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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COUNCIL

RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL

of 16 November 2007

on a European Agenda for Culture

(2007/C 287/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

- (1) recalling the objectives assigned to the European Community, in particular by Article 151 of the Treaty;
- (2) referring to the provisions of the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- (3) having regard to the Commission's Communication of 10 May 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World ⁽¹⁾;
- (4) recalling its Conclusions of 24 May 2007 on the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives ⁽²⁾;
- (5) taking into account the experience derived from planning and implementing the Council's 2002-2004 and 2005-2007 work plans ⁽³⁾;
- (6) taking into account the results of the First Cultural Forum for Europe, held in Lisbon on the 26 and 27 September 2007;
- (7) convinced that culture and its specificity, including multilingualism are key elements of the European integration process based on common values and a common heritage — a process which recognizes, respects and promotes cultural diversity and the transversal role of culture;
- (8) stressing that culture and creativity are important drivers for personal development, social cohesion, economic growth, creation of jobs, innovation and competitiveness;
- (9) sharing the view that the role of culture should be better recognized in the Lisbon Agenda in the new cycle which it will enter into in 2008;
- (10) considering that culture should play an important role in the EU's external relations as a means of enhancing international cooperation;
- (11) underlining the strong link between culture and development, and welcoming a more pro-active role by Member States and the European Community in the context of their respective external assistance, in order to foster the emergence of a dynamic cultural sector in developing countries, and taking note of the suggestion by the Commission to enhance mobilization and diversification of funding in favour of increased access of local population to culture, and of cultural goods of those countries to European markets;
- (12) stressing the importance of deepening intercultural dialogue at the international level, including with countries in a situation of fragility, and involving non-governmental actors in order to promote greater knowledge and understanding,

EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR CULTURE

1. WELCOMES the Commission's proposal to define a European Agenda for Culture, perceived as an important step towards further developing cooperation in the cultural field and increasing the coherence and visibility of European action in this field, while at the same time strengthening the transversal role of culture;

⁽¹⁾ Doc. 9496/07 and accompanying working document listing Community actions in the field of culture (Doc. 9496/07 ADD 1).

⁽²⁾ Doc. 9021/07.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 162, 6.7.2002 and doc. 13839/04.

Strategic objectives

2. ENDORSES the three strategic objectives set out in the Commission's Communication with a view to shaping the shared European Agenda for Culture, i.e.:
- (a) promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
 - (b) promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth, employment, innovation and competitiveness;
 - (c) promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations;

Specific objectives

3. AGREES that those three strategic objectives are to be specified as follows:

A. AS REGARDS PROMOTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE:

- encouraging the mobility of artists and other professionals in the culture field,
- promoting cultural heritage, namely by facilitating the mobility of collections and fostering the process of digitisation, with a view to improving public access to different forms of cultural and linguistic expressions,
- promoting intercultural dialogue as a sustainable process contributing to European identity, citizenship and social cohesion, including by the development of the intercultural competences of citizens;

B. AS REGARDS PROMOTING CULTURE AS A CATALYST OF CREATIVITY:

- promoting better use of synergies between culture and education, in particular by encouraging art education and active participation in cultural activities with a view to developing creativity and innovation,
- promoting the availability of managerial, business and entrepreneurial training capacities specifically tailored to professionals in the cultural and creative fields,
- fostering a favourable environment for the development of cultural and creative industries, including the audiovisual sector, thus maximizing their potential, in particular that of SMEs, namely by making better use of existing programmes and initiatives and by stimulating creative partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors, including in the context of local and regional development;

C. AS REGARDS CULTURE AS A VITAL ELEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS:

- enhancing the role of culture in the EU's external relations and development policy,
- promoting the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and contributing to its implementation at international level,
- fostering intercultural dialogue and interaction between civil societies of EU Member States and third countries,
- encouraging further cooperation between cultural institutions of EU Member States, including cultural institutes, in third countries and with their counterparts in those countries;

Subsidiarity and flexibility

4. STRESSES that action pursuant to these objectives should have a real European added value and be carried out with full respect for the principle of subsidiarity, and that these common guidelines at EU level do not preclude the definition and implementation by Member States of their own national policy objectives;
5. UNDERLINES that these objectives should be considered as a flexible framework for guiding future action in the cultural field;

WORKING METHODS**Dialogue with the cultural sector**

6. AGREES that a continuous, multi-layered and flexible dialogue with cultural stakeholders and in consultation with the sector at all levels (local, regional, national and European) is essential to both the development and the implementation of a European Agenda for Culture;
7. WELCOMES the Commission's intention to identify representative interlocutors from the sector and to undertake a mapping of the sector, in order to set up channels of communication and to structure dialogue with stakeholders;
8. AGREES in view of the positive impact of the first Cultural Forum held in Lisbon on 26 and 27 September 2007 that interaction with and within civil societies at both national and European level is a major element in gathering the views of stakeholders in the context of the regular reporting exercise;

Open method of coordination

9. CONSIDERS that the new approach proposed by the Commission for cooperation in the field of culture, namely using the open method of coordination (OMC) in a specifically adapted way and taking into account the specificities of the sector, will provide a flexible and non-binding framework for structuring cooperation around the strategic objectives of the European Agenda for Culture and fostering exchanges of best practices;
10. DECIDES that:
- (a) the OMC will be applied using a flexible approach suited to the cultural field, while fully respecting Member States' competences, including those of their regional and local authorities and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Participation of Member States in the actions and procedures concerned will be voluntary;
 - (b) when implementing the OMC, special attention will be paid to the need to minimise financial and administrative burden upon the different actors, in accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in the EC Treaty ⁽¹⁾;
 - (c) the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture will be implemented through triennial work plans covering a limited number of priority areas, which the Council determines as suitable for the OMC framework in the corresponding time period. On the basis of those priority areas, the Commission will propose specific actions for the work plans that will be discussed, supplemented, updated and, where necessary, endorsed by the Council of Ministers;
 - (d) the Council, in cooperation with the Commission, will play a central role in ensuring continuity and follow-up of the priority areas for action and maintaining the momentum of the process;
 - (e) after consulting the competent Council body (the Cultural Affairs Committee) the Commission will prepare a progress report to be submitted to the Council on the basis *inter alia* of the information volun-

tarily provided by Member States pursuant to the principles laid down in 10a and b above;

- (f) in order to enhance the general awareness and visibility of cultural cooperation at European level, cultural actors and the public at large will be informed about the objectives and priority actions of the work plan;
11. AGREES, in accordance with paragraph 10c, that the work plan for the period 2008-2010 will concentrate on the priority areas for action set out in the Annex;
 12. The Council may, in cooperation with the Commission, review the application of the OMC in the cultural field in the light of progress made, and having regard to the reporting and evaluation exercise mentioned in paragraph (e) above;
 13. The European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will be kept informed of the implementation of the work plans;

Horizontal aspects

14. INVITES the Commission to pursue its work in the field of cultural statistics in terms of definitions and methodologies with a view to achieving comparability of statistical data to support evidence-based policy-making and actions;
15. WELCOMES the creation by the Commission of an inter-service group to better ensure that cultural aspects are taken into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaty, as laid down by Article 151(4) of the EC Treaty;
16. RECOMMENDS, that the interface between cultural aspects and other Community policies be strengthened, through coordination between relevant Council configurations on matters that have an impact on culture and through the creation of an effective and coherent mechanism for regular reporting on and following up cultural aspects under other provisions of the Treaty;
17. INVITES the European Council to endorse these conclusions providing a framework for a European Agenda for Culture.

⁽¹⁾ Article 5 of the EC Treaty thereof as interpreted by Protocol No 30 on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality annexed to the Treaty establishing the European Community, namely its Point 9.

ANNEX

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION FOR THE PERIOD 2008-2010

In accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 10c and 11 above, the following priority actions will be pursued in the context of the strategic objectives of the European Agenda for Culture:

- improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field,
 - promoting access to culture, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, multilingualism, digitisation, cultural tourism, synergies with education, especially art education, and greater mobility of collections,
 - developing data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improve their comparability,
 - maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries, in particular that of SMEs,
 - promoting and implementing the Unesco Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
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