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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 19.7.2010
COM(2010)390 final

**COMMISSION REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL,
THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

on the implementation of the European Agenda for Culture

SEC(2010)904

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1. INTRODUCTION

Culture lies at the heart of the European project and is the anchor on which the European Union's "unity in diversity" is founded. The combination of respect for cultural diversity and the ability to unite around shared values has guaranteed the peace, prosperity and solidarity the EU enjoys. In today's globalising world, culture can make a unique contribution to a European Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, promoting stability, mutual understanding and cooperation worldwide.

The adoption of the European Agenda for Culture¹ in 2007 opened a new chapter of cooperation on culture policy at European level. For the first time, all partners – European institutions, Member States and culture civil society – were invited to pool their efforts on explicitly defined shared goals, which were endorsed by the Council²:

- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue
- promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity
- promotion of culture as a vital element in the EU's international relations

In order to support cooperation, the Agenda also introduced working methods new to the field of culture:

- an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) for closer Member State cooperation on the priorities identified in the Council Workplan for Culture 2008-2010³,
- a more structured dialogue with civil society in the field of culture through various platforms for discussion and exchange.

Purpose of this report

This report examines progress at European and national levels towards the three objectives of the Agenda and assesses first experiences of the new working methods, drawing upon the national reports submitted by Member States and the work of the OMC groups⁴ and

¹ http://eurlex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type_doc=COMfina&an_doc=2007&nu_doc=0242&model=guicheti

² [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32007G1129\(01\):EN:NOT](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32007G1129(01):EN:NOT)

³ [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:42008X0610\(01\):EN:NOT](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:42008X0610(01):EN:NOT)

⁴ Final reports of OMC groups: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1565_en.htm

platforms⁵. In the light of this analysis, the Commission has drawn the conclusions presented in sections 3.1.2 and 3.2.2.

Progress in making sure that culture aspects are properly taken into account in relevant EU policies ("mainstreaming") is highlighted above all in the Staff Working Paper which accompanies this report.

2. PROGRESS TOWARDS THE AGENDA OBJECTIVES

2.1. Agenda objective 1: Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

Progress can be highlighted in many areas.

The **2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue**⁶ focused on both awareness-raising and on developing the policy debate on intercultural dialogue. New policies and structures are a legacy of the Year in a number of Member States, while at EU level political agreement was reached on the need to promote intercultural competences⁷ and on the role of intercultural dialogue in external relations⁸. The Platform for Intercultural Europe published, and continues to promote, the "Rainbow Paper" of civil society recommendations.

Improving the conditions for the **mobility of artists** and other culture professionals has been tackled both by an OMC group focusing on obstacles to mobility and how to tackle them, for example through improved information systems, and on the role of intermediary organisations, and through an ongoing 3 million euro dedicated pilot project, which develops and tests new ideas on mobility support⁹. The Commission is also conducting a broader exercise aimed at tackling all obstacles European citizens encounter when they exercise their rights as Union citizens in all aspects of their daily lives, and will issue a Report on Citizenship later this year.

Denmark's new DIVA artist-in-residence programme supports incoming artists in the visual arts, music, literature and performing arts. A programme for Danish artists wishing to work abroad is in the pipeline. The new Czech programme for creative or study efforts supports mobility for the purpose of new creations.

The OMC group on **mobility of collections** has made a thorough comparison of practices in several fields, including incentives and obstacles to lending. A Commission study on the prevention and fight against illicit trafficking of cultural goods is underway. A pilot project to explore the development of a cultural heritage alert network has been launched in 2010 by the European Parliament.

The Netherlands runs an awareness raising campaign against illicit trafficking of cultural goods, tailored for four target groups: the art trade, the general public, heritage institutions and law enforcement agencies. A government programme in Cyprus supports transfer and exhibition costs for both incoming and outgoing works of art.

⁵ Platform recommendations : http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1199_en.htm

⁶ See http://ec.europa.eu/culture/key-documents/doc539_en.htm

⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:141:0014:0016:EN:PDF>

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/ICD_external_relations_en.doc.pdf

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc417_en.htm

Synergies between **education and culture** have been the focus of one OMC group and a topic for the Platform on Access to Culture. At European level, policy conclusions on promoting a creative generation¹⁰ recognise that cultural expression and access to culture have a vital role in developing the creativity of children and young people.

Slovenia adopted National Guidelines for Culture and Arts Education. Sweden's Creative Schools initiative to promote collaboration between schools and the cultural sector has been taken up by 97% of municipalities. The education directorate of each Greek municipality includes the post of Head of Cultural Affairs with the remit of reinforcing education-culture links. Belgium's (Flemish Community) "Dynamo3" programme encourages schools to develop a long-term vision on arts and culture education.

The Commission's 2008 Communication on "**Multilingualism**: an asset for Europe and a shared commitment", set out what needs to be done to turn linguistic diversity into an asset for solidarity and prosperity. Two structured dialogue platforms involving business and civil society have since been created.

In the broad field of access to culture, digitisation has also been an area of progress. **Europeana** was launched in 2008. The Commission has announced new measures for promoting digitisation and on line accessibility of cultural heritage in the framework of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

Estonia's Digital Cultural Heritage Strategy 2007-2010 includes a range of e-services to make heritage more accessible, including cooperation between the national archives, the national library, public broadcasting and museums.

Regarding **media literacy**, understood as the ability to access and critically evaluate media contents, a 2009 Commission Recommendation calls for Member States and the media industry to increase people's awareness of the many forms of media messages they encounter. Follow-up work is underway through the MEDIA 2007 programme and MEDIA International preparatory action.

Portugal has introduced a copyright literacy programme for schools, aiming to reinforce young people's understanding of the value of creation and cultural diversity. Slovakia has adopted a media education concept prepared in cooperation with civil society, education and media institutions.

Also with a view to promoting access to culture, the Commission has proposed a **European Heritage Label**¹¹ to build on the current intergovernmental initiative. The Label would highlight sites that celebrate and symbolise European integration, ideals and history. Award would be based on criteria including the educational dimension of sites, especially for young people.

2.2. Agenda objective 2: Promoting culture as a catalyst for creativity

Cooperation has focused on cultural and creative industries (CCIs) and the contribution of strategic investment in culture to regional and local development. At both European and national levels, the potential of **culture to foster creativity and innovation**, and so to

¹⁰ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:301:0009:0011:EN:PDF>

¹¹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc2519_en.htm

contribute to an environment favourable to growth and jobs, is increasingly in the spotlight, as confirmed by Council Conclusions on Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation¹².

Poland's "Culture Counts!" campaign highlights the role of culture both in the economy and in broader society. Italy's 2009 White Paper on Creativity explores a model of creativity and cultural production and proposes actions to boost creativity.

The **2009 European Year of Creativity and Innovation** also explored the ways in which culture generates both economic and social innovation. The Manifesto of the Ambassadors of the Year¹³ emphasises the creativity which can be generated by building bridges between art, philosophy, science and business.

Several **studies** conducted on behalf of the Commission fed into the debate, notably the 2009 study on the impact of culture on creativity, the 2010 study on entrepreneurship in CCIs and the thematic report by Eurydice on Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe.

CCIs have been a particular focus of attention, culminating at EU level with the publication in April 2010 of a Green Paper on how to create an environment in which this sector can fulfil its potential to contribute to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Green Paper draws strongly on the work of both the OMC group and platform on CCIs to frame a consultation on issues such as access to finance, the skills needs of creative entrepreneurship, and innovative partnerships with other economic sectors¹⁴.

In October 2009, a reflection paper on the challenge of creating a European Digital Single Market for creative content like books, music, films or video games was published, analysing the obstacles to the free circulation of creative content on the Internet and launching a public consultation on some possible measures to create a genuine Single Market.

The 2008 Creative Britain Strategy addresses the key issues for government intervention in the creative industries: skills and talent, innovation, intellectual property and supporting creative businesses. Lithuania's new Strategy for the Development of Creative Industries includes support for the national network of Creative Industries Incubators. Finland's Development Strategy for the Creative Economy addresses employment, entrepreneurship and product development in the creative industries sector.

The contribution of **culture to local and regional development** is also increasingly recognised. 6 billion euros of cohesion funding have been allocated to culture for 2007-2013 covering protection and preservation of cultural heritage, development of cultural infrastructure, and support for cultural services. Further funding is allocated under headings such as tourism, urban regeneration, SME promotion and information society. A study explores the contribution of culture to local and regional development and will include a practical tool for policy makers at regional and local levels and cultural operators. Preparation of the future cohesion policy, to run from 2014, should draw lessons from projects and studies to design instruments which release the full potential of the cultural sphere, and particularly that of the creative industries. Cultural and creative sectors should be mainstreamed in integrated regional or city development strategies, in partnership between public authorities representing different policy areas and relevant civil society representatives.

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/CONS_NATIVE_CS_2009_08749_1_EN.pdf

¹³ http://www.create2009.europa.eu/about_the_year/manifesto.html

¹⁴ See also Amsterdam Declaration at <http://85.92.129.90/~workshop/>

Ireland's Cultural Tourism Initiative was launched in 2009 to improve collaboration between arts, culture and tourism spheres. The Romanian Ministry of Culture's new specialist unit on cultural tourism is promoting interservice cooperation to exploit the full potential of tangible and intangible heritage.

Developing methodologies for producing harmonised cultural statistics has proven to be a challenge to address through the OMC process. Since September 2009, Eurostat supports a network of national statistical services cooperating together. Over two years this network, coordinated by the Ministry of Culture of Luxembourg, will tackle the methodological framework of cultural statistics; CCIs; public and private expenditure on culture; and cultural participation and the social impact of culture.

2.3. Agenda objective 3: Promoting culture as a vital element in the EU's international relations

As Party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions¹⁵, the EU is committed to integrating the cultural dimension as an element in its relations with partner countries and regions.

Since the adoption of the Agenda, a new strategic framework for culture in the EU's external relations has emerged. Culture is increasingly perceived as a strategic factor of political, social and economic development. New initiatives have mobilised increased financial resources; since 2007 more than 100 million euro have been earmarked for culture in third countries and regional cooperation.

EU support for culture cooperation in the region covered by the **European Neighbourhood Policy** has been significantly reinforced. The Special Action of the EU Culture Programme is dedicated to this region in 2009 and 2010, with a new initiative for regional and inter-regional cooperation due to be launched in 2011.

In the context of the **Union for the Mediterranean**, preparation of a new Euromed strategy on culture is underway. The Commission has carried out a needs assessment and consultation process; an ad hoc working group nominated by the partners will elaborate the strategy to propose to Ministers.

In the **enlargement countries**, the major effort made on the rehabilitation of cultural heritage has been complemented by a focus on independent organisations through a dedicated call of the IPA civil society facility. Culture is also an axis of policy dialogue and cooperation in the new **Eastern Partnership**, launched in 2009. The Eastern Partnership Culture Programme, to be launched in 2010, aims to strengthen the capacity of cultural operators, foster regional links and contribute to the development of inclusive cultural policies in partner countries.

Slovenia hosted in 2008 the conference during which the Ljubljana process-funding heritage rehabilitation in south-east Europe has been launched.

The role culture plays in **development policies** is also increasingly recognised. In 2009, the Commission launched a process to enhance the role of culture in development, founded on joint efforts by all stakeholders. A committee of ACP and EU professionals has been

¹⁵ More than 110 ratifications by April 2010

established to monitor progress and input to the formulation of the 10th EDF intra-ACP Culture Programme¹⁶.

Spain's 2007 Culture and Development Strategy is founded on the principles of the Unesco Convention.

In the field of **trade relations**, the EU has continued to take into account the specific dual (economic/cultural) nature of the audiovisual sector as vector for communicating identity and values in relevant bilateral and multilateral negotiations. At the same time, in line with the UNESCO Convention, the need to ensure preferential treatment for developing countries in the field of cultural expressions as a way to foster more balanced exchanges has been recognised by the signature of a Protocol on Cultural Cooperation in the framework of the Economic Partnership agreement with the Cariforum countries¹⁷.

New cinema coproduction agreements between France and partner countries include a reference to the Unesco Convention as a matter of course.

Another step forward has been through **bilateral partnerships** with developed or emerging partner countries. A high-level seminar "Russia-EU: signs on the road map of cultural cooperation" took place in Moscow in 2009, co-organised by the EU and the Russian Ministry of Culture. In 2010, a Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture was established. The EU strategic partnership with Brazil has a cultural dimension, reflected in the signing of a Joint Declaration in 2009 between the European Commission and the Brazilian Ministry of Culture. A strategic relationship between the EU and Mexico was officially established in October 2008. Policy dialogue between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Culture was launched in May 2009. Culture Programme Special Actions have supported cooperation projects inter alia with China, India and Brazil.

In the audiovisual field, the preparatory action **MEDIA International** aims to explore ways of reinforcing cooperation between European and third-country professionals from the audiovisual industry and encourage a two-way flow of cinematographic / audiovisual works. Support will continue under the successor MEDIA Mundus programme, with 15 million euros in funding for 2011-2013.

3. WORKING METHODS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Commission proposed several new working methods in the Agenda, notably the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and a more structured dialogue with the culture sector .

3.1. The OMC

3.1.1. *First experiences*

The 2008-2010 Council Workplan on Culture established four expert groups to work together through the OMC to exchange experience and make recommendations on the priority themes identified in the Workplan:

¹⁶ See http://www.culture-dev.eu/pages/en/en_accueil.html

¹⁷ Differentiated agreements and protocols implementing and promoting the Unesco Convention have also been initialled with South Korea and are being finalised with Andean and Central American countries.

- CCIIs
- Culture-education synergies
- Mobility of artists and other culture professionals
- Mobility of collections

While the Workplan set objectives for each group, the process of agreeing more specific fields proved challenging for the groups and, in some cases, delayed the effective start of their activities.

On most topics, groups concentrated on sharing experience to develop policy recommendations. In some cases, the emphasis has been on collecting and analysing more systematically national practices.

While it is difficult to draw firm conclusions after just two years of experience, both the Commission and Member States consider the OMC to be overall an effective way of cooperating in the field of culture.

The OMC process has proven to be a good framework for networking and mutual learning among national administrations. While all groups aimed at generating policy recommendations, the main challenge remains to channel them into policy making at EU and national level, and articulate the work of the groups with that of Council Presidencies and the Commission.

3.1.2. Challenges for the future

OMC cooperation shall focus on issues and outputs which can be taken up by Member States and the Commission in their respective fields of competence, leading to progress on the goals of the Agenda.

A closer articulation of the work of OMC groups, the Commission and the Council, notably Presidencies, will support this. Presidencies should have clear ownership of priorities, making sure that Presidency programmes, and Council work build on OMC outputs.

Meetings of Directors General of Ministries for Culture have proven to be an effective forum for strategic reflection and have the potential to be an important channel for the dissemination and uptake of OMC results. A more systematic hosting of a Directors General meeting under each Presidency, examining the outputs of one or more OMC groups, in accordance with Presidency priorities, should be envisaged.

In the light of suggestions by Member States in national reports and by OMC participants, the Commission proposes the following ways to reinforce effective cooperation:

- Member States through relevant Council bodies should define both the broad themes and the more specific topics to be addressed through OMC groups. A maximum of 4 or 5 thematic groups is a realistic limit, ensuring that the Commission can effectively support the process and that the Council, notably Presidencies, has sufficient capacity to take up the outcomes of the groups' work. Within each group, topics should be tackled successively and articulated in a timeline. A four-year perspective would allow sustainable cooperation, a mid-term review and meaningful thematic progress.

- The Council should also define target outputs for each topic, such as analytical reports, good practice compendia, or policy recommendations, and should identify opportunities for dissemination, including Presidency conferences, Directors General meetings, events organised by / with culture sector Platforms, and Commission-organised seminars.
- Against this background, each group would determine its working methods, ranging from plenary meetings in Brussels to peer learning activities organised by a host country. Groups would, as now, be chaired by one or two presidents, following nomination and agreement by the CAC.
- Well-defined topics should make it easier for Member States to identify group members with the right profile. The registration exercise can be repeated annually to ensure that members have the most suitable profile for the topics to be dealt with that year. Some topics may require in-depth content knowledge, others a broader policy vision. Whether nominating content experts from academia or civil society or Ministry officials (or both), a close link with policy making and effective support from the Ministry is in any event essential.
- The size of OMC groups, with 22 to 27 participating Member States, has proven to be a mixed blessing, and smaller sub-groups have in practice been the preferred forum for discussion. Active exchange and discussion remains the goal. This may mean sharing practices, hosting a peer learning visit, or drafting a case study for example. Successively tackling specific topics over a four-year period should make it easier for Member States to identify the discussions in which they wish to actively participate.
- The Culture Programme should provide support for the groups, in particular for peer learning and dissemination activities.

Adapted working methods will help promote take-up of OMC results. With clearly identified topics, target outputs and dissemination opportunities, Member State cooperation through the OMC will take place in a framework with clearer milestones. Closer articulation of the work of OMC groups, the Commission and the Council, notably Presidencies, is the overarching goal.

3.2. Structured dialogue with the culture sector

3.2.1. First experiences

The Commission remains committed to dialogue with the culture sector, aiming to ensure that its voice is clearly heard in policy debate at European level.

Since 2007, the structured dialogue between the Commission and the sector is taking place through two main structures; thematic platforms of European associations and the European Culture Forum.

In the run-up to the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the sector formed the "Rainbow Platform", an interface between civil society and the Commission for planning and supporting the Year. This has since developed into the Platform for Intercultural Europe. Drawing upon this example, the Commission published an open call for expressions of

interest in mid-2008 to encourage cultural organisations with a strong European dimension to create two further Platforms, on Access to Culture and CCIs.

Each platform has developed first policy recommendations and presented these to the broader sector during the European Culture Forum in 2009.

One main benefit reported by the Platforms is deeper and broader dialogue within the culture sector. The structured dialogue has been an invitation to players in the very heterogeneous culture sector to search for common ground. The sector is better informed of policy processes and is more open to engaging with policy.

But depending on the roll out of priorities, the sector may struggle to identify the most relevant interlocutors and policy initiatives on specific topics. A closer articulation of civil society dialogue with the work of the Commission, OMC groups and Member States in Council would give a clearer picture of when and where to input recommendations.

3.2.2. Challenges for the future

In the light of suggestions by the Platforms and by Member States in national reports, the Commission proposes the following ways to reinforce effective cooperation:

- Thematic Platforms should each "mirror" and be connected to an OMC policy field with the goal of concerted reflection and debate on priority themes. The Commission will continue its bilateral contacts with Platforms and propose an annual meeting with Platform Boards.
- The biennial European Culture Forum remains a major opportunity for dialogue between civil society and policy makers. The 2009 Forum highlighted progress on mainstreaming culture in related European policies and attracted over 1,000 participants. But smaller-scale events are also needed to provide space for discussing specific issues. Future Platform-led discussion and dissemination events should unite participants from the sector, the "mirror" OMC group, Member State and European policy makers. Alternatives to operating grant funding will be explored; experience of the pilot phase indicates that project grants may be better suited to supporting Platform activities.
- In some Member States, a positive development of structured dialogue with culture civil society has emerged. In Hungary, the Cultural Sectoral Policy Council brings together representatives of government, culture professionals, funding bodies and trade unions. In Romania, a pilot dialogue platform has grown into a department for Stakeholder Engagement in the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

A more focused dialogue with culture civil society will contribute to better articulated common efforts towards policy priorities. Thematic platforms which "mirror" the topics addressed through the OMC will make it easier for civil society practice and knowledge to transfer into policy making.

4. THE WAY FORWARD

Experience since the Agenda was adopted has clearly shown the potential of cooperation on culture policy at European level, be it through exchange of experience between Member

States with a view to best practice-based policy adaptations, greater input by culture civil society into the policy making process, or a more coherent approach to culture in related policies.

The current **broader context** makes it all the more important to reinforce cooperation.

The "Europe 2020" strategy proposed by the Commission aims to put Europe back on a long-term growth path, with measures to promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Within this framework, culture can play a fundamental role, including in flagship initiatives such as Innovation Union (creative ecologies, non-technological innovation), the Digital Agenda (media literacy, new environment for creation and access to culture) and New Skills for New Jobs (intercultural competences and transversal skills). The role of culture in regional and local development should also be emphasised in the framework of cohesion policy (creative and intercultural cities and regions). Beyond EU borders, the role of culture in the enlargement policy and external relations should be further developed (branding Europe as *the* place to create, promoting balanced cultural exchanges and cooperation with the rest of the world).

By reinforcing effective cooperation, the proposals presented in this report are intended to help ensure that culture makes its full contribution to a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe.

5. CONCLUSION

The European Parliament, the Council, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee are invited to react to this report.

The Council is invited to take the appropriate steps to decide on a set of broad thematic issues and specific priority topics to be addressed through the OMC.

The Commission proposes to report thematically on progress towards the agreed topics, drawing upon OMC outputs, the work of structured dialogue platforms and voluntary contributions by Member States.