

# WESTERN MULTICULTURALISM: NEW CHALLENGES AND DILEMMAS

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**A**ccording to studies conducted in 2012, 39% of those surveyed believe that religious discrimination in the European Union has become widespread. This figure in France is 66%, Belgium - 60%, Sweden - 58%, the Netherlands - 51% and United Kingdom - 51%.

Thus, events show that the religious tolerance and multicultural values of the West are based only on the imposition of their own religious values on others. In this case, the European countries that are characterized as immigrant countries are only trying to assimilate immigrants - carriers of another culture and religion. In other words, multiculturalism can be perceived only as the dominance of Western values and as a component that is no different from a mosaic formation. In Europe, the population of which represents different cultures and nations today, it is a threat to the future of multiculturalism. But the reality is that the future fate of Western-style multiculturalism depends on the dialogue between Christianity and Islam and the coexistence of religious and secular values in Europe.

This is the only way out of the crisis. Only in a tolerant society, does multiculturalism promote the mutual enrichment of cultures and the formation of a system of values that unites different peoples.

**The democratic principles of the West facing a test by an economic crisis.** The economic decline observed on a global scale at the present time has a negative impact on the multicultural values of the West. For example, the attitude to new residents in countries with high levels of economic crisis, especially unemployment, is even more aggressive. The French newspaper "Le Parisien Dimanche"

conducted a survey to examine the attitude of the French to the referendum in connection with the restriction of the free movement of labor migrants within the EU. 60% of the respondents admitted that they advocate a limit on the quota stipulated for immigrants.

Rising unemployment among the dominant nation and weak social guarantees amid the rising number of immigrants in Europe show how unstable the multicultural values and tolerance of the West are. There is an opinion that the cause of the collapse of the European model of multiculturalism is the inability of immigrants to integrate into the norms of Western life, as well as the loyalty of European laws that are guided by the principles of democracy and the rule of law. This course of events led to a rise in the number of supporters of the extreme nationalist ideology and right-wing political parties and racist and chauvinistic actions.

Obviously, you need to take for granted the fact that as the economic situation worsens, immigrants once invited by the European countries themselves face an attitude that goes beyond human values such as justice, democracy, tolerance and human rights. This should be seen as the preservation of Western identity itself. Even if the current policy towards immigrants is a step back, the political leaders of Europe will not abandon these steps.

The invitation of labor force from abroad depending on the economic situation and discrimination against these immigrants in the future are incompatible with multicultural values. If the abandonment by this labor force of its own national and spiritual values is seen as the triumph of multiculturalism, then what kind of a tolerant approach



can we talk about? In our view, the collapse of multiculturalism, about which they are sounding the alarm, is a consequence of the false policies of the Western countries. Obviously, the tolerant attitude of the West towards multiculturalism failed to resist the economic crisis.

**Multiculturalism and immigration policy.** In the issue of the crisis of multiculturalism that is on the agenda today, the role that the immigration policy of the European countries played in it is noteworthy. At the same time, the philosophy of life in the attitude of the West to aliens and historical traditions are of primary interest. Back in the era of the Roman Empire, the Romans called the

city in which they lived the "Eternal City", whose residents put themselves above others. It was believed that a real Roman has special values and is different from all others, including those who came from other countries. Exploring the issue of civilizations, Roger Osborne writes: "The consideration by the Greek, Hellenistic and Roman civilizations of all other peoples and cultures as 'a barbarian world' later became the beginning of Western civilization's approach to other civilizations as a whole on the basis of the criteria of discrimination" [4]. The place of immigrants in European society is based on the same principles.

It can be argued that one of the important causes of



the instability of multicultural society in today's sense is the immigration policies pursued by Western European countries, as multiculturalism in the original sense was considered an approach that implied the attitude to national minorities. But later multiculturalism started to be presented as a policy stimulated by official circles in Europe and aimed at the integration of migrant workers in the common cultural values. But this policy failed. No matter how much European politicians say today that they consider the arrival of migrant workers to be temporary, it does not reflect the reality, because for the first time Europe used an approach in relation to immigrants, which gave them the status of national minorities.

Unlike European countries, the world has seen enough countries that have a strict immigration policy and have no problems with multiculturalism. As a successful model, we can note Japanese experience. Japan's immigration laws are extremely conservative. In this country, the receipt of citizenship entails rather complicated procedures. The state regulates the level of migrant workers with specific rules and there is no reason to speculate on political grounds. With regard to Chinese, Korean and Brazilian immigrants living in the country, there is no discrimination or problems.

In Azerbaijan, where multiculturalism is seen as a way of life, it is also not in crisis. Azerbaijan, located at the intersection of East and West, North and South, Christianity and Islam, different civilizations and cultures, confirms the eternal tenacity of multiculturalism. "A multinational state – a united society" - this is the successful model of multiculturalism in Azerbaijan.

Speaking at the Second Baku International Humani-

tarian Forum, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said that "multiculturalism is our way of life. Despite the fact that it is a relatively new concept, multiculturalism has been inherent in our nation for centuries. For centuries, representatives of different religions and nations have lived in Azerbaijan as one family." The main condition for the success of multiculturalism is the coexistence of human and national values, as well as protection of the national identity of peoples in the circle of the multicultural system of values.

Thus, the failure of Western experience does not mean the decline or collapse of ideas of multiculturalism forever. Successful practice in different regions of the world confirms that representatives of other nations and religions are able to develop, preserve their identity and be respectful to others. You just need to take it not as an ideology that is trying to assimilate the differences, but as a daily way of life that has existed for centuries.

**Ways that are visible after the crisis.** The perception of coexistence of carriers of different civilizations and cultures in the same area and their mutual enrichment as a way of life - that is the salvation of mankind. The ideology aimed at standardizing values is not only in crisis, but has also lost the right to life. At the same time, steps taken by the new Europe in the direction of determining its future fate can be grouped as follows.

Firstly, integration through assimilation. The main goal of the multicultural policy of Europe is still not to ensure the integration of immigrants into the country of arrival, but to isolate them from political society and assimilate them. For example, in Germany, the policy of multiculturalism is focused not on the integration of immigrants and their future generations into German society, but on the isolation of immigrants from society and their eventual return to their homeland due to linguistic, religious and other obstacles. In this regard, a professor and expert at the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Vladimir Malakhov, said: "Multicultural measures have been directed in Germany at segregation rather than integration" [5].

Secondly, the inclusion of second-generation immigrants in the cultural and socio-political life of society. In this connection, we can note the policy of the Italian authorities. It is no coincidence that former Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said: "We get a huge potential resource from immigrants. It is necessary to follow the path of integration. The future generation of immigrants should be a generation of Italians."

Thirdly, stimulation of cosmopolitan values in the glob-



al space. Since the West faced a crisis, it has been trying to impose Western values as universal ideas on a global scale in order to get out of it. This stage can be described as an attempt towards giving the Western model the status of a universal value. In other words, the imposition of Western values on immigrants who have just arrived in Europe begins before their immigration during their stay in their own country. In this way, the West intends to solve problems in relation to immigrants in European society at the expense of cosmopolitan values that go beyond national and cultural mentality. Today, processes of globalization in the plane of multiculturalism are aimed at creating a universal model of cultural values. In this new trend, the main feature is that Western culture is not limited to imposing its own cultural values but takes control of the formation of value criteria and other cultures.

Fourthly, a tough immigration policy. The referendum in Switzerland held in February 2014 on the restriction of immigration flows from the European Union and introduction of quotas for labor force is an indicator of the beginning of a new trend in this direction. This indicates that there are tendencies to restrict migration

not only from the outside, but also between European countries themselves.

Thus, at present European states are looking for ways out of the crisis of multiculturalism mainly by tightening the immigration policy and stimulating cosmopolitan values without considering national and spiritual characteristics. The current moment will be a new test for the West and for all mankind. And time will show how mankind will pass this test with the measures that are being taken. ❁

### References

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