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CULTURAL ACTION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

NEW ORIENTATIONS ENVISAGED

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INTRODUCTION

Today, the importance of a cultural dimension to the European Community at all levels - national, regional and local - is increasingly recognized.

As an essential element of the concept of a citizens' Europe, this cultural dimension contributes to an awareness of a common sense of identity. Moreover, as an influential element in dialogue with third countries, it contributes to enlarging the image of the Community at an international level.

Considering the irreplaceable role of culture for the development of the Community, the Commission services believe that on expiry - at the end of this year - of the guidelines which have directed its common action in the arts over the last five years, a broad debate should be launched to allow new orientations for the cultural action of the Community to be established.

This debate should take into account the imminent deadline of the Single Market and its implications for culture in Europe as well as arts sectors for which a Community action is envisaged.

This document sets out the thinking of the services of the Commission on the cultural dimension, in particular more elements which could make a positive contribution to developing priorities for the Community action in the arts, and other areas with a cultural aspect. These should be established in continuous dialogue with the Member States, taking into account both the concerns of the government authorities and of those of the professionals in the different arts sectors.

To stimulate discussion, presented here are :

- proposals for new guidelines and an annex taking stock of and setting out in detail what action has been undertaken to date.

NEW GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ACTION IN THE CULTURAL FIELD

It has to be queried whether Community action in the cultural field can still be justified by the piecemeal approach which has largely characterised its evolution to date (cf. "balance" in annex).

In order to maximise its impact and to contribute added value to the Community as a whole, any action needs to be more structured, if it is to be coherent.

It is from this standpoint that the Commission services propose these new guidelines on the basis of the views outlined below.

These should:

BE BASED on a respect for the Treaty and its fundamental principles, as well as the principles of :

- cultural diversity in its national, regional and local forms;
- subsidiarity. The Community becomes involved only when an action can be carried out jointly, on the basis of consensus, more efficiently and more effectively than by the Member States individually.

FACILITATE the necessary synergies by increasing cooperation and coordination with relevant international organisations (Council of Europe, Unesco, United Nations).

CONTRIBUTE to better organisation of the work of institutions as well as their collaboration with the Member States, by encouraging dialogue and reflection and by associating the professionals in this process.

SET priorities related to the real issues for which Community action must be undertaken.

Taking this into account, the Commission services wish thought to be given to the possibilities of :

- encouraging greater clarity and introducing continuous assessment of any action undertaken,
- overlapping an "across the board", or "horizontal" approach, bringing into play the cultural dimension in the single market, with a "vertical" approach which gives specific emphasis to specific sectors with cultural aspects.

I. CULTURE IN THE SINGLE MARKET

The disappearance of national frontiers which will characterise the Community of tomorrow, calls for a strengthening, at all levels, of the links which tie our communities of citizens. It will, at the same time, increase the need to find new solutions to common problems.

For the arts and other culture-related sectors too, there will be a need to react and adapt positively to change and to seize the opportunities arising.

Always taking into account the cultural dimension in Community policies and programmes, encouraging access to the arts, encouraging artists and arts professionals through mobility, information and exchange of expertise should, in the view of the Commission services, be priority areas when any action is taken.

1. Development of cooperation and consideration of the cultural dimension in Community policies and programmes

The development of Community policies and programmes will have a direct and indirect impact on culture-related sectors.

The key factor here should be to respect the general principles of the Treaty and the major political objectives to which the Member States have subscribed, while ensuring the preservation of an environment in which the arts can flourish.

In view of the concern of the Member States and of professional circles on the impact of the Single Market on the arts, the Commission services feel that now it might be appropriate :

- to try to stress the importance of the arts in the context of Community policies and programmes at the time they are drawn up.

Without being necessarily planned as such, a growing number of actions with a cultural dimension have been developed in the context of various community policies, such as on free circulation (of cultural goods and workers), the environment, research and development, new technologies, social and regional policies, tourism, training and external relations.

The opportunities, still not fully explored yet, open to culture-related sectors through existing policies, would certainly be enhanced by being coordinated and developed.

At the same time, consideration should be given to the ways and means in which to integrate the cultural dimension as one of the elements of these same policies.

- to search at Community level for appropriate solutions to enable culture-related sectors to deal with the creation of the Single Market through vigilance and cooperation.

The Commission has already been confronted with the concept of a cultural dimension in particular in relation to audio-visual policy (1), copyright and neighbouring rights (2), the special V.A.T. system for secondhand goods, works of art, antiques and collector's items (3).

In this sense, the discussion undertaken on the protection of national treasures with artistic, historic or archaeological value, is a significant area where, in a difficult case, consultation has allowed the debate to progress.

This horizontal approach would be worth reinforcing and streamlining.

With the aid of professionals in the field, the Commission intends to look at ways in which Community measures could have an impact on culture, as follows :

- by "surveying" culture-related areas of common interest (4)
- by consulting professionals via hearings or ad hoc groups;
- by preparing a "white paper" on culture based on this.

2. Developing networks in the cultural sector

Cooperation through the medium of encouragement given to the development of networks is increasingly practised. It enables the work of particular groups of practitioners to be enriched and opened up, and to respond to often-found needs for better organisation at working level through the interchange of experience it implies.

(1) Com(90)78 final 21.2.90

(2) Com(90)584 final 17.1.91

(3) Com(88)846 final

(4) "surveying" : highlighting a range of work undertaken at other levels of Community policy-making which has a direct or indirect impact on a given sector.

In the cultural world, some networks exist already, while others are in the process of being formed, or would like to be.

Cooperation through networking in culture-related sectors should :

- help with exchange of information and experience;
- lead to innovative or pragmatic solutions;
- supply particular training needs;
- establish better arts/economy interchange within regional development (already happening);

To support the creation and development of networks, get to know them better and monitor their growth is in the Commission's view one of the best ways for the Community to act in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, whilst helping the work of people in the arts professions.

It would thus be appropriate :

- to identify existing networks at Community level;
- to pick out some which specialise in areas of agreed mutual interest (e.g. in the heritage field: museums, archives, learned institutions, libraries etc.);
- helping to create new ones where needed to establish, together with the professionals, how best to respond to current needs;
- to develop a flexible approach in order to encourage them to develop and operate autonomously.

3. Support for training and proficiency in culture-related fields

The Commission services consider that training, a current priority area for action in culture at Community level, is one of the paths (5) to be explored more closely. The aim would be to encourage investment in human resources to develop qualifications, creativity and adaptability.

It is particularly important to encourage creative artists and professionals in order to maintain quality and guarantee the future of the arts. Efforts should focus as much on maintaining traditional techniques and values as on supplying access to innovative expertise, particularly with respect to new technologies.

(5) Com(90)472 final Communication on vocational training in the arts field.

Community action in this field should be two-fold :

- on the one hand, to improve access by the culture-related sectors to existing Community programmes and funds. In particular, real needs should be identified and problems of access to programmes examined.
- on the other hand, to support networking initiatives at grassroots level. Particular attention should be paid to those which attempt (via assistance for skills development, exchanges or to young artists) to support professional artists, performers and others in the difficult early stages of their career.

This approach combines maximum efficacy in the use of Community support with encouragement to art forms to develop autonomously.

4. Access to culture and better information

It is important to ensure awareness and diffusion of the arts in order to give them greater accessibility and bring them to a wider audience after 1992.

Within the bounds of respect for the principle of subsidiarity, it is possible to improve awareness and mutual understanding between people, especially through contact and interchange, as well as improving public access and information within the arts themselves.

As regards access, the Commission intends to give particular emphasis to :

- intensifying support for translation, an ideal method of broadening access in a multicultural society;
- discover particularly via networking the special problems of arts institutions such as museums, libraries, archives, etc.;
- highlight the variety of approaches and experiments tried out at national, regional and local level, by helping to make them better known at Community level;
- pay special attention to less privileged members of society by giving priority to projects aimed at promoting their involvement in cultural life.

In addition, action to raise awareness and inform, aimed at both professionals and public, seems indispensable to sustain and flank other culture-related initiatives at Community level.

Accordingly, the Community will attempt to put the following at the disposal of arts professionals :

- basic information: practical guides or factsheets concise analyses of a particular problem offering a steer for short term action;
- studies in greater depth on topics of common concern and as necessary supplying comparable statistical data (medium to long term).

The Commission services consider it might also be opportune to try to raise public interest in those actions undertaken at Community level in support of culture. There are various possibilities, such as awareness campaigns on particular themes, in collaboration with Member States as well as appropriate international organisations; the launch of a "Eurobarometer" for culture, organisation of information seminars for target groups (voluntary organisations, press etc..).

Greater use might also be made of the opportunities provided by the audiovisual media to improve mutual knowledge of each other's cultures.

5. Private support for funding the arts

Because of different economic situations and traditions, systems for financing the arts vary greatly in our countries at present. Even so, it is generally accepted that public funds must be supplemented by private resources in order to meet a growing demand for the arts.

As requested by culture ministers (6) , the Commission has taken an interest in the question of sponsorship - a strong link between the artist and the economy - which indirectly affects public access to culture.

The Commission has accordingly made a fixed-term financial contribution towards the setting up of an European body, ECBAC (European Committee for Business, the Arts and Culture), aimed at creating links between specialised bodies in Member States. ECBAC will be concentrating on better circulation of information, particularly in respect of legislative and regulatory provisions for sponsorship. A sponsorship guide will be published shortly.

(6) Conclusions of the Council and Ministers responsible for cultural affairs OJEC.197 p.2, 27.7.1988 and Resolutions of Ministers responsible for cultural affairs of 13.11.1986 - OJEC C.320 p.2, 13.12.1986

Bearing in mind the proliferation of initiatives playing a part in the financing of culture by business (European foundations and other such organisations) it could be valuable to bring together all those actively involved in sponsorship development in the internal market so as to analyse the situation clearly and effectively. In this context, it might be helpful to make use of a networking approach. It would also be opportune to consider in greater depth how best to encourage the growth of sponsorship in the Community (fiscal measures, codes of practice etc..).

II. DEVELOPMENT OF AREAS OF COMMON INTEREST HAVING A CULTURAL ASPECT

It is very important to take into account the particular needs of different culture-related sectors. In order to be effective, Community action must be both progressive and selective.

So far, such action has been able to develop mainly in the fields of the heritage and of literature. In each sector, a different approach was used. In the case of the heritage, the preferred method was that of pilot experiments. For books and reading, the subject was from the outset subjected to a comprehensive analysis. Experience shows that it is necessary to combine the two approaches.

Bearing in mind the amount of work still to come, it might be thought wise to stick to these two fields. Conversely, it is hard to justify this self-limiting approach, given that the Community has on a number of occasions expressed its commitment to other areas, such as performing arts (theatre, music etc) and the visual arts (7). The Commission services take the view that, irrespective of what fields may be chosen subsequently, the main task is to set priorities which really respond to a common interest.

1. The cultural heritage: expansion and reinforcing of current action in conservation

Visible evidence of Europe's historic and artistic past, the moveable and built cultural heritage has irreplaceable significance for European culture: it embodies many stages of our civilisation and different expressions of its identity.

Over the last decades, saving the cultural heritage has taken on a new dimension which affects international, national and regional action on its behalf: (8).

(7) For example, Resolution of Ministers responsible for cultural affairs on the development of the theatre in Europe of 07.06.1991 OJEC C.188, p.3, 19.07.1991

(8) European Heritage Year, organised Europe-wide in 1975 signalled the beginning of the continuing process of closer co-operation, as the CSCE Symposium held in Cracow in June 1991 bears witness.

At the level of the twelve Member States, a political consensus has been established towards the heritage, amply expressed in the relative importance given to it in national culture budgets.

The Community can and should derive greater benefit from the richness and diversity of its common heritage. Quite apart from its intrinsic cultural value, the heritage is bound up with many aspects of economic and social life. Directly or indirectly, the heritage is linked to, for example,

- the environment :
- on the one hand, it is now seriously threatened by pollution, damage, and changes in ways of life and production methods (9),(10).
- on the other, it is a vital part of our quality of life: Europe's citizens are more and more conscious of the part played by the heritage as an active element in their everyday life, and of opportunities to have access to it. They ought therefore to have the opportunity to become more involved in the protection of their heritage.
- Research and new technology
 Conservation techniques are already drawing upon research and new technology. In many cases, it is possible increasingly to use the opportunities provided by progress in science and to make it more available and accessible to those who work in conservation, libraries, archives and museums etc.
- Training and employment
 The heritage makes a contribution to upkeep of small and medium-size businesses, to tourist development and to preserving traditional crafts as well as creating new jobs in numerous and varied disciplines. Heritage crafts need high-quality training, and the development of this should be given high priority (11).

(9) For example , efforts to support the architectural heritage were instigated by the Green Paper on the Urban Environment Com(90)218 final 27.07.1990

(10) The protection and conservation of the European cultural heritage form part of the STEP programme (Science and Technology for Environment Protection) of Community R&D 1991-94, in order to study the effects of pollution and environmental damage and to combat them.

(11) Com(90)472 final Communication on vocational training in the arts field.

The preservation of the cultural heritage is already one of the Community's priorities for action in the field of culture.

The experience acquired over eight years, albeit restricted to the architectural heritage, has enabled a degree of feedback from professional circles, enabling some assessment to be made of the value of a concerted effort by Member States in this area. This should be continued and broadened.

Other areas of the heritage (ie. the moveable heritage) might also be able to benefit from such a common effort.

However, faced with so vast a field of action the Commission services feel that choices must be made. The following options might be considered:

- * the Community's work on the heritage could be extended to the moveable heritage;
- * the "across the board" approach described on page 4, particularly as regards training and networking, should apply to the heritage as a matter of priority;
- * given that a wealth of activity is being generated as much at the level of the countries and regions of the Community as by the Commission, the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other specialised bodies, consultation and coordination should be strengthened;
- * in this context, a working paper on future prospects for heritage protection in the Community could be drawn up by the Commission services.

2. Books and reading

Books are a fundamental element in European integration - one of the main modes of expression, an aid to intellectual creativity and a complete cultural and pedagogical tool. They are, not least, a vehicle for cultural exchange in a Community characterised by its cultural and linguistic richness and diversity.

By the resolution of the Council and Ministries of Culture 18 May 1989 (12), the Community demonstrated its commitment to make special efforts in this area. Work has started but experience in this area is too recent to permit evaluation of the initiatives carried out. Nevertheless, the Community cannot ignore certain essential features such as :

- * linguistic diversity
- * conservation (of paper, of archives)

- * conditions needed to develop an environment in which books and reading flourish (the "book chain")

Linguistic diversity

Even though formal barriers will start to fall from 1993 on, in the Community diversity is a treasure to be safeguarded. It is still, however, an obstacle to the circulation of books and access to their contents.

Accordingly, in 1990 the Community began a pilot project of financial assistance for contemporary literary translation, focussing particularly on translation of works in lesser used languages (13). The activity will be evaluated at the end of a period long enough to be meaningful, viz, five years (13).

At this stage, it is nevertheless possible to state that translating books will not on its own have a real impact either in market or in cultural terms, unless accompanied by action to raise public awareness of the richness and cultural worth of the different Community languages.

Amongst those activities already launched, more emphasis can be placed on this aspect by, for example, ensuring translation into the other Community languages for the winners of the European Literary Prize. In future, the Community should try to develop this type of action in concert with Member States and with professionals in the field, notably through networking (cf pp. 6 and 8)

Bearing in mind the importance of translation for the Community, and without prejudice to improvements and changes likely to be made in the light of experience, it is clear that this attempt to promote translation should be extended and diversified. One possibility might be to enlarge the literary translation pilot project to give more scope for dramatic works, or indeed to extend this kind of project to other texts of a cultural nature (e.g. reference works, catalogues, technical manuals).

In addition, in order to promote quality translation, which is a prerequisite of genuine access to the richness of our cultures, the Commission has supported the growth of a network of institutes of translation by offering bursaries (14). It will require evaluation of the activity of the colleges in order to decide, in consultation with the professionals, whether this is the best way to promote quality translation.

(13) OJEC 89/C 183.01 20.7.1989 & C/86.03 3.4.1991

(14) Colleges of translation : Straelen, Arles, Tarazona, Procida, Norwich

Conservation (of paper, of archives)

Taking as read the importance of conserving the heritage on the Community level, it should be recalled that books and archives are fertile territory for developing joint action. At this stage, bearing in mind the breadth and technical nature of the questions raised, the Commission services envisage an examination of these aspects with national experts, in order to plan future practical action.

Conditions for creating an environment in which books and reading flourish (the "book chain")

The Commission's Communication on books and reading (15) set out a wide range of aspects for joint consideration, from one end of the "book chain" to the other. In the medium or longer term this can be developed and refined, with the help of increased collaboration with professional circles (cf.p.6) and the development of topic-related studies in the context of the priorities selected by the Council (16) .

III. Strengthening dialogue with third countries and in particular with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe

Naturally complex and constantly changing, cultural co-operation with third countries belongs in the broader context of diplomatic relations and is linked closely to political developments. As a significant partner in international relations, the Community must give thought to development of cultural cooperation with the other countries and continents to which it is historically linked. It can also promote its image on the world scene by way of this cultural dimension.

1. In Europe, cultural cooperation has altered decisively since the major political events which signalled the opening up to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Existing cultural affinities between the partners have greatly facilitated this dialogue. Such cooperation is a part of the larger process of European integration. The recent conferences and symposia organised by the CSCE (17) belong to this general dynamic.

(15) Com(89)258 final

(16) Guide for authors and translators; Statistics publication - the book sector; Comparative study on measures to assist book exports.

(17) Conference of Paris - Cracow Symposium, 26-May to 7-June 1991

Cultural cooperation between the European Community and the countries of Europe not members of the Community also has to take account of the setting up of "European agreements" to be concluded in particular with Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland (18) .

The EFTA Countries have shown their interest in cultural cooperation, to be negotiated in the appropriate framework.

2. With regard to the rest of the world, there are signs that culture is breaking through in the context of international negotiations. Currently, the relevant agreements are broadly of two types :

a) on the one hand, through the Lomé Convention, the Community is committed to encouraging cooperation between the ACP countries, particularly in the cultural field. "Lomé III", signed for five years in December 1984, was the first to incorporate a cultural chapter permitting relations to develop between the European Community and the ACP countries in this area. With the drafting of "Lomé IV" in 1990 the inclusion for a second time of a section on culture opened up new perspectives capable of increasing cultural co-operation between the Community and the ACP countries on a permanent footing.

b) on the other hand, the cultural dimension is being progressively included as cooperation agreements develop between the Community and other third countries. The Member States are also party to the so-called "mixed or cooperation. In practice this is carried by approval of a negotiating mandate, supplemented in the case of mixed agreements by subsequent ratification by national Parliaments: for example, the agreements negotiated with some Latin American countries (Chile, Mexico, Paraguay and Uruguay). As regards Asia, Australia and the Arab countries, there is still not enough progress on considering the cultural dimension although culture is a useful basis for efforts to reopen or begin a dialogue (*).

(18) The Commission has already opened to its neighbour countries Community programmes which are likely to have an impact on cultural matters as they develop. Thus in the context of economic assistance to central and Eastern Europe, the Council adopted on 7 May 1990 the regulation setting up a European Training Foundation and the Decision establishing TEMPUS, a transeuropean programme for mobility in higher education. These Community cooperation programmes, specially conceived for the training needs of central and East European countries, are open to the eventual participation of non-Community countries, notably G24. Similarly, the EFTA countries are taking part in the STEP, COMETT II and for 1992-93, ERASMUS Programmes.

(*) Meeting of the Social and Cultural Committee, Dublin, June 1990

The growing part played by culture in the context of international relations involving the Community and Member States attests to the fact that on the world stage the Community is no longer perceived solely as an economic player.

This is a matter for some rejoicing, but thought also has to be given to the responsibilities it entails and the likely consequences.

In this context, the Commission services think it desirable to look at the utility of :

- strengthening coordination and cooperation in the framework of the specialised international organisations: the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the United Nations;
- promoting exchange of information with the various cultural institutes of Member States (e.g. the British Council, the Goethe Institut, the Alliance Française, the Instituto Cervantes, Dante Alighieri) to the benefit of their various operations in third countries;
- monitoring overall evolution with regard to the various agreements incorporating cultural clauses.

Conclusion

Finally, the debate on new directions for action on culture in the Community should, in the view of the Commission services, focus on whether or not to take the following action :

- to take the "cultural dimension" more fully into account in other Community policies and programmes;
- to encourage the development of arts networks and help them to act independently;
- to support efforts to foster training and skills proficiency in the culture-related fields;
- to help improve the information available to those who work in the arts and the general public; and to work towards wider access to culture for the ordinary citizen;
- to choose fields of common interest in culture-related areas on the basis of priorities, with the aim of more coherent and effective action;
- to intensify dialogue with third countries, particularly the countries of central and Eastern Europe, bearing in mind the growing importance of culture in international relations.