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The Dialogue Between Democracies: The Resolution of Conflicts and the Protection of the Human Rights

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12.1 The Mediterranean as "multi-space": multi-cultural, multi-religious, and multi-traditions

In the centuries-old history of the Mediterranean, the relationship of proximity has always been characterized by an alternation of peace and prosperity on one side and conflicts and wars on the other side. However, the crisis that characterizes the Mediterranean today is different because it presents elements of novelty and of different gravity. In some ways, even the current situation reflects the peculiarity of the Mediterranean, which presents itself as a space of contradictions, as a space of aspirations toward common vocations, as a place of cohabitation of the "multi" (multi-cultural, multi-religious, multi-traditions, etc.). The current geopolitical profile, therefore, tends to record diversities, now considered as an element of division, now as an element of integration: if governments and political logics use diversity as a place of conflict, people have demonstrated (and demonstrate) that the differences are beneficial. However, there is a problem of governing the differences and identifying mechanisms with which to govern them, recognizing that they constitute a value in itself and a wealth, also from an economic point of view for Europe itself.[1] Among the new elements, we

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[1] According to Eurostat projections, the total population of the European Union with 28 countries is expected to grow from 508 million in 2015 to 520 million in 2080, with an increase of 2.3% (+12 million units). An insufficient increase to compensate for demographic deficit

can consider the following: an crisis is widespread and affects all the shores of the Mediterranean; migration flows are an issue that affects the whole Mediterranean, which has become a kind of long border; and a geopolitical change is taking place (favored by the rigidity of the European Union), which has the effect of introducing new players with hegemonic aspirations (Turkey, Russia, and China). Furthermore, Europe's substantial indifference toward a Mediterranean inclusion policy is a real novelty since, over the centuries, Europe, through the various kingdoms and states, has always played a leading role. Furthermore, three elements constitute a real novelty in the Mediterranean geopolitical panorama (destined to produce further consequences): the relevance that human rights are taking on especially in the perception of people; the value of the multi-dimensional dimension (more cultures, more religions, more traditions, etc. as an indispensable identifying element of people); and globalization as a category that enters each specific problem. Neighborhood relations (both for better and for worse) are governed by these elements of novelty that are grafted into the plural dimension of a Mediterranean, which continues to have a common vocation, a common destiny, and a common heritage.

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and aging, two of the phenomena that risk compromising European economic well-being. To stabilize the population of the European Union around 500 million people, an annual flow is needed which increases from around 2.6 million foreign immigrants in 2015 to over 2.9 million in 2020. In 2030, if the projections will be confirmed, the average number of foreign immigrants will exceed 3.7 million. As regards Italy, more detailed demographic forecasts by ISTAT, limited to the population of working age (15–64 years), analyze the probable demand for foreign workers by the Italian production system, in a longer perspective, from 2015 to 2065, obviously gross of the inactive. In general, the central scenario of the forecasts of the Italian Statistical Institute foresees an increase in the overall population much more contained than that of Eurostat (the estimate of the total population in 2065 is 61.3 million; 65.8 million for Eurostat). The total working-age population will decrease from 39.8 million in 2015 to 33.5 million in 2065 (–6.3 million), as a result of a decrease of 10.4 million Italians and an increase of 4.1 million foreigners (the percentage of foreigners out of the total will increase from 11.3% to 25.6% in the same period). Consequently, the increase in immigrants will not be able to compensate for the reduction in the working-age population but will have unbalanced effects between the Center-North and the regions of the South. In fact, during 50 years, the increase of 4.1 million potentially active foreign workers will be absorbed by 4.1 million units from the northern regions, 1 million from the central regions, and only 400,000 from the southern regions. So, across Europe, the influx of emigrants is seen as a resource and as the solution to an economic-demographic problem. Obviously migratory flows, especially those coming from countries where wars or economic hardship, are stronger and with very high levels of illiteracy, will create serious problems as regards the difficulty between supply and demand for professional figures by companies in each country. European

All this makes the Mediterranean a fragile hinge between parallel and coexisting realities (made up of peoples, policies, cultures, religions, different traditions, which sell back a sort of primacy or, at least, of equal dignity): a "multi-verse" (not a "universe"), similar in some respects to the physical or philosophical conception,[2] destined to develop in a "finite" (and not infinite) space like the Mediterranean in which, therefore, a collision between the various elements is possible. The current critical issues are also an expression of a structural feature of the Mediterranean (i.e., that of being the place of diversity), which projects itself into the multi-verse supported by interests that come from far away from the Mediterranean. Just as the bipolar system changed the lives at Mediterranean people and countries until 1989, the current pushes are destined to bring about change, in an even more traumatic form. Globalization has opened the borders of the Mediterranean and has made them permeable to other universes (above all of oriental origin such as Russia and China), which have a different view of the facts, of the problems, and of the conflicts and offer different possible resolutions (which can also create new conflicts).

New phenomena have a profound effect on the dynamics of development, and, in a context of globalization, they take on a different, albeit contradictory,

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[2]The term "multiverse" is adopted here only for the lexical ability to represent some geopolitical innovations. The term, coined in 1895 by the American writer and psychologist William James, in fact belongs to the scientific, philosophical, and theological world. From a scientific point of view, for the first time, Hugh Everett proposed it in 1957 with reference to quantum mechanics and was subsequently taken up by other scientific theories, on which we do not want to enter. The term multiverse, in reality, has an older philosophical meaning (Greek atomists believed a plurality of Earth-like worlds existed), which found a reworking in the Middle Ages, thanks to the studies of theologians and scientists such as the theologian Robert Grosseteste at the turn of the XII and XIII centuries, Nicolò Copernico between the XV and XVI centuries (with the discovery of the actual size of the universe, containing billions of galaxies), Nicolò Cusano in the XV century, and Giordano Bruno in the XVI century. At the basis of the thesis of the multi-verso, in many aspects not easily demonstrable, there are questions of religious content to which the great religions try to give answers (in Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, New Age, etc.). The volume of Mary Jane Rubenstein, Worlds without End. The Many Lives of the Multiverse, Columbia University Press, 2014 is also interesting for the multidisciplinary approach, although not entirely acceptable in some analyses. Franco Cassano's analysis is of particular interest, who affirms that the Mediterranean "is not a monolithic identity, but a multiverse that trains the mind to complexity," a thesis developed in various publications also aimed at new forms of dialogue, cf. Danilo Zolo and Franco Cassano, The Mediterranean Alternative, Feltrinelli, 2007.

importance since if, on the one hand, there is an effort to support in any way the fundamental rights of freedom and of the human person, from the another even more sophisticated and violent is the attack on the protection of the fundamental rights of the human person.

12.2 Plurality of Models of Democracy: Is There an Arab-Islamic Model?

The "multi-verse," which characterizes the Mediterranean in this historical phase, underlines for some aspects the intrinsically plural character of this space, which is unique and singular.[3] The dimension that the Mediterranean is assuming, which can be defined as multi-verse, does not cancel out its characteristics but enhances them, introducing a new cultural model that is slowly being built even if conflicts and major problems continue. Over the centuries, diversities have grown in the Mediterranean geo-historical space: they have learned to cohabit (now clashing, now meeting, now fighting, and now talking); they have created a plural identity as a set of differences. This legacy today meets a new challenge, which consists in the contextual presence in the Mediterranean of different "worlds," which have their origin outside the Mediterranean and are represented by subjects who claim a new historical role in the basin of the mare nostrum. These subjects (states, economic and commercial organizations, religions, and power groups) who propose themselves as direct actors, who no longer seek mediation, are the expression of a multi-verse based on rules, ethical, and religious principles, on traditions, and on political logics that come from territories and visions of life outside the Mediterranean.

The plural model of the Mediterranean, as an expression of a culture shared by peoples of all sides, today is insufficient to offer suitable answers for the realization of peace policies and for the resolution of conflicts. Furthermore, it should also be noted that, while a change of perspective is required in search of new models of coexistence, cultural patterns inherited from previous situations still exist, expressions of a relationship between the north Mediterranean and the south marked by a relationship of subjection (colonial, cultural, and political), which in the post-war period experienced various

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[3]Fernand Braudel was certainly the most attentive among the numerous authors to the theme and the problems of the Mediterranean, numerous writings, which still retain a current importance and are therefore reprinted; cf., most recently in the Italian language edition Il Mediterraneo, Bompiani editions, 2017.

stages. Today there are still strong limitations on the point of democracy. We cannot ignore that the north shore countries have tried to export their model of democracy and have judged the validity of the political experience of the countries of the other shores (both the south and the east) in the light of the western categories. In addition, Western powers have also recently attempted to intervene by force, ignoring internal movements and the popular innovative drive — without there being any justification, as has been shown, if not that of the affirmation of a dominance dictated by geostrategic and economic interests.

The popular push occurred during that phenomenon called "Arab springs," initially founded on a popular uprising movement. The sentiments were precise: the fall of authoritarian regimes (which did not displease certain Western politics), the moral change of social life gradually away from religious values, and, consequently, the fight against corruption, social degradation, growing poverty, the lack of freedom, and the unequal distribution of the wealth of the countries. There was a widespread aspiration to build social systems that respected the fundamental rights of the human person (heavily violated) and the deeper values of religion (Islamic and even Christian). The social models desired by popular uprisings had to guarantee political freedom, democracy, and social justice. In the Arab region repression, tyranny, absence of rights and freedoms, and massive violations of human rights went hand-in-hand with the concentration of power in the hands of the restricted elite linked to the party or family of those who governed. However, after 10 years, the bitter observation remains that little has been done in the direction hoped for by the people. The problems concerning the social structure and the political structure of the various countries remain standing and, among these, certainly remains the problem of democracy, a fundamental legal principle for the establishment of a modern state to protect the human person and his fundamental rights.

The aspiration to create a democratic system for the protection of fundamental freedoms is strongly present in the Mediterranean countries of the south and east shores as demonstrated by the 2012 Al-Azhar Shaykh Declaration which reads: "the Egyptians and the umma Arab-Islamic, after the liberation revolutions that have freed the freedoms giving new impetus to the spirit of the Rebirth (nahda) in all areas, they turn to the 'ulamâ' of the umma and its intellectuals to define the relationship between the general principles of the noble Islamic sharî'a and the system of fundamental freedoms on which international treaties agree and from which the experience of civilization of the Egyptian people originated." The document is divided into

four points (freedom of faith, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of scientific research, and freedom of artistic and literary creation), which recall the principles of a democratic system and repropose the topicality of the debate on democracy in Islam. In Arab-Islamic culture, the themes of secularism and democracy take on a crucial importance because they call into question the delicate relationship between religion, at the center of the public and private sphere, and political power, which has its source in religion but which is essentially secular.

In this new scenario, the Mediterranean has to face a new challenge, which, at the same time, is a new vocation, that is, cohabitation and dialogue as a way to peace and progress. The presence of new subjects must not create new forms of submission, but their active presence must favor any form of dialogue since the interests of these new subjects consist in the pacification of the Mediterranean. Dialogue is an instrument that can only be affirmed between subjects who realize a democratic experience; this means that democracies, which face the Mediterranean, must organize the forms of dialogue. However, do the social and political experiences existing on the shores of the Mediterranean define the existence of democracies?

The Arab-Islamic path to democracy also raises two questions: is there compatibility between Islam and democracy? If so, what are the essential features of this democratic model? If we consider the demands of the "spring," we can observe the existence of a demand for democracy, that is, for freedom, for the dignity of the human person, and for respect for moral and religious rules. In Arab-Islamic culture, we do not find a concept of democracy coinciding with the canons that define democracy in Western culture. However, the essential elements of democracy exist in the Arab-Islamic culture and experience, where we find the values of popular sovereignty, participation, consensus, and decision making (values also present in the demands of the "springs"). The current "reformist" movement (Al-Islah) is not new because it existed since the first half of the 19th century in a very large Islamic territory that went from the Maghreb to India, animating a new class of officials and intellectuals, deeply attracted by the culture and organization of European societies and determined to propose a modernization of their administrative, institutional, scientific, and cultural system by looking at Western models, but without denying the Arab tradition[4] In Islamic culture and experience,

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[4]Among the most illustrious are the Egyptians al-Gabarti (1753–1825) and al-Tahtawi (1801–1873), the Tunisian Hayr al-Din (1822–1890), and the Indian Wadi Allah (1703–1762). Toward the end of the 19th century, the intellectual movement entered a more delicate phase: some reformists (islahiyyun) began to research more deeply the internal causes that,

consensus (Jjmâ') is important, involving "a large group of people or the majority of the people"[5] and, therefore, is considered "the legitimate foundation of a true theory of popular sovereignty"[6]. The concept of consent must be considered together with the concept of consultation (shûrà), which takes on different organizational modules in the various countries (for example, in the Egyptian system, there is a Council of the Shûra, Majlis al-Shûrā, which is an advisory parliamentary body and elective of which the Governorates are part: a sort of House of Representation). A debate has reopened around these concepts and these institutes, tending to recover the fundamental elements of a recognized Islamic democracy[7] since, albeit according to a complex and fluctuating path, Jjmâ 'e shûrà (i.e., consensus and consultation) represents "the cornerstones and roots to develop a free and representative form of Islamic government or democracy."[8]

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over the centuries, had determined the scientific and cultural immobility of the Arab-Muslim world. Among all the most important intellectuals who promoted reformism were the Syrian al-Kawakibi (1850–1902), one of the first theorists of pan-Arabism, the Lebanese Sakib Arslan (1869–1939), the Persian and Shiite al-Afghans (1838–1897), a strong supporter of pan-Islamism, the Egyptian imam 'Abduh (1849–1905), a true theorist of the most mature age of reformism, the Syrian Riîà (1865–1935) founder of the Salafiyya movement, Ahmad Khan (1817–1889), of Persian-Afghan origin, promoter of a vast cultural rapprochement with the West and, finally, the Algerian Ben Badis (1889–1940), defined the "herald of Algerian Muslim reformism and Algerian nationalism" (see Paolo Luigi Branca, Voices of Modern Islam: Arab-Muslim thought Between Renewal and Tradition, preface by M. Borrmans, Marietti, Genoa 1991).

[5] Ahmad Moussalli, The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights, Gainesville University Press of Florida, 2001.

[6] See Luca Ozzano, Islam and Democracy: Problems, Opportunities and Development Models, taken from the website.

[7] About the relationship between the profound crisis of Islamic political institutions and the difficult process of democratic transformation, see M. Campanini, Ideologia e politica nell'Islam. Fra utopia e Prassi, ll Mulino, 2008.

[8] About the intimate connection between consultation (Ijmâ', as a manifestation of a will) and advice (shûra, also as the foundation of an organism) with the spirit of Islam, cf., L. Ozzano, cit. Today, the word "council" is widespread in many Islamic countries, being used also for "Parliament"; however, a restrictive interpretation of this concept, developed over the centuries by Islamic theorists, has become prevalent, meaning the shûra simply as a faculty of the sovereign, concerning not the entire population, but only a small body of advisers. However, it seems that this interpretation of the concept of "consultation" has not always been the preferred one: concretely, the Prophet would have used it more widely and, after his death, would have become "a symbol identified with political participation and legitimacy." On the evolution of the forms that define the relationship between governed and governed, cf., Bernard Lewis, The Political Language of Islam, Rome-Bari, 2005, 51 ss.

Therefore, it can be argued that Islam can interpret a possible model of democracy since the "minimum requirements" are present, which allow a "minimum definition of democracy ... that is, by attributing to the concept of democracy some specific characters on which we can all be agree" (Norberto Bobbio).[9] In essence, this means that the model does not replicate another existing model but must contain the essential elements that make it possible to identify a democracy.

Therefore, the value of democracy does not consist in the purity of an abstract model or in a "unique" model. Democracy is an "attribute" of society, that is, a "procedural model" that allows the participation of the people who elect their own rulers and who foresees a power that makes the necessary decisions after a free and majority discussion. If we accept the idea of a "minimum definition" of democracy, we can accept the existence of multiple models or systems of democracy, different in form but not in substance and, therefore, compatible with each other. The democratic system must be founded on supreme cultural, spiritual, and even religious values. In this sense, there is an Arab-Islamic path to democracy based on values also of religious derivation, which reaffirm the value of the fundamental rights of the human person and his dignity. The existence of multiple Mediterranean models of democracy introduces a new perspective of dialogue, that is, between political, institutional, corporate, and democratic models.

In this new scenario, the Mediterranean has to face a new challenge, almost a new vocation, that is, cohabitation and dialogue as a way to peace and progress. The presence of new subjects risks creating new forms of submission, or a sort of new colonialism, for countries on the south bank. However, their active presence and all forms of dialogue must be encouraged since the interests of these new subjects are linked to the pacification of the Mediterranean, to the creation of economic and political relations of peace. The war economy does not enrich the system (i.e., the whole of society) but only a few groups. Dialogue is a possible tool only between subjects who realize a democratic experience: this means that also the democracies, which face the Mediterranean, must organize the forms of dialogue.

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[9]See Norberto Bobbio, from an interview by Diego Fusaro, on the website www.filosofico.net/bobbio

12.3 Religion and Laicity in the Euro-Mediterranean Area: The Value of Practical Experience

The theme of values on which democracy is based refers to the question of the relationship between religion and laicity. Laicity is a cultural value that belongs to the history of individual countries, and this has generated different ideas and experiences. Laicity as an "expression of the political-juridical vocabulary has a history of at least two centuries. It is not a dogma, but a story. In the nineteenth century, secularism arose, from the Enlightenment culture, as an ideal and fighting position, to affirm the emancipation of the state, of culture, of education, from the ancient régime, dominated by the Church" (A. Riccardi). The origin of laicity finds its source in the Gospel when the distinction between what belongs to God and what belongs to Caesar is highlighted as existential dimensions and separate institutions.[10] The countries of the north bank, such as Italy, France, and Spain, have been characterized by the great influence of the Enlightenment, an experience that has many merits but also many critical issues, of which we still feel the reflections in Western culture today. With reference to the question of laicity, the Enlightenment culture developed a secular conception of morality, released from religion, so that religion (with its revealed truths) and morals (as thought based on reason) develop a line of separation.

A different path has been taken in Islamic culture. The word "laicity" (*almaniyya* or *ilmaniya*) is a neologism that dates back to the 20th century (between the 19th and 20th centuries, the term *ladiniya* was adopted, i.e., non-religious, while in Morocco the term *laykia* is used) and which was probably coined by Egyptian Christians. Often the word is confused with the word "atheism," generating a "semantic abuse." The debate about the relationship between laicity, religion, and secularism is very important and committed; it originates different positions, among which very interesting is the position of Ali Abderraziq, according to which "it is not possible to assert that laicity is rejected tout court by Islam"[11] on the basis of the sources and

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[10]An interesting analysis is in Ombretta Fumagalli Carulli, To Caesar What belongs to Caesar, to God What Belongs to God. Laicity of the State and Freedom of the Churches, Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2006, which highlights the contribution of canonical doctrine about laicity, following three areas of research (the emergence of the secular idea in European history, the position of the Italian state, the new frontiers of Europe).

[11]The statement refers to the work of Al-Azhar Ali Abderraziq theologian, L'Islam et les fondements du pouvoir (ed. La Découverte 1994), published in 1925, quoted by Abdou Filali-Ansary in The contrast between laicity and Islam it does not exist, transcription of the speech given by the author at the round table organized by Reset Dialogues on Civilizations

of all the Quranic verses in which one can believe or assume that there is an allusion to politics and its ideal conduction. However, there is a strong idea that between laicity (and all that belongs, such as politics) and religion, there is "an irreducible dichotomy and tangibile" (Abdou Filali-Ansary) and that religion always prevails.

However, it should be noted that at the basis of this idea, there is also a misunderstanding to be clarified, which could derive from a just principle regarding the need to moralize political life. The relationship between the religious and political dimension, between the community of the faithful (the *umma*) and the state community, can be understood in the perspective of faith-oriented Muslim humanism, which requires continuous attention for the earthly interests and needs as an adhesion to the divine will.[12] The debate on laicity is within the broader problem of modernity in Islam, which follows sometimes conflicting paths and lines of thought. The humanistic vision in Islam is based both on the foundation of faith and on the recognition of human reason (reason and piety are the expression of humanity itself).[13] In this perspective, the problem of laicity, and of the separation between politics and religion, can be observed as a practical and not ideological or theological problem. The political construction of Muslim society does not originate in a philosophical change, but first of all in a practical reason, concerning the best way to organize the political life of the community of the faithful in history, in order to best represent the faithful obedience to law. All the problems linked to laicity fall within this pragmatic framework, not marginal or minor. Therefore, going beyond commonplaces and easy judgments, it can be said that the practical datum of experience becomes the place of obedience to the

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and carried out in the context of the UNESCO World Philosophy Day (Rabat – Morocco, 16 November 2006). Abdou Filali-Ansary claims that Abderraziq, looking through all the Prophet's hadiths that could allude to politics, discovers "that in all those verses there was absolutely nothing that referred to a certain conduct which Muslims should adapt to, nor any institution or form of government that can be defined as an 'Islamic political system'." He — and this is perhaps his most important contribution, which we, through this continuous learning, are called to enhance — has advanced the idea that a fundamental distinction must be made between Islam and Muslims.

[12]Still scrolling the sayings of the Prophet, we read: "the best of you is not the one who rejects the ground for the divine or vice versa, but the one who takes from both of them." It is in the spirit of the Koranic vocation "not to forbid the goods permitted by God."

[13]This supremacy of knowledge and knowledge is present in some of the Prophet's speeches, in which we read "the reflection of an hour is better than the seventy-year service" and more "certainly the ink of the sages is more precious of the blood of the martyrs."

divine will and nothing prevents Islam from being compatible with laicity, with democracy, with humanism, and with modernity.

12.4 Dialogue Between Cultures and Religions Instrument to Strengthen Democracy and Create Tolerance

The aspiration for peaceful coexistence and the plural and multi-verse characteristic of the Mediterranean require that the social, political, and legal instruments are identified to achieve this goal and to protect the fundamental rights of the human person. Among the tools, dialogue, increasingly frequently indicated in international treaties and acts, has a peculiar effectiveness. The word dialogue (from the Greek *dià*, "through," and *logos*, "speech") has multiple meanings. In any case, it can be understood as a comparison between distant or opposite parts aimed at finding an agreement. The need for comparison, as a good coexistence practice, is typical of a society in which communication is a substantial element. However, to be effective, the dialogue must follow its own rules; it must have a procedure, a method, a goal, and a system of sanctions. Dialogue must play a strategic function aimed at identifying possible solutions between conflicting parties. The logic of the dialogue is contrary to the "reason of the fittest" since it does not favor overpowering, but a change necessary for the achievement of a shared goal and the protection of a superior common interest. Our societies are characterized by multi-culture and plurality (of religions, societies, economies, legal systems, and visions of life), phenomena that pose a problem of relations between different people and communities, with inevitable consequences in terms of understanding, communication, and cohabitation. However, coexistence (between different peoples, religions, and cultures), which also constitutes a significant effect of the globalization process, is, at the same time, an obligatory way for a coexistence of peace and progress, as an exaltation of fundamental human values and as an alternative to a perennial state of war and destructive conflict. Coexistence arises from the awareness that there is a condition of equality and substantial equality between the different visions of life, the different cultures, and the different religions, although there are many difficulties in affirming the equal condition. In this situation of potential conflict, dialogue becomes a suitable tool to overcome divergences toward common goals and to favor integration processes.

Obviously, the dialogue we are talking about is not only a good disposition of the soul but an instrument with political, social, and legal contents.

From a legal point of view, these new instruments push the right to produce and strengthen universally valid legal principles to govern the social effects of cohabitation of diversity. This means, first of all, favoring the democratic participation of "different" communities in the definition of the rules of cohabitation. In fact, the law cannot be limited only to registering diversity, but must govern it; that is, it must produce superior principles and a system of rules, which, within the polis, allow "different" people and communities to participate in democratic processes, to protect fundamental human rights, minority rights, and the right to identity.

The dialogue, as an effective legal instrument, already has its own regulatory framework of reference, at European level and in bilateral relations, including relations between states and religious communities. Without considering the 1995 Barcelona Declaration (which indicated the dialogue between religions and cultures for mutual knowledge and trust), which has lost its effectiveness, there are numerous international, bilateral, area acts that refer to the dialogue as a tool to build a stable relationship: for example, the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), born in 2003, which proposes action plans to strengthen more concrete and targeted cooperation; the projects of the European Union for the Mediterranean (UPM), born in 2008, which proposes forms of *ad hoc* cooperation on concrete projects; the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in which the "social dialogue," governed by Articles 151−156, constitutes a fundamental element of the European social model with its own procedures aimed at drawing up European social policy; and the "competitive dialogue" envisaged by Directive no. 2004/18/EC on the award of contracts for the construction of complex public works or the provision of public services.

Another example of the legal validity of the dialogue is that indicated in the concordats between the Holy See and the states, aimed at resolving legal disputes (for example, in the Italian concordat of 1984, Article 14: in the concordat between Poland and the Holy See 1997, Articles 27 and 28). The bilateral agreements of the Holy See with states, which especially with the pontificate of John Paul II have favored the path of dialogue, tend to protect the person and his inviolable rights, while general agreements in international fora (such as the OSCE) also tend to develop international texts containing humanitarian protection, in accordance with international law and according to the international commitments made to date by States.

We must mention the Council of Europe strategy which attaches great importance to intercultural dialogue, as an appropriate instrument to promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law while also strengthening social

cohesion, peace, and stability. The White Paper on intercultural dialogue "Living together in equal dignity" was launched in this direction. It was launched by the Foreign Ministers of the Council of Europe during their 118th ministerial session in Strasbourg on 7 May 2008. It stems from the awareness that cultural diversity is an essential condition of today's human society. Therefore, intercultural dialogue must be promoted to make "diversity" a source of mutual wealth, which fosters understanding, reconciliation, and tolerance.

12.5 Dialogue Beyond Tolerance: The Role of Religions

Cooperation and dialogue between religions, in the context of the complexity of the Mediterranean, assumes strategic importance as a way of achieving peaceful coexistence and balanced development (personal and social). Dialogue between religions is a necessary tool for cooperation between cultures and societies and suitable for achieving harmony. The initiative of the United Nations General Assembly lies in this direction when, in 2010, it adopted Resolution 65/5 of the month of October on the basis of which the "inter-religious week of harmony" was established. This was the final result of a long journey on the path of dialogue between cultures and religions started in 1999 with resolution 53/243, concerning the program of action for a culture of peace. The resolution on the week of inter-religious harmony recognizes the high moral value of dialogue between religions and beliefs for peace, mutual knowledge, and tolerance, and also considers inter-religious dialogue and mutual understanding as important dimensions for a culture of peace.

The UN message is transparent: to urge religions and cultures to dialogue and, at the same time, constitute a deterrent signal and a contrasting action for those who use religions for the purpose of violence. In addition, there are dialogue and meeting practices carried out by religious bodies, associations, and agencies, such as those of the Holy See on the subject of inter-religious dialogue and ecumenism (especially through the activity of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue), and meetings of San Egidio's community (which since 1987 has held meetings of prayer and culture as a continuation of the Assisi meeting wanted by Pope John Paul II in 1986), the Ecumenical Assemblies (just remember the recent third meeting held in Sibiu in Romania in September 2007) promoted by European Christian churches and by representative organizations such as CCEE (the Council of Episcopal Conferences of Europe) and CEC (the Ecumenical Council of Churches, which represents about 350 churches and religious denominations present

in more than 110 countries worldwide). Among the most recent initiatives, the international Islamic conference held in Madrid in June 2008 promoted the Saudi king Abdallah with the participation of the representatives of the monotheistic Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religions and of the Holy See.

These initiatives are of great importance also because they tend to stabilize the dialogue, reversing the trend compared to a recent past; they are even more relevant because they start from the recognition of the value of diversity and the importance of the heritage belonging to individual religions, which are recognized as equally respected experiences and as a necessity for the construction of a coexistence of peace, development, and solidarity.

Particularly interesting is the International Conference on Interreligious Dialogue promoted by the European Parliament in 2015 entitled "The rise of religious radicalism and the role of inter-religious dialogue in the promotion of tolerance and respect for human dignity," very much participated by religions. The dialogue between the different European cultures and religions dates back to 1992, by Jacques Delors, then president of the European Commission, for the need to create an ethical and spiritual dimension for European unity, going beyond economic and legal issues. This initiative, proposed periodically, finds its legal formula in Article 17 of the Lisbon Treaty, which provides for an "open, transparent, and regular" dialogue between the Union's institutions and the churches present in Europe. On this path, the project "Global exchange of religion in society" has recently been launched for the year 2020 with the aim of promoting all forms of inclusion.

In the delicate current moment, religions are "towards new areas of existence," different from those culturally and theologically considered traditional, more tolerant, and more inclusive, and closer to people's needs. This also happens because the problems and requests of the faithful grow, which strengthen the sense of belonging to a reality that constitutes the sense of existence. Migratory flows are an element that increases the role of religions, which take on a new awareness of the value of religious heritage. The meeting of religions goes beyond tolerance, even if this is an important goal. Religious tolerance is the condition through which the different faiths and practices of one or more religions, other than that professed for the majority within a people or nation, are accepted or allowed. It is, therefore, a concessive act that precedes any form of acceptance and makes sense if the ultimate goal of religions is to work toward common goals. In this direction is the subscription "Document on human brotherhood for world peace and common coexistence," signed on the occasion of Pope Francis' visit to the United Arab

Emirates in February 2019, signed by the Pope and by the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. The objective of the Document, which underlines the importance of the role of religions in the construction of world peace (also highlighted in various international documents), is clearly outlined in the conclusions and can be represented as an effort to converge the two religions (Islam and Christianity) toward common goals founded on faith in God, namely: an invitation to reconciliation and brotherhood among all (believers, non-believers, and people of goodwill); an appeal to every conscience to repudiate violence and blind extremism; and an appeal to those who love the values of tolerance and brotherhood, promoted and encouraged by religions.

Tolerance is only the first step because the way in which religions can be faithful to their message and to the service of the faithful and of people is the search for a common commitment to achieve common goals, in other words, to practice faith together and each with faithfulness to God.