



INFORMATION NOTE ON THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON A FUTURE EUROPEAN UNION CULTURE PROGRAMME

Following the adoption of the "Europe 2020" Strategy in June 2010¹, the European Commission is now launching a public consultation on a future EU programme for culture, which will replace the current one from 2014 onwards. The Commission's intention is to adopt a draft proposal in view of establishing a Decision of the European Parliament and Council on a new culture programme, which will help achieve the objectives of the "Europe 2020" strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth during the second semester of 2011.

One of the starting points for preparing a future programme in the field of culture lie in the EU Treaty,² the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union³ and the European Union's obligations as a Party to the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, which all stress the importance of protecting and promoting Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the European Agenda for Culture - the EU's strategy for culture adopted in 2007 - also includes the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as one of its strategic objectives, along with the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity, growth and jobs, as well as the promotion of culture as a vital element of international relations.

These documents recognise that while the processes of globalisation, which have been facilitated by the rapid development of information and communication technologies, afford unprecedented conditions for enhanced interaction between cultures, they also represent a challenge for cultural diversity, namely in view of risks of imbalances between poor and rich countries, as well as small and large ones as well as risks of standardisation.

By way of example, Europe's rich cultural diversity is an asset, but it also results in fragmentation, which limits the emergence of a critical mass that is needed to make full use of the opportunities that global and digital developments offer. One illustration of this is that just in terms of language, the European Union has 23 official languages, 3 alphabets and approximately 60 officially recognised regional and minority languages.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

² Article 3(3) of the consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union and Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

³ In particular Article 22.

This places dominant languages at an advantage compared to less dominant ones, with implications for example for the circulation of literature as well as music, theatre and other live performing arts. This situation means that European (and international) audiences do not benefit from the full richness of Europe's potential cultural supply.

Globalisation and the digital shift mean that the cultural sector must operate in an international and rapidly changing environment. They are having a massive impact on the sector, introducing new art forms, influencing how art is made, promoted, marketed, disseminated and how cultural organisations must manage themselves. Digitisation is also opening up new perspectives in terms of broadening access to culture (for example to opera, concerts, theatre performances), both within national populations as well as across borders. Equally, it opens up new possibilities for making our cultural heritage (eg cultural heritage sites or museum collections) more accessible across borders, yet the sector is lacking the means to optimise this potential.

Often expertise is fragmented and geographically dispersed or the sector needs to experiment to develop new tools. There is therefore a crucial need to adapt to this changing environment and to share know-how through exchanges at the international level, which enable more rapid learning and critical mass, as well as more efficient use of resources through the economies of scale resulting from international cooperation.

The small size of European countries and cultural markets means that many European artists, cultural works and productions are not able to promote themselves in the most effective way internationally. This is seen as a major weakness compared to countries with either dominant cultures or languages and which subsequently have a structural advantage. While cultural cooperation between the EU and third countries can both foster mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue, it can also be a means to develop the capacity of the European cultural sector.

Fragmentation in Europe means that in practice mobility and circulation are difficult and under-optimised, yet international mobility is of particular importance to artists and cultural practitioners, contributing significantly to their professional skills and/or artistic development, developing their own research and exploration ambitions, opening up new market opportunities and enhancing their career possibilities in particular through their participation in residencies, festivals, live touring, international exhibitions or literary events. Furthermore, although workers are supposed to enjoy free movement within the European Union, many obstacles still exist linked to visa regulations, social and fiscal regime and other administrative barriers or to the lack of access to accurate information on the different legal, regulatory, procedural and financial aspects underlying mobility in the cultural sector.

Despite these challenges, many recent studies have shown that the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) represent highly innovative companies with a great economic potential and are one of Europe's most dynamic sectors, contributing around 2.6 % to EU GDP, with a high growth potential, and providing quality jobs to around 5 million people across EU-27. Furthermore, cultural contents play a crucial role in the deployment of the information society, fuelling investments in broadband infrastructures and services, in digital technologies, as well as in new consumer electronics and telecommunications devices. Beyond their direct contribution to GDP, and in addition to the intrinsic value of culture, CCIs are also important drivers of economic and social innovation in many other sectors. Exposure to culture also stimulates creativity in individuals and workers, which is increasingly important in a knowledge-based society.

A future Culture programme should take account of this potential but also the challenges being faced by the cultural sector in Europe. This consultation is taking place against the backdrop of difficult global economic circumstances, with cuts in public funding taking place in many countries. It is therefore more important than ever that EU funding ensures the greatest possible structuring and multiplier impact and European added value. Furthermore, in order to prioritise spending on projects themselves rather than on administration, the programme design will also need to be as streamlined and cost-effective as possible.

The consultation will be open until 15 December 2010. The results of the public consultation will be made public by the Commission in a report on the consultation which will be published on DG Education and Culture's website during the first quarter of 2011. Received contributions will be published together with the report. It is important to read the specific privacy statement attached to this consultation for information on how respondents' personal data and contributions will be dealt with.