

receiver of immigrants from every corner of the world. In the future, Western Europe must continue to accept increasing numbers of immigrants due to a declining birthrate and skills shortages.

### *The Interplay of "Old" and "New Minorities"*

In countries with established primary and secondary ethnicities (particularly in Western Europe), more recently arrived groups face difficulties because culture is often seen in zero-sum terms. Immigrants' desire to retain aspects of their identity (eg. wearing *hijabs* and turbans) has been met with suspicion and resentment from local populations. A series of public policy questions have arisen from this issue, most notably: 'How does the state respond to diversity?' While some European states have adopted assimilationist models (eg. France), others have opted for a multicultural model (eg. The United Kingdom). As well, the *gastarbeiter* model of non-integration of other identities was long pursued by Germany.

Some EU states have modified their older approaches to integrate "new nationalities." In the Netherlands, for instance, old policies of addressing religious plurality were extended towards immigrants, thus allowing for greater integration. As well, in Sweden, the social welfare system has taken on a more multicultural character. The problems resulting from the "new minorities question" highlight the need for a European-wide common asylum and refugee policy.

### THE EMERGING EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The increasing importance of European Union symbols and institutions may be engendering a newfound European identity. The rights of citizenship conferred by European Union institutions could play a significant role in fueling sentiments of pan-European identity, which are seen by many as an important and necessary consequence of political and economic integration. Since holding multiple identities not uncommon in Europe, a new European identity is not likely to completely phase out state loyalties and nationalisms, some argue. Hence, European governing institutions could be more pro-active in nurturing a European identity among citizens. This could be achieved through public education, especially at the school level.

However, the concept of European identity is still fraught with difficulty. Without any enduring symbols and common memories, the European identity lacks the depth of culture and history to bring about a change in citizens' perceptions of their identities. Recognizing these difficulties, any attempt to create an artificial European cultural identity could backfire in the long-run.