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Applying Tolerance Indicators

APPLYING TOLERANCE
INDICATORS:

ASSESSING
TOLERANCE IN
EVERYDAY SCHOOL
LIFE

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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ASSESSING TOLERANCE IN EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE

INTRODUCTION

Education and schools are important for giving young people the knowledge and skills necessary for their active participation in a country's civic, political, social, economic and cultural life. Schools are also seen as important for transmitting values, attitudes and identities to new generations. Moreover, schools are places where many people meet, study and work on a daily basis. For students and teachers it is a very significant social environment. Their relations at schools determine how they perceive themselves in daily life and more generally, how they perceive themselves as part of the wider society.

The presence of cultural and religious diversity gives rise to a number of challenges regarding the regulation and organisation of everyday school life. Among the crucial issues are how people are allowed to express themselves as individuals and/or members of groups with different cultural, religious, political and other attachments and affiliations. This also concerns the extent to which significant practices and events are catered for by schools, e.g. the ability of prayer on school grounds, and the celebration of national and religious holidays.

There are good reasons to believe that it is an important human need to be allowed to express one's identity through dress and through everyday practices. If one is hindered from doing so, it could be regarded as a significant reduction of one's freedom (of expression). However, as the many debates on religious and ethnic diversity in schools and beyond have demonstrated, there can be a flipside to the notion of being able to stay true to one's identity and express it. Some people prefer to break free of the expectations that the social surroundings have of them, be they their parents, their peers, the national majority, the state and the school.

L'affaire du foulard in France and the French ban on religious symbols in schools is probably the best known controversy that relates to this problematique. Should students be able to express their religious identity in the way they dress and with symbols that they wear, or should they be free from having to stay true to any particular religious identity while at school? In view of the fact that education is mandatory in most countries and that not all people have private alternatives to public education available to them, the issue becomes all the more important.

While already a difficult matter when these issues concern students, it becomes even more difficult with regard to teachers. The issue in schools is that teachers are seen as authorities, in some cases even as representatives of the state. Thus, the question also arises as to whether and in what ways should teachers be allowed to express their individual religious or ethnic identities while at school?

Again, debates reveal a number of positions. First, the issue can be reduced to a question about the school as a work place and then whether bans on e.g. veils or religious symbols are instances of indirect discrimination in employment. Second, the issue can be addressed in terms of teachers as authorities and role models. On the one hand, it could be argued that teachers should be as neutral as possible in their appearance in schools in order not to affect students in any particular direction. There are on the other hand two arguments against this view. First, it can be questioned whether true 'neutrality' is really obtainable and whether this implicitly reflects majority standards for physical appearance and religious practice. Second, critics point to the possibility that allowing teachers from minority groups to express (as minimum through their physical appearance) their ethnic and religious identity will give students of minority groups a better sense of belonging and good role models to follow. They may also introduce majority students to a diversity that they may not otherwise experience.

As with students, teachers can experience social pressure from their surroundings to stay true to or to distance themselves from their (self-) ascribed identities, leaving the question about how different types of regulation and organisation of everyday school life affect personal freedom and peoples' sense of self somewhat open.

Regulations in different countries and regions vary in this regard. While for example religious symbols are banned on both students and teachers in France, they are allowed on students but not on teachers in the Land of Berlin (Germany). Other German Länder allow Christian headgear and symbols on teachers, but not Muslim equivalents. Denmark allows religious symbols such as Muslim veils on both students and teachers.

In this report, we survey eight countries **Denmark, Sweden, Germany, England, France, Ireland, Poland and Romania.**

We thus include a wide range of countries: old and new immigration countries and countries where new immigration overlaps with a longer established concern with the diversity that national minorities represent. By focusing on five key areas pertaining to the regulation and organisation of cultural and religious diversity in everyday school life, the guiding question is how accepting these countries are of cultural diversity. Our ambition is to provide an account of patterns of intolerance, toleration and respect across these eight cases. In the following notions a shorthand will be used respectively for intolerance, toleration and respect. 'Intolerance' is seen as a 'low level' of acceptance, toleration a 'medium level' and respect as a 'high level' of acceptance, hence making acceptance an overall and graded category.

PART 1. THE INDICATORS

In our attempt to evaluate by way of tolerance indicators the level of consciousness about and acceptance of ethnic and religious diversity in school life, we have decided to look at five areas, using nine indicators. The first regards regulation of ethnic and religious symbols and dress more generally on student and teachers (indicator 1.1. and 1.2. on dress codes for students and teachers). The second concerns whether schools ensure that minority parents are included into school life on an equal footing with the majority population, the crucial issue being whether communication to parents take into consideration their special needs so that they are able to understand properly what is going on in the particular school concretely and in the school system generally (indicator 1.3 on parent consultations). The third area concerns whether or not the school calendar is organised in such a way that minority national/ethnic and/or minority religious holidays are taken into account (indicator 1.4 and 1.5 on religious and ethnic/national minority festivities respectively). The fourth area regards whether and how religious and national celebration are accommodated in everyday school life (indicators 1.6 and 1.7 on the mode of celebration of national/ethnic and religious festivities respectively). The fifth area concerns religious tolerance and the possibility for minorities to practice prayer at school (indicator 1.8) and collective worship (indicator 1.9).

Indicator 1.1 Religious tolerance, Minority dress code for pupils

Indicator 1.2 - Religious Tolerance Minority dress code for teachers

Indicator 1.3 – Ethnic And Religious Tolerance Consultation between Parents and Teachers

Indicator 1.4 –Religious Tolerance: School Religious Festivities Calendar Organisation

Indicator 1.5 – Ethnic Tolerance: School Ethnic/National Festivities Calendar Organisation

Indicator 1.6 – Ethnic Tolerance: Mode of Celebration of National / Ethnic Festivities

Indicator 1.7 – Religious Tolerance: Mode of Celebration of Religious Festivities

Indicator 1.8 – Religious Tolerance: Provisions for Formal Prayer for Minority Religions at School

Indicator 1.9 – Religious Tolerance: Collective Worship

For each indicator, we rely on self-assessments. Country teams within the ACCEPT PLURALISM project not only have the contextual knowledge required for these evaluations, their evaluations occur (necessarily) on the basis of definitions of acceptance that are contextually appropriate and may not be completely shared. The comparative picture that thus emerges from evaluations provided by teams from eight

European countries may thus highlight interesting trends, parallels or discontinuities. Yet it should be read and understood with caution and readers are invited to critically follow the justifications provided by country teams for each score and to consult the extended assessments and evaluations provided in the country reports.

Note on the scores

Applying the indicators is not without difficulty. First, there are two ways in which indicators can be applied. One relates to the formal legal rules, another to the practice on the ground. The two can be in conflict, so that what goes on at the ground is really without the limits of the law.

Second, in some cases, the law is more or less silent on the matter pertaining to the tolerance indicators, so there really isn't any legal state of affairs. In these cases, the evaluation would have to be based on the practice on the ground. This however, leads to two different ways of evaluating the state of affairs.

Third, some countries, e.g. Germany, have a federal or decentralized structure which allows subunits to regulate the school sector. This means legal rules and/or practices vary and hence evaluations will have to vary from subunit to subunit (i.e. states or regions). An overall 'national' evaluation should be approached only with outmost caution. Fourth, to complicate matters further many national (or regional) school regulations allow for a high degree of local autonomy and discretion at the level of municipalities, school districts, local school authorities and/or individual schools. This means that the state of affairs may vary greatly within a given jurisdiction.

Making an assessment on the basis of the legal rules is obviously the most reliable way of making assessments, especially without representative survey data concerning to the practice on school grounds, nationally and locally. This 'legal approach' however, comes up short when the practice differs sharply from the formal rules, when the rules are silent and when they allow for flexibility.

In the assessments we have taken both aspects into account. Most often the legal framework is rather flexible and we have then, in most cases, aimed to base our assessments on our best impression of the general state of affairs, that is, how the practice plays out on the ground. It should be added, however, that not all national assessors have been equally confident of evaluating practice in the absence or as an alternative to assessing legal rules in the absence of solid survey data on - possibly highly differentiated - national and local practices. While some have been confident to venture a qualified guess, others have preferred to abstain from doing so.

For more information about each national case study please refer to the individual reports listed in the Annex.

What the indicators can and cannot show

Country scores on individual indicators should be interpreted as very condensed statements on the situation in a particular country (for a given time period) on this aspect. Scores represent contextual judgments by experts based on an interpretation of qualitative research and the available knowledge about the respective society in this respect backed by reference to relevant sources listed at the end of this comparative assessment. The “scores” cannot be understood and should not be presented without the explanations provided by the researchers.

Scores cannot be aggregated, scores on individual indicators may help to analyze the situation in countries in a comparative perspective, but from the fact that countries score higher or lower across a number of indicators we cannot infer that *ipso facto* a particular country as a whole is “more or less tolerant.”

Scores on individual indicators are not necessarily comparable; because different factors and reasons may have resulted in a particular score for a country (e.g. it may be that the score in one country only refers to a particular region). This means that scores can only be interpreted in a comparative way in relation to the explications and reasons provided.

For the Toolkit of the ACCEPT PLURALISM Tolerance Indicators please see here: www.accept-pluralism.eu

INDICATOR 1.1 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE, MINORITY DRESS CODE FOR PUPILS

With this indicator we look at the extent to which school regulations equally take into consideration the religious expression of majority and minority religion among students. As mentioned above, the ability to express one's religious identity similarly to everybody else may contribute significantly to the individual student's wellbeing at school and their perception of themselves as equal members of society. A low level of acceptance is found where there are different provisions for majority and minority members, while higher levels of acceptance imply a practical accommodation of minority for example by allowing minority students to change clothes on school grounds when required. The highest level of acceptance we find where any permission or restriction is provided equally to minority and majority religion pupils.

The indicator reveals that in terms of acceptance of minority students' religious expression things are going quite well in most countries with the possible exception of Sweden and perhaps Germany where there is an increasing tendency to try to prevent Muslim girls from wearing a veil. In other places, there are rather liberal approaches to the attire of minority students, which however, are generally administered locally by regions, municipalities, school districts or individual schools.

The main concern - if there is any - is that religious clothing may obstruct the educational activities. *Niqab* and *burqas* are seen as potentially obstructing communication in the class room and the identification of the individual students for example in connection with grading. The exception among the countries with medium to high acceptance, is France. France has a centralised rule banning equally all religious symbols. That, however, is considered to be furthering tolerance among students.

A number of problems can occur, when there is local autonomy and flexibility in the regulation of dress codes. This is due to the fact that different symbols and similar gestures may have different effects depending on the composition of the school population and the individual experiences among students. There may for example be certain peer pressure dynamics that play out differently from school to school, thereby affecting differently individual students' ability to express their (non-) religious identity.

LOW – non tolerance	There are different provisions regarding minority and majority religions: Thus (where religious symbols are authorized) only majority religious symbols are allowed while minority religious symbols are banned.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	No matter what the type of school and its rules regarding dress/uniform, there is a level of practical accommodation: for instance minority religion pupils are allowed to change inside the school if religious dress is not authorised within the school but required by some pupils in their daily life.
HIGH – acceptance	Conditions are equally applied: any permission and/or restrictions concerning religious dress code affect equally minority and majority religion pupils.

Table 1. Applying Indicator 1.1 Religious Tolerance Minority dress code for pupils to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	High	Generally no legal prohibition against religious symbols and they are generally thought to fall under the anti-discrimination legislation. Schools can regulate this locally to the extent that the way students dress affect the organisation and structure of the school day.
England	High	In practice, the majority of English schools have shown themselves accommodating towards expression of religiosity in everyday school life through religious dress. Conflicts usually only occur when its compatibility with features of school uniforms, which is near-universal at schools in England, is disputed or for a number of pragmatic reasons (e.g., 'health and safety'). Although the <i>Department of Education</i> encourages schools to accommodate religious differences, the decision about concrete terms lies with schools' governing boards.
France	High	Religious symbols are banned in French public schools (90% of the school population goes to state-funded public schools), and this applies to majority (Catholicism) as well as minority religions (Islam, Judaism, Protestantism, Sikhism...). The absence of religious signs in French state-funded public school is considered as fostering tolerance.
Germany	Medium / High	Big difference may exist between federal states and individual schools due federalism and to local school autonomy. No official prohibitions but growing numbers of schools try to prevent Muslim girls from wearing Muslim dress (headscarf)
Ireland	Medium / High	The main issue with regard to 'minority dress' has been with the Muslim hijab – most schools came to permit it, as long as it was in the school's uniform colours although there was no consensus on the issue. State and general denominationally issued guidelines for Catholic schools have underlined that no student should be prevented from wearing a religious symbol or garment, unless it obstructs the facial view and thereby obstructs communication.
Poland	[High]	Differences may exist between schools due to the autonomy of headmasters. However, generally the issue of religious dress has not been very dominant in the Polish context.
Romania	N/A	

Sweden	Low / Medium	This varies since it is decided by local authorities. In some cases there is a low acceptance, in others there is a medium acceptance implying more practical accommodation. Minor religious symbols in the form of necklaces are commonly accepted.
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INDICATOR 1.2 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE MINORITY DRESS CODE FOR TEACHERS

With this indicator we look at the extent to which school regulations equally take into consideration the religious expression of majority and minority religion among teachers.

As mentioned previously, the ability to express one's religious identity similarly to everybody else may contribute significantly to the individual teacher's wellbeing at school and to their perception of themselves as equal members of society, not to speak of their employment possibilities within the school sector. It may also play an important role in how teachers are considered as role models for students and more generally in society. Controversial issues arise to the extent that religious symbols on teachers are considered part of or wrongly interfering with their exercise of authority, formal, professional or personal, vis-a-vis students.

A low level of acceptance is found where there are different provisions for majority and minority members, while higher levels of acceptance imply a practical accommodation of minority for example by allowing minority teachers who need to change clothes to do so on school grounds when required. The highest level of acceptance we find where any permission or restriction is applied equally to minority and majority religion pupils.

Comparing the general level for acceptance across the cases we can see that the level is not quite as high when it comes to the acceptance of minority teachers wearing religious symbols compared to students. This may be due to the role as an authority figure that the teacher has in the school context. The lowest levels of acceptance are found in Sweden, Germany and England. The score for each country does however cover many local differences. This is most clearly the case in Germany where some states completely ban religious symbols on teachers, while others only ban Islamic/Muslim symbols but allow Christian ones, yet others again have no restrictions and apply the rules equally to all. In some cases, such as Denmark and England anti-discrimination legislation is likely to have some effect on the ability of schools to ban religious symbols. Again, as with the case of students, a concern for example in Denmark and Ireland is the covering of the face that the wearing of a *burqa* or a *niqab* may entail for the ability of a teacher to communicate and hence teach children properly. Among the countries with a high level of acceptance, France has a special position with its complete national ban on religious expression and the equal application of this ban to both majority and minority teachers.

The results could indicate that there is room for improvement when it comes to the acceptance of religious symbols on teachers. However, it should be borne in mind that this topic is highly politically charged because it relates to the issue to what extent the school should teach or endorse any particular religious observations and how the appearance of teachers as authority figures plays into this.

LOW – non tolerance	There are different provisions regarding minority and majority religions: Thus (where religious symbols are authorized) only majority religious symbols are allowed while minority religious symbols are banned
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	No matter what the type of school, there is a level of practical accommodation: for instance minority religion teachers are allowed to change inside the school if religious dress is not authorised within the school but required by some teachers in their daily life
HIGH – acceptance	Conditions are equally applied : any permission and/or restrictions concerning religious dress code affect equally minority and majority religion teachers

Table 2. Applying Indicator 1.2 Religious Tolerance Minority dress code for teachers to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	High	Generally no legal prohibition against religious symbols and they are generally thought to fall under the anti-discrimination legislation. Schools can regulate this locally to the extent that the way teacher dress affect the organisation and structure of the school day. A mainly theoretical issue has for example arisen with regard to wearing a burqa and how that would affect a teachers ability to teach children properly.
England	Medium	There is a considerable variety of types of schools within the English state system, many of which have a religious ethos and may have special requirements for employees (agreement with which may be a precondition for employment). Equally multilayered, the legal framework consists of protections under education, human rights and employment laws, with the latter now consolidated in the <i>Equality Act 2010</i> that extended non-discrimination law to religion and introduced a ‘public sector equality duty’ to act against religious prejudice. Yet the current government has expressed hostility towards this duty, which it sees to entail ‘unnecessary bureaucracy’.
France	High	Any restrictions concerning religious dress code affect equally minority and majority religion teachers. As educators teachers are prevented from expressing any religious or political belief in activity.

Germany	Medium	National scoring hardly possible: half of the federal states have laws banning headscarves for teachers, some of them at least in the word equally apply to all religions (scoring: middle) others target only Muslims (scoring: low). The other half of the federal states does not have any legal restrictions (scoring: high). On this background a medium score is given.
Ireland	Medium / High	There are no official state rules or policy on this matter. Each individual school/board of management thus determines its own rules regarding the 'dress code' for teachers in accordance with its respective 'ethos'. Guidelines from the Ministry of Education and guidelines issued for religious schools stipulate that no staff member should be prevented from wearing religious garment, unless it obstructs facial view of the person
Poland	[High]	Differences may exist between schools due to the autonomy of headmaster. However, generally the issue of religious dress has not been very dominant in the Polish context.
Romania	N/A	
Sweden	Low / Medium	This varies since it is decided by local authorities. In some cases there is a low acceptance, in others there is a medium acceptance implying more practical accommodation. Minor religious symbols in the form of necklaces are commonly accepted.

INDICATOR 1.3 ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE CONSULTATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS

With this indicator we are asking if and how schools attempt to create inclusion and give information to the parents of ethnic and/or religious minority students on terms which are likely to include them and ensure that they are receiving relevant information.

Crucial to this is whether there are efforts in arranging meetings with minority parents and whether these meetings are organised in such a manner that minority parents understand relevant issues about the local school and about the school system in general. This can obviously be done in a number of different ways. In Denmark, there have been examples of inviting only mothers to meetings on the assumption that some immigrant women are reluctant to turn up to meetings where there are men present. Other initiatives would include face to face interviews with school staff, supported by interpreters if necessary and based on training for maintaining a dialogue aimed at finding solutions to problems that may occur in relation to the participation of minority students in various educational activities at school.

Traditions for parent inclusion in different countries vary. In Denmark for example parents are required and expected to play an active role in the everyday activities at the school, turning up for class meetings and supporting various kinds of extra curricula activities, e.g. excursions. In other systems, the role of the parent is more formal and less active. Nonetheless, creating a good contact with parents (of minorities) can be crucial for how included minority families feel in the school environment and when it is successful it is likely to contribute to the academic success of minority students. When parents support and emphasise the importance of the child going to school and making an effort in the various studies, the child is more likely to adopt a positive attitude towards engaging in educational activities. Where the effort to include is less successful, the child may feel estranged from the school and its academic activities and start putting emphasis on other things which can provide it with status and a feeling of self. The cause-effect relationships in this area are necessarily complicated.

Low levels of acceptance in this area are found where no efforts are made to actively include minority parents and where no thought is given to the special needs that minority parents may have in order to be able to transgress the barriers that a majority dominated school system may entail for them. Higher levels of acceptance is found where there are some measures taken, and the highest level of acceptance is characterized by sustained and active efforts to include minority parents.

The application of the indicator reveals that most countries undertake a medium or slightly above medium effort to organise consultative meetings in schools with parents of migrant or minority background. There are some, but not very sustained efforts to make sure that linguistic or cultural obstacles towards parental participation are addressed. Generally, the practices vary locally depending on local authority and individual teachers and headmasters. This makes it difficult to make any rough and ready assessment of the 'state of affairs' in individual countries. In Denmark, a country with strong traditions for parent involvement, we witness active efforts to develop concepts for the inclusion and dialogue with minority parents. In other countries such as France, there are no particular efforts made although students may sometimes be called upon to act as interpreters for the parents in meetings with school staff. In France

there is currently a debate about whether mothers who help out with school excursions would fall under the ban against religious symbols in schools.

The results suggest that there may be room for improvement in terms of developing concepts for minority parent inclusion in European countries.

LOW – non tolerance	Teachers or school principals organise consultation meetings between parents and teaching staff without the participation of minority parents or without assuring that migrant or minority parents receive and comprehend relevant information. There are no provisions in place to address linguistic or cultural obstacles that affect migrant or minority participation in consultations.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	Teachers or school principals organise consultative meetings with migrant or minority parents but there are only minimal measures in place to make sure that parents understand the relevant issues affecting them. There is some, but no sustained, effort to ensure that linguistic or cultural obstacles towards parental participation are addressed.
HIGH – acceptance	Teacher-parent consultations are organised in a way that ensures that migrant or minority parents receive the relevant information and achieve an understanding of the local issues as well as of the school system more generally. Where there are obstacles in the way of parental participation in these meetings, special efforts are made to ensure the full participation of migrant/minority parents.

Table 3. Applying Indicator 1.3 Ethnic and Religious Tolerance Consultation between parents and teachers to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium / High	Schools are required by law to arrange parents meetings, including teacher parent conferences. Conscious efforts have been developed at the level of municipalities and under the auspices of the Ministry of Education to create a concept for constructive dialogues with parents of minority students. It is decided at individual schools how to organise meetings with groups of parents as well as with individual parents. Local school autonomy allows school to experiment and develop their own concepts, but how and to which extent necessarily varies.

England	Medium	In local multi-ethnic or predominantly ethnic minority contexts, the relationship between schools and the communities that they serve is varied and does not allow for strong generalizations. There is statutory guidance that envisages 'home school agreements' through which parents are to be informed about features of school life, school ethos and values (eg, punctuality).
France	Medium	Schools organize parent-teacher meetings but no special measures are taken so that minority parents understand. There are some practical accommodations, however: it is often the case that pupils serve as interpreters between their parents and their teacher.
Germany	Medium	This is based on an estimation since there are no relevant literature available and each individual school is able to make its own decision in this regard.
Ireland	N/A	
Poland	Medium / High	The practices vary as they depend on the attitudes of individual headmasters and teachers.
Romania	N/A	
Sweden	Medium / High	This varies according to different municipal practices. In some cases moderate efforts are given in this regard. In others there are more sustained efforts to include and inform minority parents.

INDICATOR 1.4 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: SCHOOL RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES CALENDAR ORGANISATION

With this indicator we look at the ways in which schools accommodate (or not) the fact that minorities have other religious holidays than the majority and that it may be important for them to attend these holidays without being unduly obstructed from doing so by the official school calendar.

Generally, school calendars are organised on the basis of the religious and national holidays of the majority and thus tend to be biased against minorities to the extent they need other days off to celebrate their holidays. Events such as Christmas, Easter and New Year are typical holidays in Europe but they only rarely coincide with the religious calendar of non-Christian beliefs and with other conceptions of the yearly cycle, e.g. the Vietnamese and the Chinese New Year.

Being able to participate in one's own religious festivities can obviously be important for most individuals, also because it usually, but not necessarily, reinforces the ties one has with one's family, relatives and religious community. Accommodating minority religious festivities thus adds to the welfare of the individual minority student and teacher at a private level.

In addition, taking into account minority holidays of minorities in the school calendar allows the school days and the planned instruction to go ahead without unnecessary interruptions because some students are missing on crucial days and it may generally reduce conflicts and discontent in connection with e.g. the holding of exams on days which are of high significance to specific minorities.

Moreover, the accommodation and recognition of minority holidays in a public official institution such as the school may significantly contribute to the self-perception of minority members that they are equally recognised members of society. In other words, it may have a generally inclusive effect to take minority holidays into account in the school calendar.

On this indicator, a low level of acceptance is associated with cases where the school calendar is organised on the basis of majority religion only and minorities are not allowed to take days off on their own holidays. The level of acceptance increases when minorities are entitled to justified absences from school and where certain school activities, e.g. exams, are rescheduled in order for them not to conflict with minority holidays. The highest level of acceptance is deemed to be found when minority holidays are included directly into the organisation of the school year so that there are days off, for instance in connection with the Chinese New Year and the Ramadan festivity.

The overall picture that emerges when applying the indicator is that most countries have a medium level of acceptance of religious minority holidays in the school calendar. A medium level of acceptance means that the school calendar of festivities and activities closely follows that of the national majority religion; however, minority and immigrant students can have their absences justified and may request the rescheduling of some activities or exams on the grounds of their particular religious celebrations.

Again, as with other indicators, there are a number of local variations most likely depending both on the composition of the student population at any particular school and the people in charge of making decisions.

The result implies that there is room for improvement when it comes to treating majority and minority members in regard to religious festivities in an equal manner. Obviously, the national majority calendar is often tied to notions of national culture and national identity - something which some school systems, e.g. the Polish and the Romanian, also want to inculcate in their students. And full neutrality in a school calendar is hard to imagine and probably even harder to practice because it would run up against social habits of society.

Yet, under the limitation of practicability (too many holidays would undermine continued teaching practice), including more minority festivities actively in the school calendar could add to the individual welfare of the minority student, make school life more practicable, and increase the feeling of inclusion among religious minority group members.

LOW – non tolerance	The school calendar of festivities and activities follows closely that of the national majority religion but minority and immigrant students can have their absences justified. Requests for rescheduling of some activity or exam can be individually examined and possibly accommodated.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	The school calendar of festivities and activities follows closely that of the national majority religion but minority and immigrant students can have their absences justified. Requests for rescheduling of some activity or exam can be individually examined and possibly accommodated.
HIGH – acceptance	The school calendar celebrates the religious festivities of major groups in society, not only of the majority. While for instance there may be longer holidays for the Christmas period, there are days off for the Chinese new year, the end of the Ramadan festivity etc.

Table 4. Applying Indicator 1.4 Religious tolerance: School religious festivities calendar organisation to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium / High	The official school calendar is based on majority holidays, but minority students' absences are usually justified. It is up to local schools and school administrations to formulate rules and make decisions in this regard. In areas with larger groups of students coming from minorities there is a general practice of taking their holidays into account in the school year planning, without however having them fully integrated at an equal level. There are no particular distinction made between minority national/ethnic holidays and religious holidays.
England	Medium / High	The practices that individual Local Educational Authorities (LEAs) adopt usually reflect the composition of the communities they serve. While it is common for schools with relatively small numbers of ethnic minority children not to expand their official calendars, in other parts of the country – such as in some London boroughs – Diwali (Hindu), Guru Nanak's Birthday (Sikh) and Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha (Muslim) may be official school holidays in addition to Easter and Christmas, or it may be up to individual schools to decide upon these taking into account the composition of the student body. Where this is not the case, there are exemptions for individual pupils in place and absences must be authorized except for days of religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.
France	Low / Medium	The school calendar follows that of the Catholic religion (All Saints' Day, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost and Ascension). As for minority religious festivities, there might be some accommodation in the sense that teachers may not schedule an important exam on the day of Aïd, for instance. But they are not compelled to do so and they might do it out of pure practicality (because they expect half of the class to be absent for instance).
Germany	Medium	This is an estimation since there are bound to be local variations. Generally, the school calendar is organised on the basis of majority holidays, but minority absences to attend own holidays are justified. There are no particular distinction made between minority national/ethnic holidays and religious holidays.
Ireland	Low / Medium	As the official 'standard' school calendar includes breaks for <i>Christmas</i> and <i>Easter</i> and all state schools also close on <i>Good Friday</i> (and not any

		other 'religious' holidays) – it can be considered that it tends to follow the Catholic/Christian 'national majority religion'. However, as individual schools/boards of management can use a number of 'discretionary days' for religious holidays according to their respective ethos, this can also be considered to represent 'minimal tolerance'. There is no official policy regarding the justification of absences.
Poland	Medium	Based on an estimate, there may be more than medium level tolerance in some instances meaning that minority holidays are integrated into the school calendar.
Romania	Medium	According to the Labour code all the religious legal holidays are part of the Christian Orthodox religion (Easter, Christmas and the Dormition of the Mother of God). However, the same law states that people belonging to other legally established religions other than Christian may be exempted from work (and school) for two days for each of the three annual religious holidays
Sweden	Medium / Low	This is up to local municipalities to decide so the practice may vary. An estimate is that generally minority absences are justified. In some cases this is however likely not to be the case.

INDICATOR 1.5 ETHNIC TOLERANCE: SCHOOL ETHNIC/NATIONAL FESTIVITIES CALENDAR ORGANISATION

Parallel to indicator 1.4. on minority religious holidays, we use this indicator to look at the ways in which schools accommodate (or not) the fact that minorities have other national holidays than the majority and that it may be important for them to attend these holidays without being unduly obstructed from doing so by the official school calendar. Generally, school calendars are organised on the basis of the religious and national holidays of the majority and thus tend to be biased against minorities to the extent they need other days off to celebrate their holidays.

As with religious holidays, being able to participate in one's own national festivities can obviously be important for most individuals, also because it usually, but not necessarily, reinforces the ties one has with one's family, relatives and national or ethnic community. Accommodating minority national or ethnic cultural festivities thus adds to the welfare of the individual minority student and teacher at a private level. In addition, taking into account minority holidays of minorities in the school calendar will allow the school days and the planned instruction to go ahead without unnecessary interruptions because some students are missing on crucial days and it may generally reduce conflicts and discontent in connection with e.g. the holding of exams on days which are of high significance to specific minorities.

Moreover, and again parallel to religious holidays, the accommodation and recognition of minority holidays in a public official institution such as the school may significantly contribute to the self-perception of minority members that they are equally recognised members of society. In other words, it may have a generally inclusive effect to take minority holidays into account in the school calendar.

On this indicator a low level of acceptance is found where the school calendar is organised on the basis of majority religion and national celebrations only, and where minorities are not allowed to take days off on their own holidays. The level of acceptance increases when minorities are entitled to justified absences from school and where certain school activities, e.g. exams, are rescheduled in order for them not to conflict with minority holidays. The highest level of acceptance is deemed to be found when the school calendar includes the ethnic/national festivities of major groups in society, not only the majority.

The general picture that emerges from applying the indicator is that national or cultural/ethnic minority holidays receive less attention than do minorities' religious holidays and that minorities in this regard are met with medium to low levels of acceptance in many instances.

This applies in particular to Ireland and Romania where national majority holidays unequivocally dominate the school calendar. In some countries, for example Denmark and Germany, there are no clear distinctions between ethnic/cultural or national holidays on the one hand and religious holidays on the other. In Denmark, there seems to be somewhat of a conflation between the two in that the secular school system regards religious holidays in general as cultural events rather than religious ones, strictly speaking. This may apply to other countries too.

The results indicate that there is room for including more minority holidays on the school calendar in order to signal the equal standing of minorities in society. For symbolic and practical reasons, this may be controversial. In the case of the former, school systems tend to be based on an ambition to equip the

students with an overall national identity; and national celebrations would be seen as important in this regard. In the case of the latter, indeed too many celebrations of various (minority) national or cultural holidays may interrupt the teaching schedule to such a degree that it may be difficult to maintain the required continuity. In general, there are fewer religious holidays than national ones (because of fewer religions than nations / ethnicities). So a possible alternative, both from a symbolic and a practical point of view, would be to place emphasis on national holidays which have a civic nature (in contradistinction to an ethno-cultural one). This would offer a notable potential for including all members of society irrespective of religious affiliations, e.g. the celebration of the constitution.

LOW – non tolerance	The school calendar is organised on the basis of the dominant nation celebrations. No deviations are allowed – absence of minority or immigrant children on days of their group’s ethnic or national day celebrations is not justified. No consideration of such celebrations is taken in the school exam, trip or other activities’ calendar organisation
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	The school calendar of festivities and activities follows closely that of the national majority but minority and immigrant students can have their absences justified. Requests for rescheduling of some activity or exam can be individually examined and possibly accommodated.
HIGH – acceptance	The school calendar celebrates the ethnic/national festivities of major groups in society, not only of the majority. The school takes a day off as appropriate or organises a similar event to celebrate both majority and minority national/ethnic celebration days.

Table 5. Applying Indicator 1.5 Ethnic tolerance: School ethnic/ national festivities calendar organisation to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium	National or ethnic minority holidays are not taken into account in the school calendar. However, there is no clear distinction made between cultural and religious holidays since religious holidays are mainly considered to be 'cultural events'. One point of view with regard to national minority holidays in the strict sense (i.e. non-religious holidays) is that there are too many minorities with different holidays to have them accommodated in the school calendar.
England	N/A	

France	Medium	<p>The school organizes festivities only on the basis of the French national celebrations.</p> <p>No special festivities are organized however and minorities are not obliged to attend celebration that they may feel uncomfortable with.</p>
Germany	Medium	<p>This is an estimation based on the variation between regions and schools. There is no clear distinction made between culture/ethnicity and religion.</p>
Ireland	Low	<p>Schools close for the Irish national holiday, St Patrick's Day on 17th of March. No other 'ethnic/national festivities' are officially recognised. There is no official policy regarding 'the justification of absence/presence' of students on these particular days/holidays</p>
Poland	Low / Medium	<p>Minority national celebrations may be taken into account but national/majority events and celebrations prevail in most schools.</p>
Romania	Low	<p>The Labour code establishes the days people are exempt from work or school for national celebrations, which do not include celebrations for ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Unlike in the case of religious minorities, the law does not provide persons belonging to ethnic minority groups with the option of requesting free days for other celebrations.</p>
Sweden	Low / Medium	<p>This is up to local municipalities to decide so the practice may vary. An estimate is that generally, minority absences are justified. In some cases this is however likely not to be the case.</p>

INDICATOR 1.6 ETHNIC TOLERANCE: MODE OF CELEBRATION OF NATIONAL / ETHNIC FESTIVITIES

One thing is whether minority national and ethnic holidays are taken into account by the school calendar, another is whether schools celebrate these, and how their celebration is in comparison to the celebration of majority holidays.

The mode of celebration has a similar impact to that of including minority holidays (religious and cultural/national) in the calendar, but has an additional meaning to it. The additional aspect consists in the direct positive ascription of value by an official public institution to a particular event/celebration. Where schools celebrate not only majority events, but also minority events, members of minorities are likely to feel recognised as valuable members of society and such celebration may therefore contribute to the general inclusion of minorities into society, to a feeling of belonging among them.

Another aspect of the celebration of national, majority or minority, is whether students are required to participate in them or whether they can excuse themselves if they do not feel it is appropriate. Being forced to participate in celebrations of different national or cultural content may go against one's conscience and one's self-identification. That is, the (propositional) content of the festivities may go against what one believes, one's convictions. And the identity that one is (or may be) ascribed by participating in particular events may go against how one identifies oneself and prefers to be identified. Therefore, it is important that students as a minimum are not obliged to participate in school events which disagree with their convictions and self-identity. But, perhaps better still, that schools organise both majority and minority celebrations in such a manner that majority and minorities develop an increased experience with and understanding for the each other's cultural celebrations. When done in this manner, mandatory participation by all in both minority and majority celebrations can be seen to represent a high level of acceptance.

With this indicator we hence look at the mode of celebration by schools of minority cultural festivities. A low level of acceptance is found where minority festivities are not taken into account and where minority students are not required to participate. A medium level, where students are able to be exempted from celebrations they do not feel comfortable with. The highest level of acceptance is found where schools celebrate both important majority and minority festivities in a manner that promotes mutual understanding and therefore requires all students to participate.

The indicator is unfortunately not applicable in many of the countries surveyed. However, in Denmark, Sweden and Poland where it is applicable we find a low to medium level of acceptance meaning that schools in these three countries tend to celebrate majority festivities, but allow minority students to be exempted when they feel uncomfortable attending.

This could indicate there is some space for improvement in European schools in their efforts to take in minority festivities in their program. On the other hand, and as mentioned above, some concerns about the symbolic and practical controversies and problems that this would entail should also be taken into account.

LOW – non tolerance	The school organises festivities only in relation to the national majority celebration days. There is no consideration of minority festivities and/or of difficulties that minority or migrant children may have in taking part in these festivities (because for instance their ethnic or religious community may be negatively portrayed in these festivities as ‘inferior’ or ‘inimical’ to the national majority). Participation in these festivities is obligatory for the students.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	The school organises festivities only in relation to the national majority celebration days. However, participation in these festivities is not obligatory for minority and migrant children if they feel uncomfortable.
HIGH – acceptance	The school organises celebrations not only for the national majority festivities but also celebrates important days for ethnic minorities (E.g. national independence days or days relating to the special cultural or ethnic tradition of a given group. Festivities organised by the school with the explicit aim of bringing majority children closer to the special traditions, music, folklore of minority cultures also qualify here). Majority and minority pupils are required to participate to both.

Table 6. Applying Indicator 1.6 Ethnic tolerance: mode of celebration of national/ ethnic festivities to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium	Minority students are always allowed to be exempted from participation in majority festivity celebration.
England	N/A	
France	N/A	
Germany	N/A	
Ireland	N/A	
Poland	Low/ Medium	Minority students are generally allowed to be exempted from participation in majority festivity celebration, although there are school where national celebrations are obligatory.
Romania	N/A	
Sweden	Low/ Medium	Organisation varies depending on municipalities. In some cases participation in majority celebrations are obligatory, in other cases students are allowed to opt out of participation.

INDICATOR 1.7 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: MODE OF CELEBRATION OF RELIGIOUS FESTIVITIES

School celebration of religious festivities has some of the same meaning to that of celebrations of cultural or national festivities, please refer above (indicator 1.6). They can also confer value on certain attachments and identities and they can contribute to increased understanding and acceptance between different (religious) groups of society.

Rules that apply to minority participation in majority celebrations in relation to religious festivities and the ways in which arrangements are made for increasing understanding between religious groups and between religious and non-religious groups could be said to be even more important than in regard to cultural/national festivities, since (some) religions claim a moral authority that 'cultures' do not. It would, therefore, be even more important to ensure that students are not obliged to participate in celebrations relating to religion which disagree with their convictions and self-identities or, alternatively, ensure that celebrations are organised in such a manner that they spur understanding between religious groups and between religious and non-religious groups.

With this indicator we hence look at the level of acceptance with regard to the way in which schools in the countries surveyed organise celebrations in relation to religious festivities. A low level of tolerance is found when schools celebrate only majority festivities or when schools apply a strong secular approach excluding all celebrations relating to religion. A medium level is found when minorities can be exempted from majority celebration, while a high level implies that celebrations are held for both majority and minority religious events and schools require all to participate in both.

The general picture that emerges from applying the indicator is that where applicable most countries have a medium to low level of acceptance with the possible exception of Denmark. In Denmark, certain major minority events, such as Eid or Ramadan, are also celebrated or acknowledged in some schools with a high percentage of minority children. These events, like the majority celebration of Christmas, is however, mainly framed as 'cultural' events not strictly as religious events. In England, something similar seems to take place in schools which have a high percentage of minority students. Poland and Sweden have more restrictive practices where it is not always a matter of course that students can be exempted from the celebration of majority festivities.

The results suggest that improvements could be made in the way that European schools address the issue of the mode of celebration of religious festivities. As a minimum, minority students should be able to be exempted if the events taking place disagree with their convictions and their self-identity. A possible route is to emphasise the cultural aspect of religion as opposed to the doctrinal one, and to open up to a more inclusive and diverse mode of celebration where all students participate. This will make celebrations more directed at mutual understanding and less towards the acceptance of controversial religious authority.

LOW – non tolerance	<p>The school organises religious celebrations only in relation to the national majority religion. There is no consideration of the different faith of minority or immigrant children. Participation in these festivities is obligatory for the students.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Religious festivities are excluded from the school programme. The school applies a strongly secular approach.</p>
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	<p>The school organises celebrations/special events only in relation to the national majority religious festivities. However, participation is not obligatory for minority and migrant children if they are of a different religion.</p>
HIGH – acceptance	<p>The school organises celebrations not only for the national majority religious festivities but also for minority religious celebrations (e.g. the end of the Ramadan, or the Jewish Passova). Both majority and minority pupils are required to participate to both.</p>

Table 7. Applying Indicator 1.7 Religious tolerance: mode of celebration of religious festivities to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium / High	Depends on individual schools. Many schools with high percentage of immigrant students acknowledge major minority festivities such as Eid, Ramadan alongside with majority festivities such as Christmas. Students are always allowed not to participate in these events if they are not comfortable in doing so.
England	Medium	It is for individual schools to decide whether to recognize and celebrate minority religious festivals. The ‘mainly or wholly Christian character’ of collective worship at English schools (see 1.9. below) does not preclude such celebrations or activities on the occasion of non-Christian holidays. Although no coherent overview of where such celebrations take place, it is reasonable to assume most cases of such celebrations will be in state schools with a high degree of diversity in its student body
France	N/A	

Germany	Medium	Each school deals with this differently. Celebrations of non-Christian religious festivities in school are however rare. Generally, all children participate in the Christian festivities, although they are not obliged to. This has not been a major debate in Germany yet.
Ireland	N/A	
Poland	Low / Medium	Varies from school to school as it depends on teachers and headmasters. In some schools, students are able to be exempted from participation in the celebration of majority festivities.
Romania	N/A	
Sweden	Low / Medium	Practices depend on municipalities and vary. In most cases there are only celebrations in relation to majority religious festivities and all are required to participate. In some cases, however, minority students can be exempted from participating.

INDICATOR 1.8 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: PROVISIONS FOR FORMAL PRAYER FOR MINORITY RELIGIONS AT SCHOOL

The possibility to actively practice one's religion while at school may be important for many religious people, students as well as teachers. In some religions, it is obligatory for believers to pray at specific times of the day, some of which fall within regular school hours. In facilitating the ability to pray, schools can thus be important in order for believers to live up to what their religion requires of them. In addition, practicing prayer is a way of expressing one's religion or just 'being who you are' (please refer above to the text regarding indicator 1.1. and 1.2). By allowing prayer on school premises, schools can thus accommodate religious believers and arguably structure the everyday life of school in such a manner that all can attend school equally while observing their religious obligations. This should also be considered in light of the fact that in many countries school attendance is mandatory. Many students have to attend the local (public) school since they typically do not have access to (other) private schools which would allow them to meet the requirement of attending school in an alternative way.

As always, matters are not simple and some argue that allowing prayer at school may turn into active religious proselytization on school premises and/or that it might facilitate a level of peer pressure towards religious conformity that some students would prefer to be without. That is, under certain locally varying circumstances the ability to express one's religion in this manner, may mean that others' freedom to have a school environment free from religious pressure is endangered. In the German Land of Berlin, precisely this kind of debate arose between those who argued for accommodating a desire to be able to practice prayer on school grounds and those who thought that it might lead to the kind of active religious proselytizing that would undermine a religiously neutral school environment (Mühe 2011).

Nonetheless, with this indicator we consider a low level of acceptance to be where schools ban minority students' prayer, even during breaks, while a medium level of acceptance implies that there are some arrangements put in place to facilitate individual prayer, for example exemption from breaks or the availability of space which can be used for prayer. We find high levels of acceptance where there is an active effort on the part of schools to accommodate prayer, to avoid conflicts between religious festivities and scheduled educational activities, and to foster understanding between different religious and non-religious groups.

When applying the indicator, the general picture we get is that most countries have a medium level of acceptance when it comes to minority prayer at school, meaning that students can be exempted during breaks and that space is made available for individual prayer. Schools in most countries seem to take a pragmatic approach to this in particular where there is a larger group of religious minority students. This also applies to Germany, which, as mentioned, had a recent case about prayer at school grounds in which the student wanting to practice prayer was decided against.

The results suggest that improvement could be made with regard to increasing the acceptance of minority religious practices in school. At the same time and as the German case demonstrates, it should be remembered that religious practices on school grounds can endanger the possibility of students to be taught in a non-religious environment. The dynamics of allowing prayer of this kind may vary much from

school to school. Moreover, other factors also need to be taken into consideration. The impact on and reaction of (children of) people who have fled the totalitarian religious regime in Iran may be significantly different from people who have a labour migration background, say from Turkey. It should also be noted that in some cases, the relationship between majority and minority at the national level is reverted in local schools so that those who are a minority at the national level become a dominant majority in individual schools.

LOW – non tolerance	Minority/immigration pupils are banned from prayer or other forms of worship during school hours and on school premises, including during breaks and free time.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	Some arrangements are in place to facilitate individual prayer/worship. This can include exemptions for religious pupils during breaks and/or space made available on school premises. No particular measures towards inter-faith understanding are in place
HIGH – acceptance	There is an active effort by school authorities to accommodate prayer/worship. Space is provided if necessary for groups of pupils to congregate. Where there are possible conflicts with the requirements of education or the school day, compromises are negotiated in good faith. There is an active effort by school authorities to provide for understanding between (differently) religious and non-religious pupils.

Table 8. Applying Indicator 1.8 Religious tolerance: provisions for formal prayer for minority religions at school to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	Medium / High	This varies from school to school in part depending on the composition of the student population. In general, accommodation is made for individual prayer and in some instances also for groups. Schools in general work to promote understanding between different religions and between religious and non-religious students. The latter is however often framed in terms of culture more than in terms of religion.
England	Medium	Even though there is no complete account of how accommodation of in particular Muslim prayer practices take place in England, it is reasonable to assume that facilities exist in most schools that cater for a significant number of Muslim pupils, though perhaps not always to a very high standard. For Friday prayers, where communal prayer at a mosque may be requested,

		the 1988 Education Act allows for children to be excused from school premises to receive religious education (subject to a written request by parents).
France	N/A	
Germany	Low / Medium	Based on an estimate of locally varying practices. . A recent court case decided against a boy, who wanted to pray in school. Other schools however provide neutral rooms for pupils of all religions to be used.
Ireland	Medium	There is no 'official policy' on this issue – each school develops its own policy/guidelines according to its ethos. According to guidelines for Catholic schools making up about 98 per cent of schools in Ireland, schools should consider how to cater to the needs of minorities to practice prayer and other religious rituals.
Poland	[Medium]	This has not been debated much in Poland. The Polish school system is formally secular and Muslims in Polish Schools are extremely rare.
Romania	N/A	
Sweden	Medium	This varies, depending on municipalities. In some cases there is no accommodation of minority students while in other cases, exemptions are made and space is provided for individual prayer. In a limited number of cases, prayer in groups is facilitated and there are active attempts at providing understanding between different groups of religious and non-religious affiliations.

INDICATOR 1.9 RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Religion is taught in schools in most European countries. The construction of how religion is fitted into the school schedule varies. In some cases, religion classes are non-confessional. Students are not taught a specific religion, but about religion in general and different religions. In other cases, classes are taught in a confessional manner, meaning that religion is taught as an ethical and moral system. In this case, the alternative to attending religion classes can be classes on ethics.

When religion is taught in a confessional manner it is most often taught by a teacher who has a certification by the religious community on which he or she is teaching. In some systems, where confessional teaching is not available, the school schedule opens time slots allowing students to receive classes on religion externally. Other systems do not regard it a public responsibility to facilitate confessional religion classes and such instruction is hence entirely privately organised.

Collective worship on school premises can be part of a system where religion is taught in a confessional manner. However, also in predominantly secular systems without confessional teaching, events take place which may have a religious dimension connected to it. An example could be the occasional hymn song around the Christmas tree at the school gathering in December.

Collective worship can be an important dimension of religious people's daily life and hence an important part of school life too. Being together in practicing one's faith arguably enhances not only faith itself, and the religious experience, but also the self-identity of the believer (even though not all religions place the same emphasis on the collective dimension of religious practice).

Collective worship in schools is nonetheless controversial because it very openly breaks with expectations concerning secularity, neutrality and equality that many people associate with the modern liberal state and its core institutions. As an institution with a certain level of public authority, the school may emphasise or cater to a specific religion thereby influencing students in an inappropriate manner, - if judged from a general liberal point of view. Nonetheless, in some European school systems, collective worship generally still takes place.

With this indicator we look at how collective worship is conceived and practiced in schools in the surveyed countries in Europe. With regard to minorities, a low level of acceptance is found where collective worship takes place and reflects majority beliefs only, either ignoring or rejecting minority beliefs. A medium level of acceptance is found when minority students are allowed to be exempted from participation in collective worship practices. The highest level of acceptance is found when school gatherings with worship and similar symbol purposes positively take into account the diversity of beliefs within the student body, and aim to promote mutual respect and understanding.

The application of our indicator on collective worship suggests that with the exception of Romania (and possibly Denmark), most countries have a low to medium acceptance of minority religions. Hence, there is collective worship or similar events during school hours which reflect majority beliefs and tend to ignore or reject beliefs of minority/immigrant students. However, in most cases, minorities are exempted from participation. Ireland, Romania and to some extent England place a conscious emphasis on the religious dimension in school life. The guidelines for the catholic schools in Ireland are perhaps both the most striking and the most unsurprising at the same time (please refer below). Here, there is clear emphasis on

the importance of inducing children to have a religious dimension in life. Other countries, such as Denmark and Germany place less emphasis on the specifically religious dimension of education and in many instances emphasise the cultural dimension of what are strictly speaking 'religious events'.

The results suggest that improvements could be made with regard to the acceptance of religious diversity in relation to collective worship. However, as remarked in relation to the possibility of individual prayer at schools, these issues are controversial and due consideration should be given to how social dynamics play out in concrete school contexts.

LOW – non tolerance	Where it exists, collective worship during school hours or other ceremonies of a primarily symbolic purpose reflect majority beliefs and either ignore or reject beliefs of minority/immigrant pupils.
MEDIUM – minimal tolerance	Where it exists, religious minority or non-religious pupils are exempted from collective worship.
HIGH – acceptance	Religious meetings, where such meetings are organised, take positively into account the diversity of beliefs in the student body and seek to promote mutual respect and understanding.

Table 9. Applying Indicator 1.9 Religious tolerance: collective worship to eight European countries

Country	Score	Notes
Denmark	[Medium / High]	Formally, no collective forms of worship exist. Students are always able to be exempt from participation if they feel uncomfortable with it. Events which have a religious reference are typically considered 'cultural events' and usually aim at promoting mutual understanding between different worldviews.
England	Medium	The 1944 Education Act provides for a daily act of collective worship at all non-faith state schools, which must be ' <i>wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character</i> '. This provision has been clarified to mean that ' <i>only a majority of acts in each term must meet that requirement.</i> ' Moreover, ' <i>any act of worship can contain non-Christian material</i> '. Parents can withdraw their children from this act of worship. Schools can apply for an exemption from the 'Christian requirement' and decide upon an alternative arrangement for worship (such as for example in the London Borough of Brent). In such cases in multi-faith areas, there is evidence that schools attempt to reflect the composition of the communities they serve by expanding modalities of

		religious celebration.
France	N/A	
Germany	Medium	Collective worship does not exist in all school. In certain schools, which celebrate for example Christmas, non-Christian students are not obliged to participate.
Ireland	Low / Medium	There is no 'official policy' on this issue –each school develops its own policy/guidelines according to its ethos. Guidelines for Catholic schools emphasise that prayer is an important part of the school ethos and that students of other than the Catholic faith while not having to participate directly could be 'encouraged to use the time to pray quietly in their own way, thus honouring the spirituality of all of the students.' Catholic school guidelines open up for the arrangement of inclusive 'prayer services' which may highlight important festivals of other faith traditions (e.g. Ramadan, Diwali or Hanukkah).
Poland	Low	In Poland there is formally no collective worship outside of religion classes.
Romania	High	While the current legislation does not make direct reference to collective worship/ prayer, this may occur during some religion classes. The Law of Education stipulates: The curricula of primary, secondary and vocational education should include religion as a subject of study. Upon written request of the student or his/her parents or legal guardian if the student is underage, the student can be exempt from religion classes. Moreover, students belonging to religious faiths recognized by the state can exercise their constitutional right to freedom of religion. They must be provided with the alternative of participating in a religion class of their own confession (regardless of the number of students requesting the class).
Sweden	Low	No specific considerations are made for minority students in connection with regards to collective worship in Swedish schools.

Table 10. Comparative country overview

Country	1.1 Pupil Dress Code	1.2 Teacher Dress Code	1.3 Minority Parent Consultatio n	1.4 Religious Festivities in Calendar	1.5 Ethnic/ National Festivities in Calendar	1.6 Celebrating Ethnic/ National Festivities	1.7 Celebrating Religious Festivities	1.8 Formal Minority Prayer	1.9 Collective Worship
Denmark	High	High	Medium / High	Medium / High	Medium	Medium	Medium / High	Medium / High	[Medium / High]
England	High	Medium	Medium	Medium / High	N/A	N/A	Medium	Medium	Medium
France	High	High	Medium	Low / Medium	Medium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Germany	Medium / High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	N/A	Medium	Low / Medium	Medium
Ireland	Medium / High	Medium / High	N/A	Low / Medium	Low	N/A	N/A	Medium	Low / Medium
Poland	[High]	[High]	Medium / High	Medium	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	[Medium]	Low
Romania	N/A	N/A	N/A	Medium	Low	N/A	N/A	N/A	High
Sweden	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Medium / High	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Low / Medium	Medium	Low

PART 2. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned in the introduction, it is difficult to use the indicators comparatively in a rough and ready manner. However, the overall impression that can be gathered from the analysis above is that generally, there is a higher level of acceptance of minority self-representations in schools and with regard to the inclusion of minority parents into school life, than there is when it comes to opening up the school calendar for minorities and with regard to minority religious practices and beliefs. In the latter two instances, school life in the countries surveyed generally only reaches what in terms of the ACCEPT PLURALISM Tolerance Indicators are defined as 'minimal tolerance' i.e. that individual and group difference is allowed to exist within the public space but no special measures are taken towards their accommodation and inclusion.

Accommodating minority religion and culture is a way of furthering the welfare of minority members at an individual level and can also contribute to a general sense of equality and inclusion into society among minorities. It may further a greater mutual understanding between the many cultural and religious groups that live side by side in European society today.

Throughout this report, it has been argued that there is space for improvements when it comes to the acceptance of minority culture and religion in everyday school life.

One possible policy response would be to issue national legislation which mandates more inclusive practices. However, as we see, in many countries issues concerning everyday school life are left to local decision makers: local school authorities, schools and headmasters. And there may generally be good reasons for leaving such decisions to be made according to the particular circumstances that apply in each school context. For, as also suggested above, the dynamics involved accommodating different cultural and religious needs and requests, be they majority or minority, may vary significantly from context to context, and from school to school.

In the ACCEPT PLURALISM project, we reviewed a number of debates on culture and religion in everyday school life in European countries (Olsen 2012). The study revealed that in many cases there was a conflict between two different, but equally fundamental interests. On the one hand there was the interest of the *freedom of religion*, the interest in being able to express one's religious identity while at school, in dress and e.g. the practice of prayer. On the other hand, there was a request to be free from strong religious influence while attending school, in short a *freedom from religion*, be it that of the state, the national or local majorities, and even that of one's parents.

Since none of these two interests seem unreasonable - and are generally recognised as important - and since they point in fundamentally different directions, no 'one-size-fits-all' solutions would be able to dissolve the conflict between them. Rather than being resolved, it will therefore have to be 'handled' in concrete contexts, at concrete schools.

However, the problem with local decisions is that they become arbitrary if decision makers do not take into consideration the interests of those affected. Locally exercised discretion can undermine the protection of students' and parents' rights. This is also why the organisation of parent consultations enabling good quality communication with all parent groups is of high importance.

Within the framework the ACCEPT PLURALISM framework we have recommended models for 'appreciative dialogue' to be put in place in order to handle conflicts that may arise from different cultural and religious needs and requests.

Due to the asymmetries of power, the obligation to initiate dialogue should lie with the school staff / local school authorities. School staff ought to be trained in a form of dialogue that opens up for positive solutions to problems and which is inclusive towards the viewpoints of all groups of students and parents. The model of 'appreciative dialogue', developed by professional communities dealing with cultural and religious diversity within social policy implementation, housing and education, is not a one-size-fits-all solution in terms of its content, but is a procedural model which, when applied appropriately, would be able to generate solutions and compromises to problems and conflicts in an equitable manner in the school community, taking into consideration local circumstances and social dynamics. It may therefore be the better way of bringing forward the agenda of creating more equal and inclusive everyday school life conditions for cultural and religious minorities in Europe.

FURTHER READINGS AND COUNTRY REPORTS:

[Let's Talk About It: Accommodating religious diversity in Europe's schools](#)

By Tore Vincents Olsen, Aarhus University (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/22240>

[ACCEPT PLURALISM Tolerance Indicators Toolkit](#)

By Anna Triandafyllidou, European University Institute (2013)

Download your copy from: <http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/ToleranceIndicatorsToolkit/ToleranceIndicators.aspx>

[Conceptions of Tolerance and Intolerance in Denmark: From Liberality to Liberal Intolerance?](#)

By Tore Vincents Olsen and Lasse Lindekilde, Aarhus University (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/23255>

[Concepts and Practices of Tolerance in France](#)

By Riva Kastoryano and Angéline Escafre-Dublet, CERI Sciences Po', Paris (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/23254>

[Tolerance Discourses in Germany: How Muslims are Constructed as National Others](#)

By Nina Mühe, Europe – University Viadrina (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/23404>

[Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in Ireland. Concepts and Practices](#)

By Iseult Honohan and Nathalie Rougier, University College Dublin (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/23258>

[Tolerance of Cultural Diversity in Poland and Its Limitations](#)

by Michał Buchowski and Katarzyna Chlewińska, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/24381>

[Tolerance and Cultural Diversity Discourses in Romania](#)

By Sinziana-Elena Poiana, Ioana Lupea, Irina-Madalina Doroftei and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, SAR (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/24380>

[Tolerance and cultural diversity in Sweden](#)

By Hans-Ingvar Roth and Fredrik Hertzberg, Stockholm University (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://www.accept-pluralism.eu/Research/ProjectReports/NewKnowledge.aspx>

[Tolerance and Cultural Diversity in the UK](#)

By Jan Dobbernack, Tariq Modood and Nasar Meer, University of Bristol (2012)

Download your copy from: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/23256>

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Mühe, N. 2011 *(In-)Tolerance towards religious minorities in German schools Religious diversity challenges in regard to Muslim religious practice and education*, ACCEPT PLURALISM Working Paper 16/2011, Florence: European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Olsen, Tore V. 2012 'Tolerance and Intolerance in European Education - On the accommodation of diversity in everyday school life,' in M. Maussen & V. Bader (eds), *Tolerance and cultural diversity in schools. Comparative report*, Florence: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, ACCEPT PLURALISM 7th Framework Programme Project.

About ACCEPT PLURALISM – project identity

Acronym	ACCEPT PLURALISM
Title	Tolerance, Pluralism and Social Cohesion: Responding to the Challenges of the 21st Century in Europe
Short Description	<p>ACCEPT PLURALISM questions how much cultural diversity can be accommodated within liberal and secular democracies in Europe. The notions of tolerance, acceptance, respect and recognition are central to the project. ACCEPT PLURALISM looks at both native and immigrant minority groups.</p> <p>Through comparative, theoretical and empirical analysis the project studies individuals, groups or practices for whom tolerance is sought but which we should not tolerate; of which we disapprove but which should be tolerated; and for which we ask to go beyond tolerance and achieve respect and recognition.</p> <p>In particular, we investigate when, what and who is being not tolerated / tolerated / respected in 15 European countries; why this is happening in each case; the reasons that different social actors put forward for not tolerating / tolerating / respecting specific minority groups/individuals and specific practices. The project analyses practices, policies and institutions, and produces key messages for policy makers with a view to making European societies more respectful towards diversity.</p>
Website	www.accept-pluralism.eu
Duration	March 2010-May 2013 (39 months)
Funding Scheme	Small and medium-scale collaborative project
EU contribution	2,600,230 Euro
Consortium	17 partners (15 countries)
Coordinator	European University Institute Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies
Person Responsible	Prof. Anna Triandafyllidou
EC officer	Ms. Louisa Anastopoulou, Project Officer, Directorate General for Research and Innovation, European Commission