

G3i Groupe International Interculturel et Interconvictionnel

Association Loi de 1901

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Presentation of the G3I

The G3I, an **Intercultural, International et Interconvictional** Group (hence the name G3I), is an interconvictional "think tank with an eye to action". The G3i is established as an "association" (with charitable status) in French law (loi de 1901).

In accordance with article 2 of its constitution, *"The objective of this 'association' is to work for the development of European Citizenship with an emphasis on threefold dialogue: international dialogue, especially among all the peoples of Europe, intercultural dialogue among all kinds of cultures — whether territorial or a diaspora — an interconvictional dialogue among people with different world visions — whether they be atheist and non religious or based on religious convictions with their different beliefs as to ultimate issues. » With this in mind, the G3i is keen to work for the development of new laïque public spaces, distinct from those of religious institutions, which facilitate dialogue and sharing between people who claim a humanist¹ identity — whether atheist or religious."*

To do this, the G3i brings together men and women from different countries of Europe, from different cultures and different religious convictions whether atheist or agnostic, **as well as members of "associations" of which the greater part have participative status at the Council of Europe.**

The initiative began about five yeas ago in order that :

- 1) as citizens of Europe with different convictions, it would be possible to think about the impact of religions and different lines of thought for the development of social **cohesion** in a multicultural Europe as well as about awareness of European citizenship.
- 2) we might present a point of view on intercultural dialogue, on questions related to European construction and on the interaction of society/religion and traditions of thought independent of that of hierarchies in religion and in traditions, but also developed interconvictionally.
- 3) to give a voice to those who have no other means of making themselves heard, and to contribute to the creation of conditions that can enable this voice to be heard in different parts of the European Union; in particular in the institutional framework that exists as a consequence of the ready of Lisbon,

¹ Translator's note : "humanist" in French does not necessarily convey the non religious overtones of the English translation. It is not unusual to find that religious believers are perceived as humanists, or use the term of themselves, because they believe that "humanity" is important in its widest sense.

4) to give practical expression to authentic experience² of interconvictional dialogue which will enrich participants through the free expression of one another's point of view in complete freedom and without any attempt at dominance, but rather in mutual recognition of one another.

Expertise : Is provided by the interconvictional progress of members. The G3i affirms the practical possibility of fruitful dialogue and of work honestly conducted for the rule of law, democracy and human rights. Thanks to its experience of this kind of dialogue and practice the G3i can contribute to :

- ensuring that such dialogue can be achieved with all the institutions and actors in Europe, in the conviction that such a dialogue is one of the conditions for the exercise of productive European citizenship.
- researching values shared by all and which are therefore greater than the convictions of the individual,
- identifying conditions for harmonious life together founded on shared values, in particular those which make up the pillars of Europe.
- achieving social cohesion that enables each individual to blossom, to reach his or her potential, to find a meaning of life and therefore to live his or her humanity to the full in the present with a view to the future as well.

Experience

This interconvictional and intercultural dialogue enables the G3i to engage in very enriching and productive work constructively related to that in the Council of Europe, particularly in the framework of its NGO Conference of which the greater part of the organisations that make up the G3i are members.

In this way the G3i has

- contributed to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue³, in particular on the interreligious dimension⁴.
- organised, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, a colloquy on the theme "Social Cohesion in a multicultural Europe, the rôle and impact of traditions of thought and of religions" the proceedings of which have been published⁵.
- been invited to contribute to the European colloquy "*laïcité* and human rights" organised by the European Humanist Federation in the European Commission in Bruxelles on 16 April 2008

² Cf. for example Albert Camus : *Actuelles Ecrits Politiques*, Gallimard Paris 1950 "*I will try to change nothing of what I think, nor of what you think (so far as I can judge), so as to realise an agreement that will be acceptable too all of us. On the other hand what I want to say to you today is that the world needs real dialogue, that the opposite of dialogue is as much a lie as silence, and that dialogue is only possible between people who remain what they are and speak the truth.*"

³ The white paper on intercultural dialogue is available at :
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf

⁴ Cette contribution est accessible à l'adresse : <http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/reponseg3i.pdf>

⁵ « Cohésion sociale dans une Europe multiculturelle, rôle et impact des courants de pensée et des religions » sous la direction de François Becker, Editions Publibook Paris 2009 :
<http://www.publibook.com/boutique2006/detailu-4695-PB.html>

- been invited to the conference debate organised in the European Parliament on "Laïcité and the European Union" in March 2009, where the G3i presented its vision⁶ on the basis of its interconvictional experience and its work in the Council of Europe. The proceedings of this colloquy have just been published⁷.
- organised a study day on 24 January 2012, with the support of the General Directorate of Programmes in the Council of Europe on the theme "Becoming citizens of a plural Europe: Interconvictional spaces and practice," of which the proceedings are being prepared.

Possibilities for cooperation with the European Commission:

In this way the G3I is able to bring an interconvictional point of view, independent of that of religious or convictional institutions, on questions related to

- the search for values shared by all and which therefore go beyond individual convictions, but on which we can build social cohesion, and particularly values which make up the pillars of Europe,
- social cohesion⁸ in Europe that allows each person to blossom, to reach his or her potential, to find a meaning of life and in this way to live to the full in the present and with a view to the future:
- how to live out convictions in a multi-convictional environment and to identify the conditions for peaceful and harmonious life together on the basis of shared values.
- the balance of legitimacy and representativity in consultation: the links between representative and participative democracy, especially in the framework of article 17 of the treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

Il s'agit des associations suivantes :

- **Amitiés Judéo Musulmane de France (AJMF www.ajmf.org/)** « *The basic task of the 'A.J-M.F. is to ensure that knowledge, understanding, respect and friendship should replace historical misunderstanding in society as well as mutual prejudice between Judaism and Islam ... Through fraternal dialogue and active coopération the A.J-M.F. seeks to fight against racism in all its forms and to condemn it, particularly that against Muslims, on the one hand and that against Jews, together with antisemitism on the other.*».

- **Cercle Gaston Crémieux (www.cercle-gaston-cremieux.org)** was created in 1967 at the instigation of certain Jewish intellectuals who were anxious to assert the legitimacy of Judaism of the diaspora, without obligation to the Synagogue or to Zionism. It aims to "to provoke argument, research, open debate and activity on questions raised by the presence of Judaism in France and in the world." The "Circle" bears the name of a Jewish Lawyer from the Franche Compté, who was a keen activist for the social Republic and a "communard marseillais" shot in 1871. Today it is recognised as "a cultural and philanthropic organisation of general interest."

- **Christenrechte in der Kirche** (a member of the ecumenical Network Kirche von unten), <http://kirche-von-unten.org> This association is a member of the European Network Churches and liberty.

- **French coordination for the European Women's Lobby (CLEF) (www.womenlobby.org)**, founded in 1991. It is made up of more than 80 feminist and women's organisations. It is the French branch of the **European Women's Lobby**.

- **DECERE (Democracy, European Construction and Religions)**, founded in 2004 is a joint venture of the Diocese of Strasbourg and the Dominicans. Its objective is the study of the place of religions and convictions in the social,

⁶ Cf. the text of François Becker's présentation at :

<http://www.european-catholic-people.eu/laiciteeuropefb.pdf>

⁷ « Laïcité et Europe » Editions du Grand Orient de Belgique avril 2010

⁸ « Cohésion Sociale » est prise dans le sens défini par le Comité européen pour la cohésion sociale (CDCS) tel qu'il a été approuvé par le Comité des ministres le 31 mars 2004 : « La cohésion sociale est la capacité d'une société à assurer le bien-être de tous ses membres, à minimiser les disparités et à éviter la polarisation. Une société cohésive est une communauté solidaire composée d'individus libres poursuivant des buts communs par des voies démocratiques ». http://www.coe.int/t/dg3/socialpolicies/socialcohesiondev/indicators_fr.asp

democratic and humanist construction of Europe. The objective is based on the desire to promote intercultural and interreligious dialogue and the conviction that this dialogue can contribute to the development of a European civilisation that respects fundamental human values...

- **Fédération Humaniste Européenne (FHE)** (www.humanism.be) , founded in Prague in July 1991, is an international charitable organisation in Belgian law. Members of the FHE are humanist and *laïque* organisations. The purpose is to manage educational, scientific and cultural activity in such a way as to promote, chiefly in Europe, the presence of voluntary organisations with the same objectives; to represent its members at the European Institutions; to promote exchanges among its members and to share information and experience that contribute to the development of humanist and *laïque* values in Europe, as well as to social and cultural progress.

- **Fédération des Réseaux du Parvis** : brings together more than 40 French and Christian organisations (open-minded Catholics, liberal Protestants and Unitarians). If some of these Christian critics still work in the Institutional Churches, many have distanced themselves and gather "outside the walls" to live, speak and celebrate the Gospel together in a new way. <http://www.reseaux-parvis.fr/chretiens-en-liberte/>

- **Femmes et Hommes, Egalité, Droits et Libertés dans les Eglises et la Société** (FHEDLES <http://fhedles.fr/>) is a French organisation (law 1901), set up to "work within the churches and society, with the liberty of the Gospel for new practice of justice, or solidarity and democracy for: equality and partnership between women and men by refusing all forms of discrimination related to sex, for profound transformation of attitudes, conduct and institutions, so as to give reality to rights and freedom for all, for the development of renewed expression and symbol, for the promotion of research, in particular in the fields of history and theology. It draws inspiration from the three objectives set out below in respect of cultural and spiritual diversity. FHEDLES is a member of the Réseaux du Parvis Federation and of the European Network Churches and Freedom.

- **Intereuropean Commission on Church and School** <http://www.iccsweb.org/> is a "charity" (in English law) of which the President, Peter Schreiner, is senior researcher at the Comenius Institute in Münster (Germany). ICCS is represented in 22 European Countries. It works in the field of education for religion in view of European diversity and the need for dialogue and mutual knowledge among religious traditions and other convictions in the European context.

- **Ligue Internationale de l'Enseignement, de la Culture et de l'Education Populaire** (www.ligue.org) The Ligue de l'enseignement strives after a democratic, *laïque*, and social republic through education, solidarity and civic commitment. It fights for «l'école de tous» (the common school), throughout the country, in rural areas threatened by depopulation like areas of cities where conditions are difficult. With its network made up of about 34,000 organisations it works on the essential development of the educational system. It is a grouping of citizens and educational professionals committed to the success of young people and to public service. The *ligue* is committed to helping the school to realise this transformation.

- **Le Manifeste des Libertés** (www.manifeste.org) is an association of which members and sympathisers see themselves as belonging to Muslim culture whether they are believers or non believers, and who battle for *laïcité*.

- **Mouvement pour une Alternative Non-Violente** (MAN) (www.nonviolence.fr). A non violent movement for reflection and action set up in 1974. MAN's objective is the promotion of non violence and the promotion of its specific contribution in daily life, in education and in social and political struggles. Through reflection, action and education MAN aims to promote a society of justice and liberty through its strategy of non violence.

- **The international movement We are Church**, founded in Rome in 1996 is dedicated to the renewal of the Roman Catholic Church by basing itself on Vatican II and the consequent theological environment. <http://we-are-church.org/pt/>

- **Observatoire Chrétien de la laïcité** : On the initiative of the five organisations that belong to the Parvis network: Friends of 68 rue de Babylone, Christians for a Church not involved in the Confessional School (CEDEC), Rights and Freedom in the churches (DLE), Hope 54 and We are also the Church(NSAE), OCL organised in Paris in March 2003 a colloquy on the *laïque* future of Europe. In view of the success of this colloquy the organisers decided to create within the réseaux du Parvis a « Christian Observatory of *Laïcité* ».

<http://www.reseaux-parvis.fr/chretiens-en-liberte/societe/laicite/pourquoi-un-observatoire-chretien-de-la-laicite.html>

- **Réseau Européen Eglises et Libertés** (<http://www.en-re.eu> old site: www.european-catholic-people.eu) is a spontaneous coming together of about 30 organisations from 15 countries of Europe (associations, communities, groups and informal networks), of chiefly Catholic Christians of Europe who share (1) the vision of a Prophetic, œcuménical, living church of solidarity; and (2) the desire to work with respect for cultural and religious diversity, for peace, justice, freedom, human rights and democracy, including within the Catholic Church.

- **European Buddhist Union** (<http://www.e-b-u.org/index.html>) The European Buddhist Union is an organisation made up of Buddhist communities and organisations in Europe. It was founded in 1975. It is open to Buddhist organisations of all schools and traditions. It encourages contact and cooperation among Buddhists in Europe and the development of friendly relations among Buddhists organisations as its chief objective. In 2008, there were more than 50 member organisations from 16 European countries engaged in the exchange of information and experience. Inter-Buddhist dialogue is a priority for the EBU. The BTE (Buddhist Teachers in Europe) is one of the projects initiated by the EBU to promote this dialogue among teachers of the *dharma* active in Europe.