

Council conclusions of 10 May 2010 on the contribution of culture to local and regional development

(2010/C 135/05)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

- the relevant political background as set out in Annex to these conclusions,
- the challenges, both economic and social, faced by the European Union and the need for a European strategy to address these challenges,
- the intrinsic value of culture, as well as its importance as a key driver for a competitive, innovative and inclusive market economy and as a vehicle for social cohesion,
- the particular cultural wealth and diversity of the regions and the cities of Europe, due to their proximity to the needs of citizens and local stakeholders and their role as platforms for economic, social and territorial cohesion,
- the contribution of culture and the cultural and creative industries to local and regional development through making European regions more attractive and developing sustainable tourism, creating new employment opportunities and innovative products and services, and helping develop new skills and competences,

AGREES THAT:

- there is an evident link between culture, creativity and innovation contributing to social and economic progress. Therefore, it is essential to consolidate the contribution of culture, especially the cultural and creative industries, to the 'Europe 2020 strategy' for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth,

CONSIDERS THAT IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN THE CONTRIBUTION OF CULTURE TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IT IS NECESSARY TO:

- mainstream culture as a strategic and crosscutting element into European and national policies for the social and economic development of European regions and cities,
- encourage strategic investment in culture and cultural and creative industries, in particular SMEs, at local and regional level, in order to foster creative and dynamic societies,

- foster the contribution of culture to sustainable tourism, as a key factor for local and regional attractiveness and economic development, as well as a driver for highlighting the importance of cultural heritage in Europe,

- raise awareness among decision-makers on local and regional policies that develop new competences through culture and creativity adapted to the current fast-changing environment, with a view to developing new skills, improving human capital and fostering social cohesion,

- strengthen crossborder, transnational and interregional cultural initiatives as a means of linking the diverse peoples and regions of Europe and strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion,

IDENTIFIES THE FOLLOWING PRIORITY AREAS WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY:

1. Mainstream culture in local and regional development policies

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (a) strengthen the role of culture in integrated local and regional development policies including infrastructure, urban regeneration rural diversification, services, entrepreneurship, tourism, research and innovation, human capital improvement, social inclusion and interregional cooperation;
- (b) enhance vertical and horizontal synergies between the cultural sector and other sectors, as well as partnerships between public and private stakeholders;
- (c) support an evidence-based approach to cultural investment at a local and regional level, making use of evaluation and impact assessment instruments;
- (d) promote greater cooperation and exchange of good practices between Member States, European regions, cities and stakeholders;
- (e) promote information and better awareness on the contribution of culture to local and regional development;

- (f) facilitate a better understanding of the regulatory framework and of the implementation procedures of the instruments of cohesion policy, which specifically involve the cultural stakeholders in both public and private sectors, including civil society, and which help to raise awareness of the cultural dimension among those responsible for local and regional development policies.

The Member States are invited to:

- (a) include cultural stakeholders in an integrated bottom-up approach to programmes for local and regional development, including in the context of European cohesion policy as appropriate;
- (b) associate local and regional authorities in the implementation of the European Agenda for Culture so that cultural policy responds to the expectations and needs of European regions and cities;
- (c) encourage integrated local development strategies aimed at compensating for geographical differences in access to culture among citizens.

The Commission is invited to:

- (a) collect and disseminate best practices at the European level and develop instruments for exchange of information at European level.

2. Stimulate a favourable environment at local and regional level for a better development of cultural and creative industries, especially SMEs

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (a) take better advantage of the instruments of cohesion policy and other relevant financing programmes with a view to optimising support to the cultural and creative industries, including through facilitating access to information on funding opportunities and providing consulting services;
- (b) favour the creation of cultural and creative industry incubators at the local and regional level, thus strengthening entrepreneurship;
- (c) explore ways to promote new business models and to consolidate creative clusters and business research centres by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the application and use of ICTs;

- (d) support and strengthen the access of cultural and creative SMEs to the digital and physical distribution channels, through policy encouraging the widest possible distribution and circulation of works, ensuring fair remuneration for the actors involved within the creation chain.

The Member States are invited to:

- (a) encourage a favourable regulatory environment for cultural and creative SMEs and explore innovative ways to enable access to finance, both public and private;
- (b) promote better communication between cultural and creative industries and financial services by encouraging business management, research and innovation, financial and information training for companies, employers and people working in cultural sector.

The Commission is invited to:

- (a) attach greater importance to the cultural and creative industries in key policy initiatives, relevant strategies and European Union programmes.

3. Deepen the contribution of culture to sustainable tourism

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (a) encourage the development of cultural tourism, as a key element of sustainable tourism, and pay due attention to the protection of the environment, cultural heritage, landscape and the quality of life.

The Member States are invited to:

- (a) foster the revitalisation of resources intrinsic to a region, with special focus on cultural (tangible and intangible) heritage, cultural expressions and related activities;
- (b) promote cultural activities which take into account and respect the specificities of a region and foster its image while allowing the involvement and participation of the local population;
- (c) further develop, in the context of environmental education, greater awareness of the need to protect cultural and natural heritage, with a view to encouraging responsible attitudes among tourists and providers of tourist services.

4. Promote creativity in education and training with a view to developing new skills, improving human capital and fostering social cohesion

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (a) promote creativity and innovation within education and business sectors through networks between educational institutions, research centres, cultural actors and enterprises;
- (b) intensify links between culture, education and business sectors at local and regional level in order to facilitate the integration of young people and people with fewer opportunities into the labour market and equip them with the communication and entrepreneurial skills required in an evolving socio-economic environment.

The Member States are invited to:

- (a) together with relevant local and regional authorities, assess the potential skills needs of a region and identify ways in which culture can contribute to policies aimed at the improvement of local human capital;
- (b) foster cultural and arts education as an important element in life long learning.

The Commission is invited to:

- (a) map skills and needs required for the cultural and creative sectors in the context of new challenges derived from the digital shift, demographic changes, and evolving economic circumstances;
- (b) mobilise existing instruments to support learning mobility for professionals in the culture and creative sectors, including for young entrepreneurs, and encourage new

forms of learning (i.e. crossborder peer to peer learning initiatives).

5. Reinforce cross-border, transnational and interregional cultural cooperation

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- (a) facilitate cultural cooperation and mobility of cultural operators among different regions of Europe;
- (b) support the development of cross-border and interregional cultural projects and activities which emphasize the local specificities of a territory and seek to involve their citizens.

The Member States are invited to:

- (a) foster the use of cohesion policy instruments to strengthen crossborder, transnational and interregional cooperation.

The Commission is invited to:

- (a) continue supporting cultural initiatives within cohesion policy instruments acting as a catalyst for good practices, exchanges and innovation laboratories;
- (b) disseminate widely among stakeholders relevant studies and examples of good practices,

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

take these priorities into consideration when drawing up and implementing current and future local and regional development policies, and when implementing European cohesion policy in accordance with their respective competences.

ANNEX

In adopting these conclusions, the Council recalls in particular the following background:

- UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (20 October 2005),
- Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006 laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1260/1999,
- Council conclusions on the contribution of the cultural and creative sectors to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives (24 May 2007),
- Commission Communication. Agenda for a sustainable and competitive European tourism (19 October 2007),
- Council resolution on a European Agenda for Culture (16 November 2007),
- Presidency conclusions of the European Council (13-14 March 2008) which recognised that a key factor for future growth was the full development of the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens built on European culture and excellence in science (7652/08),
- Council conclusions on Intercultural Competences (22 May 2008),
- Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010,
- Council Conclusions on Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation (12 May 2009),
- Europe 2020 — A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (3 March 2010),
- Green Paper *Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries* (27 April 2010).

Studies:

- Application of Article 151.4 of the EC Treaty: Use of the Structural Funds in the field of culture during the period 1994-1999 (doc. 6929/04),
 - The Economy of Culture in Europe, ed., KEA European Affairs (13 November 2006),
 - The Impact of Culture on Creativity, ed., KEA European Affairs (June 2009),
 - The contribution of culture to local and regional economic development as part of European regional policy (April 2010).
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