

Culture powers Europe

Appeal for an activating cultural policy for Europe

Declaration – Fourth Federal Congress on Cultural Policy: »culture.powers.europa – europa.powers.culture«, 7/8 June 2007

The European Union faces major challenges: it must become more democratic and efficient so as to win the approval and active support of its citizens to a much greater extent. This process must include a robust concept of citizenship that encompasses the diversity of all people living in our societies. Cultural policy can make a key contribution in this context, if we recognize and exploit the potential of a culture and its makers.

Europe's reality to this day is influenced by transnational developments. It is crucial that we accept this fact and the challenges associated with it. In order to play an active role in shaping the globalisation process, the European Union and its Members States must set standards: peaceful, intercultural, partnership-oriented, unwavering in the upholding of constitutional standards, social justice and human rights.

Culture is not homogeneous; it thrives only on consensus and contradiction, tradition and innovation, past memories and future visions. Europe is characterized by its open and dynamic cultural identity, which includes its long tradition of transnational art, as well as cross-border cooperation in culture, education and media. Taken together, these factors strengthen the acceptance of the European project in European societies and states.

Culture powers Europe – Fundamental elements of an activating cultural policy

The European Commission on 10 May 2007 published a new »Communication for a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world«. The document emphasizes not only the special role culture plays in the intercultural dialogue and as a key component of foreign relations, but also the inclusion of civil stakeholders as partners for implementing European cultural policy. We welcome this initiative and see it as a key contribution to establishing an activating cultural policy for Europe.

We view the offer of collaboration as an instrument for starting an intense debate. We want to help rewrite European cultural policy. In the process, we have defined the following basic assumptions:

- An activating and sustainable cultural policy for Europe is possible only if all political levels participate to an extent commensurate with their competencies, and work together in a constructive manner conducive with cooperative, European cultural federalism. Jointly elaborated European framework conditions should supplement and round out the competence of the Members States, countries, regions and municipalities in matters of cultural policy.

- Culture, democracy and open communication are inseparable: without open communication, there can be no civil society; without civil society, there can be no democracy. The requisite democratisation of the European Union can only be achieved by strengthening civil society and establishing open, transnational communication in Europe.
- Culture is not primarily a commodity or marketable service, but rather a public asset that must be protected by suitable means, and the prerequisite for achieving this goal is consistent implementation of the »UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions«.
- Although cultural and artistic diversity cannot be ensured by market activity alone, it cannot survive without a market. Therefore, European cultural policy must not only promote the arts, but also create suitable framework conditions for the culture/creative industries. The objective is to maintain the delicate balance between government, market economy and society on all levels, both European and global.

Europe powers culture – Framework conditions and prerequisites

The European Union is a major, and in every respect competitive, economic and cultural region. Global competitiveness includes the capacity to exploit and develop cultural potentials and creative forces in the civil population. This requires direct culture promotion, but also a culture-friendly legal system, which safeguards social standards for artists and creative talents, and which is suitable for the special working conditions in the micro-structures of the culture/creative industries. European policy must provide for a balance of forces: for example by means of a *copyright law* that ensures suitable compensation not only for businesses, but also for practising artists; or by means of a *media law* that not only defines the electronic, dual media system independent of the associated technology, but also is based primarily on content and not only on the new diversity of digital distribution channels.

Back in 1992, the EU Treaty laid down in writing the obligation of the European Community to consider the effects of all its activities on culture and cultural policy. Europe must live up to this self-imposed requirement: due consideration must be given to the significance of cultural creativity and cultural practice for social development in Europe, for innovation and creativity, growth and employment, integration and solidarity, security and peace in Europe and the world. Decisions in all political sectors must be examined for their impact on the development of cultural diversity in Europe.

European values, such as the acknowledgement of human rights, constitutionality and the right to free assembly and speech, are passed on by means of transnational cultural exchange, intercultural dialogue, and cultural collaboration between EU Member States and non-EU countries, thereby conveying tolerance and acceptance of cultural differences between the peoples of the world. Making such measures more efficient and transparent requires better coordination and the participation of cultural civil society. To this end, a new division of labour must be established between the political sector and civil stakeholders (arm's length principle). Such cooperation serves the heterogeneity of the cultural sector, in both conceptual and operative terms, more effectively than a centralised project management structure. Improved cooperation with the Council of Europe can only benefit the implementation of a complementary European cultural policy. Developing these approaches to cultural policy on a European level and in the Member States requires qualifying resources (research, documentation, statistics, monitoring) and active consultation processes.

In view of the significance of culture, the budget available up to now in the EU for its core culture programme is inadequate and hinders a targeted and complementary promotional policy. The revision of the framework budget in 2009 must aim to redeploy funds relevant to this future-oriented sector.

Europe powers culture – Programmes and action areas

European Capital of Culture. This project is a successful model: as a laboratory for a »Europe from the bottom up«, the Capital of Culture promotes sustainable, culture-oriented urban development and the use of cultural instruments as an engine of, and resource for, social developments in European and global dimensions. The dialogue between former and future Capitals of Culture is worthy of expansion. Analysing, exploiting and transferring best practices to other cities is effective in many respects: for elaborating a »syntax“ for cultural urban development, and for raising awareness of the significance of culture for urban and regional development in Europe.

Cities and international dialogue. European urban culture has always thrived on mixture and interaction. The model of a »European City« must be improved to harmonize the two ends of the spectrum: »western cultural traditions« and a hybrid »urban culture“ with European and global influences. Municipal cultural policy could provide *the* ideal field for experimenting with a new *diversity*. European cultural policy must give greater consideration to this task and actively pursue an exchange of experience and active collaboration with European municipalities. The »2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue« should be used offensively for this purpose.

European memory culture. European memory culture is still largely influenced by national myths and their unique characteristics. It is necessary to develop a European history that reflects the entire spectrum of the historical process over a thousand years in Europe. Cultural policy must integrate a memory policy, which is based on fact and whose standard of measure is the upholding of human rights in a given era. A memory policy must take the non-concurrence of societal developments into account and address the history of violence in the 20th century without taboos. In addition to confronting the Holocaust, another primary focus is the investigation and resolution of the crimes and injustices of totalitarian regimes.

Enhancing the effectiveness of cultural promotion. Cultural promotion in the European Union as implemented under the EU Culture Programme (2007–2013) has proven, in principle, to be effective. However, funding is inadequate and the concept still needs refinement. To enhance the effectiveness of promotional policy, a fund must be set up to cushion financial risks (possibly on the national level), so as to enable above all smaller organisations to submit applications. The information offices (Cultural Contact Points) should receive better support in their work.

Promoting mobility. Despite progress in many specific areas, the freedom of movement of artists, cultural workers and works of art in Europe is still limited. Incentives hardly exist at all, particularly for young talents, to develop, collaborate on, or co-produce projects. For this reason, the framework and promotional conditions for transnational work and cooperation between artists and creative talents urgently must be reformed. Effective steps include: expanding the promotion of cultural exchange in all its diverse forms (e.g. with national and European mobility funds), creating a European Cultural Mobility Programme, and improving visa requirements, work permits, copyright law, immigration law, tax law and social insurance law.

Culture/creative industries. The sectors of the culture/creative industries are considered to be sources of growth with great employment potential. They are part of the future, knowledge-based, European economic space and simultaneously producers of a considerable portion of

European culture. Sustainable cultural policy must give consideration to the associated micro-structures in the context of an integrated economic, legal, education and cultural policy, and in particular promote small to medium-sized enterprises in order to guarantee creativity and jobs.

Open communication in Europe. The establishment of open communication in Europe is a key prerequisite for the democratisation of the European Community. Up to now, »open communication« essentially is established in and for the national framework. Therefore, projects must continue to be funded that provide for transnational reporting on European debates and the dissemination of information across Europe. Effective measures include: supporting existing, virtual media forums significant to Europe, promoting European cooperation in journalism and expanding Internet portals that promote European cultural cooperation by means of information and service.

Area, region, culture. Culture manifests itself not least in specific areas. The regions must be enabled to identify their own »talents«, their own »territorial capital« and to develop a unique profile so as to present and position themselves more effectively within Europe. The EU's Structural and Agricultural Funds are based on approaches for integrated development strategies. The Member States should make better use of the cultural policy options formulated in these instruments. One effective measure would be to draw up information on the Structural Fund specifically for the cultural sector, thereby improving access to the fund for culture stakeholders.

European Culture Forum. The significance of the cultural and creative sector in the European Community is growing. Until now, no platform exists for a continuous exchange between participating associations, initiatives and organizations (»stakeholders«) on the one hand, and European institutions on the other. A European Culture Forum can initiate an exchange of arguments relating to the cultural policy perspective above and beyond cultural lobbyism. Therefore, it would be desirable to establish a European cultural policy platform and to support existing, civil organisations and associations.

Cultural foreign relations in Europe. The »European added value« created by cultural projects and encounters for the European Union's foreign relations cannot be rated highly enough. The cultural exchange between the European Community and non-EU countries therefore must be strengthened just as much as the cultural components of EU foreign policy. It would be desirable to support existing platforms for structured cooperation between European institutions in the area of cultural foreign policy, improve coordination between the various stakeholders, and promote concrete modes of coordination. We welcome the planned establishment of an EU-ACP Culture Fund.

We are convinced that without an activating and sustainable cultural policy, Europe will be unable to cope with either internal or external obstacles. In addition to putting cultural policy into practice, Europe must conduct an ongoing debate to examine and analyse cultural policy arguments and proposals. The Fourth Federal Congress on Cultural Policy, »culture.powers.europe – europe.powers.culture« on 7/8 June 2007 in Berlin, is a step towards a strategic and sustainable cultural policy for Europe. We are optimistic that the ripple effect we trigger will have a lasting impact.

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