



European Forum for the Arts and Heritage

2007 Communication on Culture - Contribution to the on-line consultation
European Commission – Directorate General Education and Culture
Friday, 3 November 2006

A. Important challenges

1. Are art and culture linked to the process of European integration and how can they contribute to it? (*max 500 signs*)

As a field of exchange, debate, creativity and production of meaning, culture is a key building-block of European political integration, which requires an awareness of who we are and what we want to be. Cultural expression is the bedrock of that common ground of symbols, meanings and experiences. To implement its social and political agenda the EU needs to strengthen its cultural dimension, not as an imposition of uniformity but as enhancement of cultural diversity and growing opportunities for cooperation and exchange.

2. Which are in your view the most important cultural challenges for Europe and for the European project in the 10 years ahead? Please explain briefly your choice.

deepening of European integration
enlargement of the EU
cultural diversity
intercultural dialogue
emergence of a European identity and citizenship
other(s)

Please rank the challenges in decreasing order of importance (max. 250 signs per challenge)

Intercultural dialogue

To strengthen civil society and foster social inclusion, the EU has to identify and reinforce the spaces where cultural identities enter in dialogue. Long-term support for the creation of lasting intercultural relationships and the development of intercultural competences is needed.

Cultural diversity

The EU should protect and promote cultural diversity, for example by enhancing the cultural rights of minorities and of individuals in general. “European identity” or “common values” should not be captured in cultural terms, but in political i.e. democratic terms.

Other - Emergence of a European public sphere and citizenship

Intercultural competences, when wisely exploited in a spirit of participatory democracy, can open zones of communality, reinforce citizenship and give sense to civic engagement. Cultural expression has to be recognized as a fundamental human right.

3. Do you think that culture plays a role in individual personal development and social cohesion in Europe? If so, please indicate how this role could be supported at European level? (*max 500 signs*)

Culture is a tool of expression and self-realisation in personal and social development. It allows individuals and communities to deal with their heritage and memory and to conceptualize their individual and collective futures. It opens dialogue, helps understand cultural differences and surpass them, and allows individuals and groups to go beyond their exclusive identity stances, based on ethnicity, religion or some other marker. This cultural dimension of individual and social development has to be recognised at EU level and mainstreamed in all relevant EU policies.

4. Do you see a role for culture as a stimulus for creativity in Europe and as a catalyst for innovation and knowledge? If so, please indicate how this role should be supported at European level? (*max 500 signs*)

Even if the arts and culture should not be measured only in economic terms, it is recognized that cultural tools are indispensable in nurturing creativity and imagination. To support the development of a creative society, the EU should not only consider the commercial value of culture but transversally recognize its role in all the policies which directly or indirectly help develop cultural creativity (education, research, youth, etc.).

B. The cultural sector, Community policies and cooperation in the European Union

1. Which are the most important challenges for the cultural sector in the European Union in the 10 years ahead?

organisation, expression and representativity of the sector, legal and regulatory environment, European agenda for culture, financing of culture, national policy (-ies) for culture, Community policy for culture, cultural cooperation with third countries, Community culture programmes, other(s) (max. 250 signs per option chosen)

Please rank the challenges in decreasing order of importance.

Community policy for culture

The existing legal basis (art. 151) needs to be fully conceptualized and implemented. Until now, the EU's varied direct and indirect support to cultural activities via specific actions and programs has led only to an EU cultural policy 'by default'.

European agenda for culture

Within its political agenda, the EU has to develop an explicit and coherent cultural policy, which would then flow into strategy and programming. Such policy should have a strong statistical and research basis, a sufficiently funded programme with focused objectives, and a cross-cutting agenda in other policy areas.

Other

An ambitious reading of article 151.4 would lead to transversal tools, supported by an adequate budget and driven by clear political aims. Beyond the need to protect culture from the negative repercussions of e.g. trade or taxation, the EU has to recognize the importance of taking culture into account when dealing with other policy areas.

2. In your opinion, which are the Community policies and their specific aspects that have the greatest impact on the activities of the cultural sector at European level or to which the cultural sector could make an important contribution? How are you affected by these policies, which developments in these policies could contribute to the development of your sector and its cross-border activities, what might this contribution consist of, serving which specific aims and with which partners? Have you identified any concerns or difficulties in relation to these policies? Which European developments could facilitate the involvement of your sector?

Please rank the policies or policy areas in decreasing order of priority and indicate, if necessary, their specific aspects (*max.500 signs*):

Agriculture
Audiovisual and Media
Civil Society
Competition
Culture
Customs Union
Economic and monetary union
Education and Training
Employment and Social affairs
Enterprise and Industry
Environment
Freedom, security and justice
Information Society
Internal Market
Maritime Affairs
Regional policy
Research, Development, Technology and Innovation
Sport
Taxation
Trans-European networks
Transport
Youth
Development
Enlargement
European Neighbourhood Policy
External assistance
External trade
Foreign policies

Space limitation does not allow us to go into details for each policy area. However, we strongly believe that recognising the central place of culture in our societies should translate into a concrete and coherent transversal policy strategy as recommended by art. 151.4. Such a mainstreaming agenda should be based on systematic data collection (e.g. Eurostat), regular results measurements and appropriate funding. Synergies between culture and education or youth policies have already been recognised. It is time to apply this lateral thinking to a vaster range of policies (social affairs, development, etc.).

3. In addition to the Community policies and areas mentioned above, have you identified other fields in which coordination or cooperation at European level could significantly contribute to the fostering of the cultural sector? If so, which one(s)? What should such coordination/cooperation consist of and what would be the added value? (*max 500 signs*)

The concerted EU participation in the negotiations of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity should open the way to a European monitoring of its implementation. Next to the coordination of national efforts, new EU projects which promote policy synergies such as between culture and social policy, home affairs or development policy should be identified and supported. The cultural sector's expertise in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural co-operation should be used in this process.

C. International aspects and co-operation with international organisations

1. What is the scope of your activities and/or co-operation with and/or in third countries (outside the EU)? In which geographical areas and in which cultural sector(s)? Which should in your view be the objectives of the European Union in its relations with third countries in the field of culture? Which types of action(s) would contribute to these objectives? (*500 signs*)

The EU should recognize that culture and the arts play a crucial role not only within Europe's multicultural societies but also in dialogue with the world at large. The EU should therefore place its European cultural programmes in a global context and accentuate the cooperation of cultural operators with their counterparts in third countries, and especially in the neighbouring countries. A cultural dimension would endow EU foreign and development policies with credibility and effectiveness.

2. What is your experience of relations/cooperation with other international or regional organisations active in the cultural sphere, such as UNESCO or the Council of Europe? How do you see the relationship between action at EU level and within the framework of those organisations? (*500 signs*)

The EU should acknowledge and actively pursue synergies with various international cultural bodies as well as deploy their enormous intellectual capital. The Council of Europe's track record in research, training, and evaluation of the national cultural policies should prompt the EU to develop a role that would be complementary and equally shared by the cultural field and the national governments. When it comes to culture, the EU must assert a strong voice in UNESCO, WTO and OECD, in regional initiatives (Barcelona process) and in post-conflict engagements (Western Balkan).

D. Arrangements for dialogue and co-operation at European level

1. Do you think there are particular difficulties in the framework of the dialogue between the cultural sector and the European institutions? If so, what are they? How do you think this dialogue should develop, both with regard to the cultural sector and the European institutions in order to make it more structured and sustainable? (*max 500 signs*)

A well-structured and open dialogue is only possible if the financial and administrative fragility of most non-profit cultural organisations is recognized and addressed. The European Commission needs to continue to support intermediary European thematic and disciplinary networks as the rudimentary infrastructure of international cultural cooperation and as a primary voice of the sector.

2. What could be in your opinion the objectives common to the whole of the cultural sector at European level? (500 signs)

The cultural sector is diverse and with multiple concerns and needs. In order to help develop a coherent set of objectives which may be shared by many different actors in the sector, the EU has to recognize its place and role within organised European civil society. It should support the development of organised structures for dialogue and advocacy, possibly following the models of other civil society sectors such as the Social Platform, the European Women's Lobby, CONCORD, etc.

3. Among the areas of action in which more advanced coordination between Member States of the EU might be feasible, which are the ones with significant European value added for the world of culture? Should this coordination involve all Member States or could it be developed by a group of interested countries?

Please present the areas in decreasing order of importance (max. 5 priorities 100 signs)

In parallel to developing cultural mainstreaming tools for its own policies, the EU should lead a coordinated intergovernmental initiative (following the example of the Bologna process?) which would aim at the development of a coherent and solid European cultural space, using the principle of 'subsidiarity' not in defence against integration but only as a safeguard of democracy.

E. Other comments

This contribution has been prepared by the EFAH executive office with the help of an advisory group of EFAH members and contacts. The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) is an umbrella organisation founded in 1992 to ensure that cultural associations, operators and artists have a voice in Europe. A number of our members will present separate contributions stressing concerns and requests to their specific cultural domains.