RESPECT

Towards a "Topography" of Tolerance and Equal Respect. A comparative study of policies for the distribution of public spaces in culturally diverse societies.

Project developed within the
European Commission's Seventh Framework Programme

<u>Currents status</u>: financial negotiation

<u>Expected start date</u>: 1 January 2010

ABSTRACT

Tolerance has been increasingly invoked as the inspiring ideal of a number of social policies in European democracies. Appeals to tolerance have animated especially the political debates on those policies addressed to accommodate minorities' requests. Among such requests those for the **allocation of public spaces** have recently come to the front in the political agendas of many European and extra-European countries.

Relevant examples concern issues of perceived security and social exclusion related to the allocation of space for **Roma encampments** (e.g. in Hungary, Czech Republic, Russia, Italy, United Kingdom and Slovenia); Muslims' requests for the concession of public spaces to build **places of worship** and faith schools (e.g. in Italy, Denmark, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Germany, Slovenia and France); risks of **"ghettoisation"** of migrants in urban areas (e.g. in Lithuania, Germany, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Russia, Italy and China); as well as those social conflicts related to the **ethnic segregation** in such divided countries as Cyprus and Israel.

Although the **appeal to tolerance** is very much vivid in all political and academic debates revolving around those policies, it is far from clear and uncontroversial what it means and requires of societies committed to it. This lack of agreement at a conceptual level translates into serious political, social and institutional problems once such policies are implemented. In particular, policy makers seem to appeal often to tolerance with a view to securing such fundamental democratic values as (a) the **equality of treatment** of all citizens and (b) **social cohesion**. However, at the level of policy implementation, such values may end up being partially incompatible or requiring relevant trade-offs in their realisation. Thus they may (a) represent a threat to the equality of treatment of all citizens as they risk creating different categories of citizenship with which diverse rights and obligations are associated, and, in so doing,

(b) they may end up undermining the bases of social cohesion (causing resentments, and ultimately intolerance).

In keeping with this backdrop, the RESPECT project will explore the extent, if any, to which the implementation of tolerance-inspired policies risks undermining the pursuit of such basic democratic commitments, and – if so – what conception of tolerance, grounded on what bases, may be invoked so as to limit such a risk.

In particular, the project pursues **4 objectives**:

1. to develop a **conceptual taxonomy** to clarify the *liaisons* between tolerance, respect and spatial issues;

2. to study the ways in which appeals to tolerance have informed the development of **spatial policies**;

3. to investigate the **influence of cultural diversities** on the interpretations of tolerance in different national contexts; and

4. to extrapolate from the above studies an overall view of the **connections between tolerance and equal respect**.

Our findings will be of interests to national and international Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), policy makers at a European, national, regional and municipal level and international academics engaged in the study of urban integration in different social, religious, cultural, and political contexts.

PARTNERS

1. Istituto Universitario di Studi Superiori di Pavia (Italy)
Team leader and Project Scientific Coordinator: Dr Emanuela Ceva.

2. Københavns Universitet (Denmark)
Team leader: Dr Sune Lægaard.

3. Západoceská univerzita (Czech Republic)
Team leader: Dr Lenka Strnadova.

4. Université de Rennes I (France)
Team leader: Dr Magali Bessone.

5. Institution of Foreign Philosophy, Peking University (People's Republic of China)
Team leader: Dr. Dezhi Tong.

6. University of Wales, Newport (United Kingdom)
Team leader: Dr Gideon Calder.

7. Università degli Studi del Piemonte Orientale "Amedeo Avogadro" (Italy)
Team leader: Prof Anna Elisabetta Galeotti.

8. Ural State University (Russian Federation)
Team leader: Prof Maxim Khomyakov.

9. Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs (Cyprus)
Team leader: Dr Achilles Emilianides.

10. Univerza v Ljubljani (Slovenia)
Team leader: Prof Igor Pribac.

11. Central European University - Budapest (Hungary)
Team leader: Dr David Weberman.

12. European Humanities University (Lithuania)
Team leader: Dr Alexei Pikulik.

13. Tel-Aviv University (Israel)
Team leader: Dr Michael Romann.

14. Universität Darmstadt (Germany)
Team leader: Dr Maria Paola Ferretti.