors in the UK have an ethnic minority background. In France, on the other hand, the current National Assembly has only 10 members with such a background, accounting for just 1.8 percent of the total.

Minority representatives in France and the UK are mainly left wing. All minority deputies in the French National Assembly belong to the Socialist Party. As for British minority MPs, most of them are Labour MPs although the number of Conservative MPs is increasing. Historically, there was a clear alignment of interests between Labour and immigrant groups, and the Labour Party became the near-exclusive entry point for ethnic minority citizens into politics well into the 1980s.

Both France and the UK have dealt with demands from minorities in similar ways, dismissing them as only beneficial to minorities. For example, although the British Labour Party is often cited as a channel for ethnic minority participation, it does not necessarily welcome the assertion of minority identities and interests. Minority demands have often been rejected on the grounds that they are ‘sectarian’ and defy Labour’s claim to address a wider constituency. Many politicians with minority backgrounds who have fought for minority-related claims have been accused of having ‘separatist’ agendas and have had burdens put on them to prove the opposite. This has led to a situation in which Muslim actors, such as the Muslim Council of Britain, now feel the need to emphasize that their main goal is ‘to work for the common good’ and not to disrupt social unity.

Similarly, ‘sectarianism’ is used in France to dismiss claims from ethnic and religious groups. These groups are seen as threats to unity, and their demands are often ignored because of the underlying assumption that minority interests are exclusively beneficial to minority groups and not applicable to the general population.

In order to avoid being seen as sectarian, immigrant-based organizations adapt their demands in ways that merge with national values such as laïcité (secularism and neutrality). During the demonstration against the ‘Official Debate on Laïcité’ on 2 April 2011, Muslim-based associations argued that the state’s use of laïcité was a distortion of its original meaning and not a protection of religious freedom. Associations made their claims against discrimination by referring themselves to this Republican value rather than opposing it. This is an example for how minorities adjust their claims when they are constantly assumed to be threatening or sectarian.

Stigmatization is a fundamental reason why minorities cannot equally exercise their right to political representation. When Muslim actors are negatively labelled and seen to fall outside of what is politically acceptable, they struggle to get their demands through to political channels.

In the UK, demands from Muslims are generally seen as exceptional, homogeneous, reactive, and impossible to accommodate. This was evident in the 2010 British General Election. First, during the election British-Muslim constituents and Muslim advocacy groups tended to be homogenized. Internal divisions such as around local interests, gender, and class were not acknowledged. As a result of this focus, British Muslim constituents felt the need to abjure their ethnicities in order to obtain more encompassing political identities. While other religious affiliations rarely consume a person’s entire political
identity, this was seen to be the case with Islam. Some organizations felt that this homogenization was a symptom of the stigmatization of British-Muslims; they were not being recognized as common citizens but distinctly as Muslim and separate. Other organizations felt constrained in expressing shared concerns without needing to highlight their religious identities. In both scenarios, organizations contested stigmatizing and constraining ways in which Muslims were perceived.

Second, demands from Muslims were mostly seen as reactive and fuelled by grievances. Muslims were not seen to have the power to make and enforce decisions, but just to be in positions to react. Considering Muslim agency as purely reactive was a form of stigmatization.

Thirdly, mainstream actors often viewed the demands of Muslims as toxic and refused to associate themselves with Muslim actors. During the election, some Muslim-based organizations adapted their strategies to respond to this perceived ‘toxicity’. Such caution-and-avoidance strategies underline a weak relationship between Muslims and mainstream political parties.

Stigmatization in France is also prevalent, even though diversity is hidden underneath a propagation of invisibility that tends to conceal the full effect of discrimination. Religious diversity is managed under laïcité, a French term denoting secularism and neutrality. It is a Republican principle that separates the state and the Catholic Church, confining religion to the private sphere. Over the past two decades however, laïcité has been increasingly used to respond to the perceived growth of religious diversity, and more specifically to Islam. Since the first headscarf affair of 1989 (which initially linked laïcité with the restriction of Muslim expression) the problematic association has grown stronger. In 2011, when the Interior Minister Eric Besson wanted to launch an ‘Official Debate on Islam’, it quickly got relabeled to an ‘Official Debate on Laïcité’. In a context where religion is not openly discussed, laïcité is commonly used as the signifier for a discussion on Islam.

Over the past two decades, non-governmental organizations in France have argued that the laïcité principle has been used to restrict Muslim practices instead of protecting religious equality. Immigrant and Muslim organizations have rallied in ‘defense of laïcité’ and against the state’s distorted use of the principle. Human rights associations, feminist groups and other majority organizations have also shifted their approach. Instead of defending laïcité, they have argued against its systematic exploitation to pass laws restricting Islamic practices stigmatize Islam in general. The Islamic veil controversy is a case in point. While the veil was initially interpreted as a sign of religious extremism and gender discrimination, many human rights associations and feminist groups have now recognized the inherent stigmatization in those views.

The alleged exceptionality of Muslim identity has produced obstacles for Muslim activists. In response to this, they strive to demonstrate the normality of their claim and ask to be treated as equal. In the UK, Muslim activists ask to be treated as any other minority. They want to be seen as ‘normal’ political actors with broad interests and motives that are not exclusively Muslim. They feel that being seen as exceptionally different places them outside the norm. Their requests for normalization are requests to be admitted as equal into British political life.

In France, many Muslim-based activists contend that Islam should be treated like any other minority religion instead of being portrayed as alien to French values. They argue that it should be respected as a part of religious diversity, much like Protestantism and Judaism is. They are demanding not to be excluded from the boundaries of French normativity.

By reclaiming laïcité and arguing that the state distorts its meaning, Muslim-based activists in France show that politicians and members of the majority population do not have a monopoly on the right to determine the meaning of Republican values.
The two case studies suggest two main conclusions: the obstacles faced by Muslim activists result from the alleged exceptionality of their identities and claims and can be considered as forms of stigmatisation, intolerance and discrimination. In both cases, there is a need to raise awareness regarding this intolerance and to highlight the issue of religious discrimination in political activities. Secondly, the findings stress the fact that the wish for a certain normalization of Muslim claims and identities is evident in both case studies.

6. Concluding Remarks

Summarising in a nutshell the findings of our project, as we have already highlighted in the Introduction, the following key messages are relevant for researchers, policy makers and civil society actors in Europe. While our project focused on the concept of tolerance and the practice of toleration in the various meanings and guises that this is presented in the 15 countries studied, a plurality of concepts and terms is used to speak of possible ways of dealing with cultural diversity and the challenges that it raises in Europe today. These include terms such as integration, accommodation, insertion, assimilation, equality, respect, recognition, acceptance. These terms vary in their meanings and uses from one country to another and from one language to another. They usually are embedded in related conceptions of the nation that can be based on ethnic and cultural elements or emphasise a common civic culture and a common territory. In addition, conceptions of the nation may emphasise the nation’s unity and homogeneity, or may envisage internal cultural diversity and the existence of minority groups and/or even minority nations within a multinational state. Conceptions of citizenship and more open or restrictive citizenship acquisition policies and histories of emigration and immigration are also important factors that inform the debates and the concepts used in each country to speak about cultural diversity and the way to accommodate (or indeed reject) minority groups’ and immigrants’ claims.

In relation to these conceptual concerns, the conflation of tolerance and more demanding concepts is both normatively problematic and analytically unhelpful. While sympathetic to the strategy of developing a more demanding normative vocabulary, we believe that there is a risk of conceptual confusion here, one result of which is that we may lose the normative value of toleration.

The forbearance of toleration is of normative and pragmatic value – as many minorities know historically and today – and to disparage toleration because it falls short of, say, respect is politically short-sighted. ‘Gritted-teeth tolerance’ is the most practical solution in many circumstances, and it makes little sense to denounce it where more demanding notions are unavailable. Thus we should view tolerance and acceptance/respect not in a hierarchical relation – i.e. as if accommodation is always better and tolerance a lesser solution – but rather as fit for different purposes.

There are indeed things that we should not tolerate but we should be able to discuss, such as racism and sexism but also more specific issues that have been at the forefront of public debates on cultural or religious diversity such as clitoridectomy, marriage at the age of puberty and/or under duress, polygamy and so on. There are also issues that should be tolerated and hence should not be outlawed but for which it is not necessary that we all come to agreement and afford recognition and substantive equality. We need in other words to be clear about what we do not tolerate, what we tolerate and what we agree to accept, respect and accommodate in public life.

The limitations of tolerance need also to be acknowledge. Tolerance involves power, the power of the majority to suppress the minority. And it also implies non-acceptance or non-respect. To tolerate means to live and let live but it may also mean to look down upon and disapprove. In other words, in some cases tolerance hides inequality and domination. In seeking a form of equality in a context of diversity, we may
prefer a non-evaluative respect for others in which people, especially fellow citizens, have a right (which is not a gift of the powerful) to be included. We need to find ways to agree on those cultural and religious differences for which minority groups may require these more advanced forms of acceptance and find the appropriate forms of institutional accommodation.

In all cases where intolerance, toleration and respect are possibilities, we need to acknowledge that positions are not beyond contestation, that the objects and boundaries of toleration are historically changing, and that there needs be a political concern with the relationship between tolerator and tolerated as it entails the elements of power, authority and domination. This is a particularly urgent task in light of rising intolerance, be it liberal or ethno-nationalist in its arguments, as the common sense character of their arguments make pragmatic solutions for achieving tolerance or acceptance appear less tenable and difficult to achieve.

The case studies undertaken in this project have shown that there are two groups that mostly attract negative attention in the public debate because of their presumed inability to integrate into mainstream European secular, modern, democratic societies. These groups are the Muslims and the Roma. Interestingly, while the Muslims are for their most part a post-immigration minority, the Roma are natives of Europe (or indeed are supposed to have immigrated to Europe from India about a thousand years ago). During the past decade, the fact that Muslims in Europe should largely be seen as European Muslims and particularly also as (for example) French, British, German, Dutch, Swedish, Italian or Spanish natives has gained recognition. As the second generations have been growing in various European countries, Muslims have come to be accepted as an ethnic minority, as citizens that demand certain rights or raise certain claims. The Roma, who have suffered discrimination and exclusion as a native minority, have attracted negative attention during the last years mainly because of their status as intra EU migrants. Their EU citizenship has been overshadowed by the questioning of their right to freely move and establish themselves in other EU member states.

Thus we note that what matters probably is not the migrant or native minority quality of each group but rather the ways in which it is perceived to be culturally, ethnically or religiously diverse and thus puts to the test social cohesion and the dominant norms and practices.

Our project results suggest that the Muslims and the Roma acquire a renewed significance in the post-1989 period in Europe. With the implosion of the Communist regimes and the re-unification of Europe particularly after the 2004 Enlargement, there is a need for new Others against whom to reassert a positive identity for this reconnected and enlarged Europe. Muslims and Roma people offer this convenient Significant Internal Other (Triandafyllidou, 1998; 2001) against which the unity of the European nations can be reasserted and their cultural distinctiveness emphasised. These two Europe-wide minorities present in most EU countries, offer a mirror against which Europe can assert its common values. This is particularly important as these values are relatively universal (peace, human rights, equality, freedom) and hence do not offer a strong emotional basis on which to forge a political community. Thus these Others within offer the necessary outgroup that makes the commonality among Europeans politically and symbolically relevant.

One of the aims of the ACCEPT PLURALISM project has been also to compare tensions arising in different countries by different types of minorities, notably native historical minorities vs. migrant populations, with a view to highlighting common features and possibly common practices and policies for addressing such tensions. In other words, we have aimed at facilitating exchange of good practice and policy learning. Such cases have been identified albeit in a small number of countries as already noted above.
Our studies have also shown that perhaps the form of cultural diversity that presents the highest challenges is that of religious diversity. The question that often concerns politicians, policy makers or also lay people pose is how much – or indeed what kind of – religious diversity can be accommodated in European moderately secular democratic societies. The findings of this project confirm that there are no simple “threshold” answers as to how many immigrants, what percentage of minorities or what kind of claims should be accepted or should not be trespassed. One finding that emerges and that has been highlighted in the 15 European countries studied, is that these countries are only moderately secular. Moreover, the study of different countries and cases shows that not all minorities demand the same type of solutions. Thus, while in some cases special accommodation of their religious or cultural needs are requested, in others they ask to be treated on the basis of equality and secularism, asking however that concessions are made neither for the minority nor for the majority religious faiths. Not only are minority claims of different order in different countries, also the level and type of accommodation that each country can make are different and respond to their specific historical experience.

This suggests that the general principle of equality of treatment for minorities and immigrant groups “translates” into different practices and policies with a view to accommodating national sensitivities without however compromising the principle as such. It is at that point where we see the notion of tolerance as holding particular promise as it guarantees a first step towards non-discrimination and neutralises power inequalities. The question of accepting and accommodating cultural, ethnic and religious diversity comes then as a second step and in line with the history and claims of each minority group or migrant population. However, as if matters were not complicated enough, our study has shown that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between ethnic or religious discrimination on the one hand and socio-economic disadvantage on the other. In the case of Roma populations, the question for alleviating poverty, improving access to basic services (clean water, health services, education for children) and employment appear as a first step of any policy aiming at combating ethnic discrimination and actual segregation of this group. Indeed, in some countries we have found attitudes and practices not only of intolerance but also of segregationist acceptance (arguing that by leaving the Roma to their own devices one respects their way of life and their culture). These are hard to disentangle from socio-economic inequality (poverty, illiteracy, unemployment) and any policy aiming to address the situation needs to tackle both dimensions simultaneously.

Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges play out at local, national and EU levels. Indeed the importance of the local level cannot be over-emphasized. Integration takes place at the local level even if policies are national and guidelines European. Nonetheless, our case studies have shown that sometimes not only integration and accommodation but also of intolerance and exclusion are promoted at the local level by local political groups with the aim of gaining votes by blaming immigrants for urban decay, insufficient welfare resources or simply the economic crisis. Especially in the case of the Roma, local authorities and actors actually more often than not hamper national policy efforts for integration and accommodation. In fact despite repeated decrees and circulars and policy programmes promoting the integration of Roma children in mainstream schools, local authorities and parents associations strongly resist such desegregation efforts.

Alongside the local level, the national level remains most important for addressing cultural diversity challenges and proposing solutions. Indeed the relevant civil society actors, experts, politicians and policy makers see the national authorities and the national legislation as the most important arena where such claims are addressed. The EU offers opportunities for networking for civil society actors and public administration, funding and an additional political arena for mobilization. Minority organisations seize the opportunity of framing their claims for equality and justice in relation to “European standards” and
European values counteracting “national security” discourses.

Our project has also clearly suggested the need not only for exchanging good practices and policy learning among countries and between the wider fields of migrant and native minority integration policies. It has also clearly pointed to the need for effective monitoring and assessment on how each policy measure, targeted programme or grassroots initiative contributes to a more tolerant and more cohesive society. The project has thus created the Tolerance Indicators Toolkit, a set of indicators that can be applied in specific policy areas (mainly in school life and in politics) on different countries, with regard to specific periods of time and/or with regard to specific issues, providing an overview of how a country is doing in that specific field, by comparison to other states, or by comparison to itself in the past. The details on this tool are given in the following section which outlines the impact of the project.

Potential Impact:

7. IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

ACCEPT PLURALISM has:

• generated up to date knowledge on migrants and minorities in 16 European countries;
• published comparable insights and findings on tolerance in 15 European countries;
• produced a wide range of publications targeting very different audiences (policy, practitioners and academics) mainly in the English language so that they are easily accessible by a wide audience, but also in some national languages;
• codified new knowledge on the ways in which cultural pluralism and tolerance are expressed and has advanced the normative debate on tolerance, intolerance and the accommodation of cultural pluralism in different democratic contexts;
• ‘translated’ this codified new knowledge and real-life best practices into a practical Handbook on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe which can be used for training purposes for teachers in secondary education and by high-school and undergraduate students;
• created a set of ‘Tolerance Indicators’ focusing on the accommodation and management of diversity in school life and political life which can be used by policy makers inter alia for self-monitoring, comparative evaluation, benchmarking;
• mobilised and created a network of experts, academics, young scholars, civil society actors, and practitioners across 16 European countries but also far beyond through synergies and common workshops and events that have been organised around the themes of tolerance, the management of diversity in school life and the accommodation of political claims of minority groups;
• offered the opportunity to young scholars and researchers to kick-start their academic careers in the European Research Area;
• forged links between the research and academic work on tolerance and cultural pluralism and organisations that practically manage and work on these issues in the scope of their every day work (notably, Banlieues d’Europe and CCME). These links offer the opportunity to ground academic research with real-life situations while at the same time to facilitate access to new research and conceptual paradigms which may be useful to experts and practitioners in their work;
• actively used social media tools in order to disseminate research findings, trigger debates on current developments related to the challenges of cultural pluralism across Europe and globally;
• established connections with related programmes and projects that will enable the scope of the work undertaken in the context of this project to continue far beyond the administrative end of the project.
In the section that follows we aim to illustrate some of these points listed above:

7.1 Publications

First, the following publications in particular deserve a special note because of the themes they address and also because of the format in which new knowledge and insight generated by the work undertaken in this project has been published. Our aim has been to not only explore challenges related to the accommodation of cultural pluralism in school life and political life in different European democratic contexts. We have also aimed at presenting these findings in ways and in formats that are accessible, useful and insightful to different sets of readers/users:

The Comparative Report of the project’s research findings (WP1)
This comparative report presents and discusses the main ethnic, cultural and religious diversity challenges that Europe is facing today through surveying 15 European countries: Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.

For each country, we have identified the minority groups or migrant populations that pose the most important ethnic or religious diversity challenges. The report concentrates in particular on challenges that have a currency across several EU countries. It discusses the ways in which different countries have dealt with similar diversity dilemmas and identifies appropriate courses of action for the future.

Moreover, this report categorises the different European countries based on their migration experience, citizenship concept, and predominantly native or migrant minorities into three groups (old hosts, new hosts and countries in transition). Finally, the comparative analysis led to the identification of three European Minorities: ‘Black’ people, Muslims and Roma which pose the most significant diversity challenges across Europe today. These three groups are internally very diverse, coming from different countries, with different immigration or settlement histories and enjoying different statuses in their countries of residence. They are identified here as three populations that raise major cultural, ethnic and religious diversity challenges and that are subject to the most unequal treatment in the 15 European countries under study, including widespread discrimination in the labour market, in education, housing, and in social life in general. The comparative analysis in this report also clarifies the sort of negative stereotyping and ethnic/racial prejudice these groups experience: Muslims face predominantly religious racism (even though in France for instance ethnicity (for instance Moroccan) and religion (Muslim) are embraced in one term: ‘maghrebin’) while ‘black’ people and Roma are faced with biological and culturalist racism that refers to their physical features, creating a link between their ethnic descent and their way of life.

Addressing Tolerance and Diversity Discourses in Europe: A Comparative Overview of 16 European countries, Edited by Ricard Zapata-Barrero and Anna Triandafyllidou, Barcelona: CIDOB (2012)
In recent times, the accommodation of ethnic and religious minorities and their special needs or claims has been an important concern for the European Union. In some countries challenges relate more to immigrant groups while in others they refer to native minorities. This book studies 16 European countries: 15 Member States: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands,
Poland, Romania, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and one associated country: Turkey.
The e-book discusses the ways in which different states have dealt with similar diversity dilemmas. It considers what tolerance means in different countries and under different circumstances. It also casts light to the relationship among concepts such as tolerance, acceptance, respect, pluralism, integration or assimilation and questions which concepts provide an appropriate base for policy making.

The e-book, published by CIDOB, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, is available online at: http://www.cidob.org/en/publicaciones/monografias/monografias/discursos_sobre_tolerancia_y_diversidad_en_europa_panoramica_comparativa_de_16_paises_europeos

According to data provided by Google Analytics, the e-book has been downloaded 1,098 times by users across Europe but also from North and South America countries, including Mexico, Columbia, Chile, Canada, Ecuador and the USA.

15 Country Synthesis (Comprehensive Reports) (WP5)
These comprehensive country reports offer a synthesis of the main diversity related challenges that are particular to 15 European countries. Each report includes tables and easily accessible and usable information on the main characteristics of diversity that different groups pose, as well as information on their size and composition. The reports also discuss the challenges these minority or migrant groups raise for the majority and how these have been addressed.

The reports can be downloaded from: http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NewKnowledge.aspx

Handbook on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe
This Handbook synthesises knowledge and best-practices concerning tolerance and managing cultural diversity in very different settings and contexts across Europe and presents it in simple, real and very straightforward ways. It aims at being easily accessible and above all useful to a wide, non-specialist readership.

More specifically, it is geared toward teacher-trainers, as this Handbook is intended primarily for use in programmes that prepare teachers to serve in high schools in Europe. While it could be beneficial for teachers of any subject, the Handbook may be most useful to those who are preparing to deliver courses on European civics and citizenship education. Furthermore, the Handbook’s targeted readers are high school students and undergraduate University students between 17 and 23 years of age.

This Handbook seeks to inform and educate youth, to help them understand diversity and talk about it using a common set of terms. It aims to give young people the tools to resolve dilemmas that they may face in their everyday lives and in the future, and talk about it using a common set of terms.

This Handbook contributes to clarifying terms commonly used to talk about diversity such as nationality, national identity or citizenship but also concepts such as integration, multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. Secondly, the Handbook introduces the concepts and phenomena underpinning fear of diversity. Finally, the Handbook proposes answers to the challenges of ethnic and religious diversity in everyday life in Europe.

This Handbook seeks both to clarify important terms associated with its subject matter and to clearly articulate the principles that should guide democratic life in European societies. It includes real examples and descriptions of cases where diversity was accommodated in innovative ways; it explores best practices across 14 EU Member States and Turkey; and poses real-life questions aiming at triggering thoughtful debates on racism, integration, assimilation, diversity management, and accommodation of
intercultural differences

It is relevant to note here that the Handbook on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe has been adopted as training material by:

• The International Baccalaureate Programme for its teacher training programme throughout the world;
• The European Academy of Bolzano/Bozen for its Summer School on Human Rights, Minorities and Diversity Management.

Moreover, the Handbook has been translated into Greek and has been used in the following teacher training course in Greece:

• The Educational Project ‘BEST’ (Bringing Europe to School Teachers) coordinated by the University of Piraeus and funded by the Jean Monnet programme ‘Learning the EU at Schools’ (see http://www.unipi.gr/news_files/2012-12-04_ProssklisiAsderaki.pdf ). This training focuses on primary and secondary school teachers and the Handbook was distributed to 140 teachers as additional material during their meeting on 16-17 March 2013.

This is particularly noteworthy in the current conjuncture of racism rising in an alarming manner not only in public discourse, in politics and in everyday life, but especially in schools. Approximately 8% of the school population in Greece have immigrant backgrounds and initiatives aimed at offering a more intercultural/multicultural approach to education have so far been rather limited, as an assimilationist approach has been more dominant. Moreover, since the June 2012 national elections that saw the entry into Parliament of the neo-nazi party Golden Dawn, there has been an outburst of racist discourse and violence across the public sphere, in every day life, in schools and obviously in politics. In this context, all initiatives aimed at engaging in a meaningful dialogue on tolerance and respect for diversity become particularly important in the field of education. Through its practical examples this Handbook offers hands-on and real life examples of how diversity can be managed, what racism is and how it can be addressed.


In “Hard to Accept,” leading political theorists and sociologists offer perspectives on intolerance, tolerance and respect in contemporary Europe. Contributors examine the relevance of these concepts for how societies respond to new formations of ethnic and religious pluralism. They address challenges, such as anxieties about Muslim identity claims and the rise of a new ‘liberal intolerance’. At the same time, they explore the role that perspectives in political theory can play for resolving some of the challenges that appear to make it increasingly ‘hard to accept’.

This academic publication is part of the Palgrave Politics of Identity and Citizenship book series and constitutes an important contribution to the academic discussion on tolerance, acceptance and respect. The ACCEPT PLURALISM project has generated a new conceptual framework on tolerance and acceptance/respect (particularly through the work carried out in WP2 and WP7).

The book “Hard to Accept” is the first academic publication further expanding this conceptual framework and the normative debate on the usefulness of the concept of tolerance both from a theoretical and a practical perspective. More specifically, through the different contributions:

• It is emphasised that toleration is necessary as it protects a minimalist ‘modus vivendi.’ In fact, it may even be, in challenging circumstances, a desirable solution;
Yet it is underlined that there are inherent limitations of tolerance that need to be acknowledged;
In effect, toleration comprises attitudes and reasons that exceed minimalism and contain a drift towards more demanding moral arrangements;
At the same time, while it makes little sense to introduce a hierarchy of classes of acceptance, toleration needs to be backed up by more demanding principles and virtues in order to be a stable and reliable arrangement in practice;
As such, toleration in a context of contemporary cultural diversity cannot simply be a form of benign neglect but requires active policies of equal opportunities and inclusivity;
While the state must lead this implementation of equality, multicultural recognition is a civic idea. This means that the media, intellectuals, employers, trades unions, the churches, neighbourhood associations and so on need to actively participate and engage in discourses and practices of recognition;
Finally, the book also tackles the problematique of the relationship between liberalism and cultural pluralism. In effect, the contributors tackle the challenges raised by liberal tolerance and liberal intolerance discourses and their implications for multiculturalism and the management of cultural pluralism in different democratic contexts.

7.2 The ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators: Creating a Toolkit, Applying Tolerance Indicators and integrating these Indicators in a wider framework

Indicators are/ can be:
• A diagnostic tool for identifying problems and needs;
• An instrumental measures of performance;
• A technique of awareness-raising and public advocacy;
• An instrument of change.

Indicators create valuable, necessary, and quantifiable simplifications that both illuminate key dimensions of a complex problem while simultaneously allowing important comparisons to be made. Indicators are becoming increasingly used for political steering, lobbying on certain regulation and governance choices, for benchmarking and standard setting and also for forming perceptions on state performance on specific policy issues or sectors.
In short, they are about Information but they are also about Intervention. They have the potential to offer constructive interventions in addressing complex problems (such as development, state fragility, poverty, doing business, corruption, democracy, and managing integration of diversity). As regards their information value, indicators have the potential to prompt changes in beliefs about the world, including beliefs about the moral implications of various social outcomes, about relationships between actions and outcomes, and about the beliefs or actions of other actors. By altering the beliefs actors draw upon when deciding how to address social problems, indicators can in turn affect the decision-making process, actions and, eventually, outcomes. Indicators may also be helpful in addressing complex problems as they help frame problems – they make statements about the existence and nature of a problem, as well as about how to measure the problem or aspects of its solution. By identifying factors that contribute to a problem an indicator can also implicitly embrace a specific theory of change – a theory about (i) what causes the problem, (ii) how those causal factors can be overcome, (iii) who the key actors are for the problem to be addressed productively, (iv) what pathways are likely to produce better outcomes, and (v)
what would constitute progress toward solving the problem. Moreover, they have a networking value as they can influence the process of addressing social problems through the social and political engagement they foster. They may contribute to developing new and shared understandings of how to frame problems, learn about causal relationships between actions and outcomes, share information, and cooperate. Indicators can be used to monitor and evaluate the extent of problems and the success of interventions. The can also have a community mobilizing effect, bringing attention to an issue.

Thus, against this background and with these core dimensions in mind, the ACCEPT PLURALISM project created a tool for assessing the levels of intolerance, tolerance and/or acceptance of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity in European societies: The ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators. These are a set of qualitative tolerance indicators that seek to translate into assessment of Low / Medium / High the presence or absence of specific features in a country’s policies, practices and discourses.

The advantages offered by these Indicators:

• The ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators offer relative measures (low / medium / high) that form the basis for a comparative account of tolerance, non-tolerance and acceptance across Europe. The assessment is focused, qualitative and contextually informed and includes not only policy and legislative frameworks but also -to the extent possible- social practices which may go beyond policy arrangements and legal rules;
• They are a tool for assessing whether European societies are becoming more or less tolerant over the last decade. The use of these indicators can provide a snapshot picture, a synchronic evaluation of where each society is positioned on an intolerance / tolerance / acceptance scale. But they can also be used in the future to assess whether a given society is becoming more or less tolerant. Alternatively, they can be applied to assess the same country in the past and consider how it has developed in recent years;
• They can be used for monitoring developments in a specific policy area over time;
• They can be particularly useful as a self-evaluation instrument on the part of policy-makers through comparison with other countries and through monitoring trends in their own. Though the values used by the ACCEPT PLURALISM are qualitative and therefore do not allow a simple (and over-simplified) ranking, they do allow for a comparative outlook which can be more insightful;
• They offer an easily understandable assessment of complex issues to non-experts;
• They provide a link between complex academic research and the need for scientific basis for policy making;
• They can offer a meaningful platform for exchange and discussion between policy makers and civil society consultations on specific challenges that need to be addressed in school life and political life.

The ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators, cover two main areas of public life that are of paramount importance for shaping social equality in a society: school life and politics. In line with the aforementioned country-specific and comparative reports and policy briefs, clusters of Tolerance Indicators (related to a specific issue) have been applied to a set of countries with a view to assessing and comparing levels of intolerance / tolerance / acceptance among countries in particular policy areas. More specifically, the ACCEPT Consortium has assessed levels of intolerance, tolerance and acceptance with regard to minority and immigrant populations in relation to the specific issues outlined below, in the 15 European countries studied. The ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators are applied on the following issues:

• Roma segregation and efforts for de-segregation in schools in Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Poland, and Romania;
• The acknowledgment of cultural diversity and minorities in national curricula in Bulgaria, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Turkey;
• The accommodation of cultural diversity in everyday school life arrangements in Denmark, Sweden, Germany, UK (England), France, Ireland, Poland and Romania;
• The existence of minority religious schools in Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and Sweden;
• Intolerant discourses and practices in political life in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Spain;
• The political mobilization of minorities (native or post-migration) in Bulgaria, Ireland, France and the United Kingdom;
• The tolerance or acceptance of claims raised by native minorities in Bulgaria, Greece, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Turkey;
• The local or national policies of exclusion of native minority or immigrant groups from civic and political life in Bulgaria, Ireland, Netherlands, Greece, Spain and Italy.

All reports on Applying Tolerance Indicators along with in-depth explanations (included in the Annex to the Reports) can be downloaded from: http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/ToleranceIndicatorsToolkit/ToleranceIndicators.aspx

This first set of comparative studies on the ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators shows their usefulness and the wide range of ways and combinations in which these can be used. In order to maximise their potential and ensure their sustainability, we plan to integrate these into the Global Governance by Indicators project at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the EUI. The Global Governance by Indicators project (for further information see http://globalgovernanceprogramme.eui.eu/researchpublications/research-projects/) examines the development, application and impact of indicators, sets of indicators, composite indicators and indices in global governance and global administrative law. It seeks to understand these differently institutionalised governance forms, and investigate questions of democracy and accountability that accompany their deployment in global governance and law.

In effect, the use of indicators in global governance is an urgent contemporary concern, related to fundamental questions of political steering, regulation and governance at global level. Indicators as instruments of global governance not only quantify and simplify empirical phenomena in order to help us to understand complex realities and to quantify measures, they also help us to measure and evaluate many aspects of global governance, be it state action, policy specific developments or international institutions. Composite indicators and indices are applied to describe and measure multi-dimensional concepts (such as sustainable development, governance, human well-being or competitiveness) as well as the performance of states, international or regional organisations and different domains of policy implementation. These measures are therefore often closely connected to policy judgements and prescriptions, and may become a means of benchmarking and standard-setting.

Integrating the ACCEPT PLURALISM Indicators into the Global Governance by Indicators programme will guarantee their sustainability beyond the life-span of the project and offer new avenues and frameworks through which to rethink tolerance, intolerance and how to manage cultural pluralism in different democratic contexts.
7.3 Core themes and issues related to tolerance and cultural pluralism in school life and political life in Europe

ACCEPT PLURALISM has produced: country reports, comparative reports, comparative policy briefs and new knowledge highlights.

These different publications have examined discourses on tolerance in public life from a variety of conceptual and practical perspectives. They have also enabled the ACCEPT Consortium to analyse and explore in depth a number of issues related to school life and political life at the country level. Moreover, they have provided the opportunity for the ACCEPT Consortium to seek common issues and policy challenges across different countries thereby enabling a meaningful comparison on a number of dimensions. These comparisons have offered the platform for evidence-based, policy-relevant conclusions to be drawn.

Though the list that follows is not exhaustive, we would like to highlight the following:

- Roma education in Romania;
- Religious education in Romanian public schools;
- The status of the Hungarian minority in Romania;
- Political participation and representation of native minorities in Romania;
- Tolerance towards Roma in Polish schools;
- The presence of religious symbols in Polish schools;
- The participation of minority groups in Polish political life (with special reference to the Silesian minority);
- The place of religious schools in the Dutch education system;
- Changing ideas on teaching and tolerance in the Dutch education system;
- The debate on asylum seekers in The Netherlands;
- The accommodation of Muslim religious diversity in German public schools;
- Intolerant discourses in the German public sphere (with special reference to the debates raised by Thilo Sarrazin’s book in 2010);
- Issues of segregation and desegregation of Roma in the Hungarian education system and policies relating to their integration;
- The radicalisation of media discourse and the rise of the far right in Hungary;
- The limits of tolerance in Danish school life;
- Liberal intolerance in Danish political life;
- Educational reform in Turkey with special reference to the Alevi-Bektashi community;
- The headscarf issue in Turkish school life;
- The mobilisation of ethno-cultural minorities such as the Circassians and their participation in Turkish political life;
- The accommodation of religious and cultural diversity in the Italian curriculum and everyday school life;
- Faith schools in Italy;
- The pursuit of local policies of exclusion (e.g. restrictive rules for the opening of places of worship, the repression of irregular immigration by reinforcing police controls, welfare assistance ‘bonus’ is only accorded to babies born by Italian citizens, the ban on opening new kebab shops in the city centre, or the fact that immigrants with a low salary cannot register with the Registry office, etc.) in Italy;
- The issue of special funding for Protestant schools in Ireland;
- The hijab issue in Irish schools;
• The challenge posed by the Sikh turban in the Irish Garda police;
• The education of Roma in Bulgaria;
• The accommodation of religious diversity in the Bulgarian education system;
• The political participation and representation of Roma in Bulgarian political life;
• Voting rights accorded to Bulgarian-Turkish dual citizens;
• The implementation of laïcité and tolerance in the French education system;
• The inclusion of the history of immigration in the French national curriculum;
• The mobilisation of Muslim activists seeking equality and non-discrimination in French political life on the basis of claims of laïcité;
• The accommodation of religious diversity in Greek public schools;
• The inclusion/ segregation of Roma students in the Greek education system;
• Issues of tolerance and intolerance of ethnic and religious diversity in Greek public life;
• The political representation of the Sámi people in Swedish political life;
• The establishment of Islamic denominational schools in the Swedish education system;
• The debate on the wearing of the Burqa and Niqab in Swedish schools;
• The accommodation of cultural and religious diversity in Spanish schools;
• The concentration and segregation of immigrant students in Spanish schools, and the role of publically funded private schools;
• The creation and implementation of the ‘Education of citizenship’ course in the Spanish curriculum;
• The backlash of political intolerance in Catalonia (with special reference to the Burqa ban across Catalonia and the anti-Romanian Roma campaign in Lleda);
• The commemoration of ‘Abolition 200’ in the UK;
• The ‘Muslim vote’ in the 2010 national elections and issues of Muslim representation;
• The accommodation of the needs of Muslim pupils in British state schools.

These topics have been identified as core issues in each of the countries as they have raised a set of practical and political challenges. They have also raised a series of powerful debates in the public sphere as to how these claims should be accommodated, how much diversity and what sort of claims ought to be accommodated, and to what extent some might be in conflict with the majority norms or dominant understandings and perceptions of social cohesion and respect for diversity. Thus, the importance of each of these issues at the national level has been studied in depth by the national teams in order to reframe and explore how tolerance, intolerance and cultural pluralism are perceived in the public space, and how they are subsequently managed.

Moreover, these issues, in spite of their national specificity, are common across countries. Thus, the knowledge generated provided comparatively geared knowledge as analysed in the comparative reports and the comparative policy briefs, notably:

• Let’s Talk About It: Accommodating religious diversity in Europe’s schools, By Tore Olsen, Aarhus University (2012), available at: [http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22240](http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22240)
• Education on the Edge: Roma segregation in the schools of 5 EU Member States, By John Fox, University of Bristol (2012), available at: [http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22239](http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22239)
• A Delicate Balance: Religious schools and tolerance in Europe, By Marcel Maussen and Veit Bader, University of Amsterdam (2012), available at: [http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22238](http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22238)
• Minority Mobilization in the United Kingdom and France, By Angéline Escafré-Dublet, CERI- Sciences 52 of 58
8. DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The ACCEPT PLURALISM research project was launched exactly at a time when intolerance to diversity started rising in different forms and intensity across European societies. The question of how to accommodate cultural, religious and national difference was transformed into an urgent policy issue that concerned every European citizen. From this perspective, the project has been a timely academic and research endeavour. ACCEPT PLURALISM not only aimed at the effective diffusion of its theoretical advances, but it was also set up since the very outset so as to conduct relevant research and lead to accessible research findings. In other words, dissemination did not only concern the way project results have circulated, but how the project was structured as a whole and developed throughout its life.

On the one hand, thus, as noted above, the academic and scholarly community remained throughout the project a paramount user that was targeted by the consortium. ACCEPT Pluralism results were disseminated in academic arenas through a multiplicity of publications (see above), but also through partners’ participation in academic conferences and workshops. ACCEPT members have presented individual papers related to diversity in school or political life in different scholarly meetings across Europe. For the purposes of illustration, it is worth noting that the UK team participated in a conference ‘The End of Multiculturalism in Europe? Migrants, Refugees and their Integration’ at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC (May 24th, 2012). Moreover, the consortium organized separate panels comprising different country case studies- see for instance, ‘Who’s the Most Legitimate to Protest? Immigration vs. Native Minority Claims in an Extended Europe’ at the Council for European Studies Annual Conference in Amsterdam (June 26th, 2013), which discussed the cases of Turkey, Sweden, Denmark, France and the United Kingdom.

ACCEPT Pluralism responded to the quest for conceptual outputs and novel empirical research. However, equally important was the need to carry forward outputs relevant for the wider audience and meaningful for policy makers and, thus, to participate dynamically in the debates taking place across Europe and beyond the academic environment throughout the duration of the project. ACCEPT findings were disseminated through a threefold strategy established at the outset of the project and further built into the actual research process:

8.1 National ACCEPT Pluralism events (involvement of stakeholders during the research process and interactive feedback strategy)

All project partners were called to conduct their country based research in the context of a broader...
dissemination strategy, according to which they developed networks of communication with stakeholders and specific communities of interest, made their material accessible both to those and to wider audiences and devised ways in which their research findings could lead to useful policy messages.

To begin with, the project was presented to relevant stakeholders through national launch events that varied in every country in terms of focus and format. In 14 different events, a multiplicity of social and political actors, media professionals, policy makers, religious organizations’ representatives, NGOs and activists working in the fields of migrant and minority integration were invited to present best practices, issues of concern and/or policy implementation in terms of accommodating diversity. In the Romanian launch event (October 12th, 2010), for instance, in the light of the Roma expulsions from France to Romania and Bulgaria, Mr Laszlo Andor, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, addressed an audience of over 350 guests, comprising of high ranking Romanan and European officials, NGO representatives and media, on the EU commitment towards Roma integration. Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, President of the Romanian Academic Society and member of the ACCEPT Consortium, drew attention to the plurality of problems currently faced by the country’s Roma communities – poverty, poor access to public services, discrimination – and the need for these problems to be properly mapped in order for knowledgeable local policy responses to be elaborated.

Moreover, each partner organized additional national events during the empirical research phase within each case study. Those ‘policy events’ took a national, local or regional character and engaged actively a variety of stakeholders in view of sharing knowledge and receiving feedback. This strategy included also the participation of one of the partner NGOs in order to develop networking between national and international actors and enrich the national discussion groups. For instance, in the case of Greece, during the first stakeholder event (December 20th, 2011) diversity in Greek schools was discussed with teachers from Athens’ high schools and policy makers, while in the second ACCEPT event (September 13th-14th, 2012), the issue of racism and xenophobia was debated in Thessaloniki with a variety of human rights activists, NGOs and local political actors. This way, research findings from both case studies were broadly diffused and reshaped by stakeholders’ feedback. Or, in the case of the UK (September 19th, 2012), ACCEPT outputs in the field of religious diversity were presented along with another major research project concerning the inclusion of Muslims in British political life (MPCG). An audience of about 70 from universities, local government, MPs, think tanks, religious institutions, and civil society organisations contributed with questions and debate, which was placed into a European perspective by Doris Peschke from Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe (ACCEPT partner).

In this respect, the project has succeeded in bringing together policy-makers and various communities of interest through diffusing research findings. Beyond these two categories of ACCEPT events, national teams also participated at different occasions in events organized by municipalities, academics or local social and political actors in each country. ‘Contesting and resisting the implementation of restrictive asylum policy in the Netherlands’ was a presentation made by the Dutch team on the occasion of the conference ‘Science Meets Policy, Policy Meets Science. Asylum, Immigration and Integration Research’, organised by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Netherlands (the Hague, November 1st, 2012). The Italian team also offered a presentation of the ACCEPT Pluralism project during the workshop ‘Milano al Plurale’ organized by a cultural foundation, Milan University and an international magazine so as to reflect on the challenges produced by cultural and religious plurality in the city (October 3rd-6th, 2012). The Greek team had the chance to discuss research findings on intolerance in political life with students at the University of Crete (December 5th-7th, 2012), as well as during the meeting of the Racist Violence Recording Network led by the Greek...
section of UNHCR (January 30th, 2012). Lastly, the Turkish team in various occasions discussed ACCEPT outputs, as, for instance, in March 2013 through the presentation on ‘Multiculturalism and Diversity in the EU’ on the occasion of the Youth Conference organized by the European Union Delegation and European Union Information Office in Van and in Trabon, Turkey.

Reaching Out to Different Constituencies/Stakeholders

In order to facilitate the communication of key ACCEPT Pluralism outputs and policy messages stemming from the project’s research, the consortium additionally prepared a number of publications that presented the scope of the project’s research in plain language. To begin with, since the outset, a leaflet was prepared presenting briefly the project (Flyer) in all national languages and a longer document explaining the rationale of the project, its different phases of work and different targets (Project identity). More importantly, drawing from their respective fieldwork, the individual teams edited country specific policy briefs both in English and in the national languages concerning tolerance and diversity discourses and practices on the one hand in schools (12) and on the other in political life (9). A 4-page document on ‘Acceptance of religious diversity in German public schools’, for instance, discusses the discourses and tensions around the issue of Muslim religion in schools in Germany. After a short introduction setting the background, the two case studies are examined- one of a Muslim pupil forbidden to perform his daily prayer at his school in Berlin, and the other, of Islamic religious education included in school curricula. Quotations from interviews with different social and political actors are followed by key messages to policy makers so as to release religious tensions in schools. In ‘Tolerance in Discourses and Practices in the Italian Political Sphere’ the issue of political representation and participation of migrants in Italy is discussed, especially in what concerns the local level. Messages to policy makers focus on ways to fight local policies of exclusion that are conceived as institutionalized forms of intolerance. The ACCEPT Pluralism consortium also produced 7 European Policy Briefs that tackle broader issues thematically and from a comparative perspective. As a result, Roma segregation in schools is examined across 5 EU member states, while another policy brief focuses on discourses of intolerance in political life highlighting findings from case studies in Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Greece and Spain. Those documents are helpful for both European and national policy makers by articulating research material in accessible and compact ways and by putting well studied national case studies within a wider European context.

Additionally, in an attempt to reach even broader constituencies and re draft outputs in a format that is attractive to a wider (and non-specialist) audience, the ACCEPT Pluralism Consortium edited the ‘New Knowledge’ reports for each country, which highlight the work of the project, the main findings from both a national and European perspective and what kind of policy recommendations emerge from these. In the Bulgarian case, for instance, discourses and practices are evaluated in the four case studies examined - education of Roma children, religious diversity in schools, political participation and representation of Roma, and voting rights of minorities- as tolerant/ intolerant/ or denoting acceptance and recognition.

8.2 European Events and E-dissemination

Of special importance has been the way ACCEPT Pluralism has managed to diffuse its findings beyond national borders. One primary way of achieving such an aim was the participation of three very different NGOs in the structure of the project. Their work has cut across both different work packages and national
case studies by always contextualizing individual case studies, adding policy aspects to qualitative research and ensuring feedback with civil society throughout the three years of our research. Most importantly, the three NGOs each organized a regional conference with the participation of academics, policy makers, and politicians and media groups. The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies organized a conference opening to the public in Nicosia, Cyprus (September 27th–28th, 2012) where some of the project’s findings from the empirical research were presented by concentrating in particular on the gender dimension of cultural difference and how this is often highlighted in public discourses as a symbolic marker of the incompatibility and impossibility to tolerate cultural minorities. Banlieues d’Europe organized in Lyon, France (January 24th–25th, 2013), a workshop that focused on cultural diversity in different areas of social life and most importantly in educational establishments. More than 100 persons including policy makers, NGOs representatives, academics and journalists debated their understanding of tolerance and intolerance in live discussions touching upon the ACCEPT Pluralism findings. Lastly, the Churches’ Commission for Migrants in Europe organized in Brussels the final European Conference (March 6th–7th, 2013) that brought the project outputs to an EU-specific audience by focusing mainly on Tolerance Indicators and how these can be used in policy making. The conference participants placed the project within broader European developments while also reflecting on ways of combating intolerance, promoting practices of tolerance and/ or acceptance of cultural diversity across different European countries. This final European Conference also managed to gain visibility for the Tolerance Indicators both through the European Website on Integration and the the Sirius Network.

In addition to these ACCEPT European events, individual teams had the chance to discuss their findings on cultural diversity at meetings across Europe at various phases of the project. The French team presented the rationale and structure of ACCEPT Pluralism at the Workshop of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education, Berlin (November 18th, 2010), while the coordinator of the Consortium Prof. Triandafyllidou talked on ‘Tolerance and cultural diversity in Europe: Theoretical perspectives and contemporary developments’ during the Migration Working Group seminar at the European University Institute in Florence (May 11th, 2011).

Moreover, dissemination was also achieved through media coverage of the project’s research and rationale throughout its life, the radio show or newspaper articles concerning the Romanian launch event, or the way Hungarian media has dealt with the stakeholder workshop organized in Budapest on the rise of far right in the country. Additionally, since the outset of the project, much effort was put into building a network of communication with stakeholders in each country. As a result, a diversified and broad mailing list was created comprising both national and international actors working on issues of diversity, to whom a regular Project Newsletter was sent approximately every month updating on the project’s events and publications, but also on broader issues related with tolerance and intolerance across Europe.

What proved to be a crucial tool for diffusing the project’s research beyond national borders was the way online tools were used. The ACCEPT Pluralism website had been conceived from the outset of the project as a repository, where the initial material and, later, all reports, ACCEPT events and publications and project information would be available. To begin with, the project’s rationale and structure was explained online. Then, all events that were about to take place were announced in advance informing on the provisional programme and venues, while past events were reported in detail comprising the final programme, data on the participants, short reports and detailed minutes from the meetings, photos and related links for further information. Moreover, all publications, both academic and policy oriented, were fully available on the website for downloading, along with information about related activities of ACCEPT members in diverse occasions.
The website also developed into a hub for news on cultural diversity across Europe by comprising a very rich 'news' section. This section went beyond the website’s original scope, and became a source of information on relevant conferences, meetings, reports, initiatives and lectures in various cities across Europe as led by academics, national NGOS, local stakeholders, activists, journalists or international organizations. Moreover, the website also functioned as an intelinkage between different research projects working on related issues, such as EURISLAM, RELIGARE and others. Another important feature of the ACCEPT website is the blog that was also created due to the topicality of the issues touched upon throughout our fieldwork. For instance, drawing from Arab Spring and its impact on the way liberal European democracies conceive Islam, on the one hand, and democratic processes, on the other, the ACCEPT blog launched a live debate, in which the limits of the currently used concepts and policy approaches of multiculturalism and integration were discussed. Similarly, drawing from the change in the Greek citizenship law towards a more exclusionary direction in 2012-2013, another debate was initiated discussing the issue of accommodating difference in times of acute economic crisis. In the same way, other blog items included comments on current affairs in Hungary or in Spain as related with cultural diversity and issues of intolerance that the project dealt with.

In the same way, a Facebook ACCEPT group was created, which circulates much of the information included on the website but also engages a much broader variety of people into the project’s activities and topics by triggering debates on issues of tolerance and intolerance in different European and global contexts.

9. REFERENCES

All project reports and material are available from the project’s following websites:

Project reports
(including reports on concepts and theories of tolerance; country reports on national discourses of tolerance; tolerance in everyday school life; tolerance in political life)
http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/Index.aspx

Handbook on Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Europe

New Knowledge Highlights
http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NewKnowledge.aspx

The ACCEPT PLURALISM Tolerance Indicators
http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/ToleranceIndicatorsToolkit/ToleranceIndicators.aspx

The project’s country specific policy briefs as well as the European policy briefs

Related academic publications
In addition, the project’s core publications are presented in a specialised brochure which can be downloaded from here: http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Projects/ACCEPT/Documents/Dissemination/AcceptPluralismPamplhet2013.pdf

List of Websites:

www.accept-pluralism.eu

Professor Anna Triandafyllidou, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute,

Related documents

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Last update: 18 July 2014
Record number: 144662