

The Magazine

EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN EUROPE

ISSUE 24 - 2004

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- » European Commission, B-1049 Brussels; tel. (32-2) 29-91111; fax (32-2) 29-50138
- » Education and Culture DG, fax (32-2) 29-64259; e-mail: eac-info@cec.eu.int; Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm
- » Edited by: Jaime Andreu Romeo, Francis Gutmann
- » Design and drafting: Marielle Riché
- » Special thanks to: Vito Borelli, Catherine Colomb-Nancy, Cheryl Cooper, Youri Devuyst, Fatima Djourmer, Johannes Gehringer, Gilles Gervais, Renato Girelli, Catherine Henriot, Fabienne Métayer, Valérie Panis, Sylvain Pasqua, Xavier Troussard, Roger O'Keefe, Arnaud Pasquali, Dietrich Rometsch, Diego Sammaritano, Alain Sancerni, Ruard Wallis de Vries
- » Graphic design and illustration: Rumeurs and Mostra, Brussels.
- » The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Commission.
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Directorate-General for Education and Culture





Bichara Khader

Director of the Centre for Studies and Research on the Contemporary Arab World and lecturer at the Université Catholique de Louvain, Belgium

You took part in the work of the high-level advisory group, a circle of intellectuals convinced through their training and their activities of the need for dialogue. By what means and by when do you see a structuring dialogue being established in the Euro-Mediterranean region?

Despite the lyrical waxing on the *mare nostrum* theme and the need for 'mutual comprehension', cultural dialogue has remained a poor relation within the Euro-Mediterranean partnership. Admittedly, intellectuals and men of faith have met, spoken and discussed the need for 'dialogue', but they have been unable to devise a 'cultural platform' in the Mediterranean capable of breaking with the accusatorial rhetoric, received ideas and particularly the facile analyses whereby a given culture or, more particularly, a religion, is held to be the root cause of the economic, social, political and even geopolitical problems afflicting the Euro-Mediterranean world.

The fact is that there can be no genuine cultural dialogue between the peoples of the Mediterranean without a critical reading of recent and not so recent common history in which the victors in terms of geopolitics and geo-economics have administered their power in an unrestrained manner. Cultural dialogue implies first the work of historians in order to close the dark pages of history and devise a new way of living together. It also hinges on the action of responsible media in building bridges between people instead of insidiously pitting people against one another and raising spectres.

Could not the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for dialogue between cultures and civilisations appear as derisory in the face of international events which currently fuel people's fears and prejudices?

The creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation is to my mind urgent, useful and worthwhile. But to imagine that on that basis the Foundation could foster dialogue between cultures and become the driving force of a common dream would be to rush things. If we are to counter negative perceptions and euro- or islamo-centrist views, the distortion of reciprocal images, the arrogance on one side and the narcissistic wounds on the other, it is going to take more than a Foundation: we have to learn to come to terms with others and the way they are different, particularly those nearest us. We have to get to know others as they are and not as we would like them to be. This is why I personally give priority to work at school, university and media level. This is where perceptions are shaped. In this spirit, any action focusing on youth deserves priority: the inter-Mediterranean Erasmus programme, exchanges of young people, twinning of schools, establishments and universities, summer camps, sports meetings and voluntary activities, etc.

'Soft power' has been mentioned as a way of changing societies and political structures from the inside. Is intercultural dialogue a part of this?

Radically changing attitudes and perceptions is a question of time, perseverance and vision. You cannot change societies and cultures by decree or by tele-evangelism, and even less by firing missiles. To deconstruct our stereotypes we have to work on ourselves, our fears, our phantasms. Only then will we cease to create imaginary enemies and the world will be a safer place.

Contact

khader@dvlp.ucl.ac.be

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Foreword

Education and culture: Europe, a partner for the world

Education and training are a priority for the European Union, not only as part of its drive to equip Europe with a dynamic and competitive economy, but also in order to create an internationally outward-looking Europe, engaging with other cultures. Education, training and culture are an integral part of the cooperation actions between the Union and its international partners: the States which have become its new neighbours after the recent enlargement; the western Balkan States; the Mediterranean countries; the ACP countries whose development it supports; the Latin American and Asian countries with which it has signed regional agreements; and, lastly, industrialised countries such as Australia, the USA, Japan and New Zealand.



Ján Figel'
Member of the European Commission with responsibility for education, training, culture and multilingualism

Populations with proper education and training are the linchpin of economies which are solid, job-rich and offer social progress. Similarly, strong and vibrant cultures underpin identity and allow countries to make their voices heard clearly on the world stage. Grey matter and creativeness, broadening minds and exchanging ideas, are all investments which are necessary if we are to improve the way we live and the quality of our lives, and establish balanced international relations.

At the same time, however, these cultures must be able to express themselves and make themselves known outside their own borders. The Union, within the framework of international bodies such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and Unesco, is doing its utmost to ensure all States the right, if they deem it necessary, to pursue cultural policies and support their cultural industries. There is no other way that cultural diversity can be preserved and a genuine dialogue established between peoples.

Through the policies and programmes it implements, the European Union is active on all these fronts: through exchanges of young people on both sides of the Mediterranean, exchanges of students and teachers between universities in Europe and on other continents, e.g. through the Erasmus Mundus programme, co-funding for cultural projects in the partner countries, studies and seminars on intercultural dialogue.

In my capacity as the new European Commission member with responsibility for education, training, culture and multilingualism, and coming from one of the new Member States, I am convinced that the European Union is not an inward-looking entity. Far from it. By making its education systems internationally outward-looking, by creating a range of cooperation with governments, international organisations and also with civil society – associations, the universities, cultural players – it has a duty to carry forward the principle that there can be no democracy, social progress, prosperity or peace without educated, well-trained people who are curious about others and their cultures.



Higher education: an international vocation



Some countries, often by virtue of historic links, but also in order to promote their teaching and language throughout the world, pursue active policies aimed at international university cooperation, and subsidise educational and cultural establishments (British Council, Edufrance, etc.). Globalisation and its corollary, a high demand for international training and increased competition between universities, have prompted the Union to go further while leaving the individual Member States responsible for their higher education systems: by stepping up aid for university systems in the third countries, by improving the international attractiveness of its universities and by encouraging them to cooperate with each other and with the universities of the other regions of the world.



For 10 years or so, the Union has been launching several university programmes. These were set up in response to specific requirements: to help the countries of eastern Europe to institute reforms in their higher education systems (Tempus), to encourage young Europeans to study in another country and the universities of Europe to cooperate (Erasmus), to improve the teaching of European issues (Jean Monnet action), or to establish partnerships between European universities and those of industrialised countries such as the USA or Japan. These activities have all been designed to strengthen higher education and mutual comprehension, to bring education systems closer together and through them, people. Over the years, and with the enlargement of the European Union and its partnerships with other regions of the world or with international organisations, this cooperation has opened up to new countries and new areas of action.

Quality in higher education: a matter of the utmost importance to everyone

The underlying principle of the European programmes is that comparing experiences, exchanges and shared projects encourages innovation on courses and in practice, in our countries and elsewhere, but also that the bringing together of students, teachers, heads of universities from Europe and partner countries is conducive to better mutual comprehension. The watchword is cooperation.

Since 2004, the new Erasmus Mundus programme provides support for the setting up of European Master's qualifications (attesting to five years of university study) by at least three universities in three Member States of the European Union. It also pays out grants to graduates from other regions of the world who have come to study these Master's qualifications in Europe.

Several universities in Europe jointly prepare these new courses, which will be followed in at least two of them. Starting in 2005, Erasmus Mundus will also enable European students and university staff to spend a period of three months in non-European universities. Through this cooperation and through these exchanges, this programme contributes to the opening up of European university systems, making them internationally attractive and improving them. Having had the benefit of a European experience, students and teachers alike will then bring pressure to bear on the system, but from the inside. They will have learned languages and will have cast off many prejudices thanks to contacts with their peers in other countries and other regions of the world.

Unlike Erasmus Mundus, which is focused primarily on European teaching, the Tempus programme contributes to improving the quality of higher education in countries close to the Union. Tempus was set up following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and currently covers 27 countries from Morocco to Kyrgyzstan. Designed initially to help the countries of the former Soviet bloc to institute reforms in their higher education but also to train the players of the professional world with a view to the accession of these countries to the EU, it opened up to the Balkan countries, Russia and the newly independent States which issued from the break-up of the USSR, and then, starting in 2002, the EU's 10 Mediterranean partner countries. Tempus provides financial support for projects to overhaul courses, teaching methods and operational methods submitted by groups of universities in the EU and in the partner countries, as well as projects to accompany structural reforms to teaching systems, involving the ministries of education. It also provides grants for short-term mobility to university teachers and administrators from these and European countries. It thus helps to train higher-echelon staff from which many senior officials and politicians have come, and whose European experience can but have a positive influence on relations between these countries and the European Union.

Jean Monnet: the Union's ambassador to the world

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The Jean Monnet action was launched in 1990 in the EU Member States. Its purpose is to strengthen understanding of the original nature of European integration. It provides funding for 650 'Jean Monnet chairs' in some 50 countries on all continents and 98 multidisciplinary centres of excellence, situated in universities all over the world and bringing together documentary resources on European integration. It also supports the establishment of course modules on this theme and debates on European issues.

The 'Jean Monnet' universities, a network of 1 800 teachers, help to disseminate information on the different aspects of European integration: economic, political, social and cultural. They thus elicit in a generation of students, future officials and intellectuals of their countries, a specific knowledge and sensitivity in relation to the European project, while their work, lectures and publications help to throw light on policy options in Europe and in the world.

Further information is obtainable from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/ajm/index_en.html



Specific partnerships with the industrialised countries

The EU's external university cooperation takes routes which are different from those of the programmes. From the mid-1990s, the Union stepped up its relations with the main industrialised countries, the USA and Canada. The partners undertook to compare notes on matters of international trade and concluded bilateral agreements in various areas, including higher education. The Union and its partners every year contribute an equal amount to subsidise some 20 projects organised by three European universities and three American or Canadian universities. These universities create common syllabuses and exchange 50 or so students over a period of five to 12 months. Some 600 students annually take part in these exchanges.

The aim is not merely to establish lasting links and to consolidate mutual comprehension on both sides of the Atlantic, but also, through sharing experiences and comparing university systems, to innovate and improve the quality of higher education. These projects offer an insight into other ways of organising and evaluating studies, but also the opportunity to develop curricula in an international framework. The universities are encouraged to group and work in a network to create new courses or reach agreement on the combination of existing courses. Indeed, many of them continue their collaboration even after the project has been completed.

For the students benefiting from such training, this period of study in another country on international issues is a plus point for their university career and boosts their chances of finding a job. It is also a very effective way of discovering and better understanding the ethos of the host country while at the same time communicating in a foreign language.

Since 2002, the Union has been experimenting with similar cooperation with Japan (see the interview on page 9), Australia and, since 2004, New Zealand. The cultural dimension with a country like Japan is obviously very important, while cooperation with the other two countries means that European universities can benefit from the links they have traditionally maintained with the United Kingdom.

**Further information on European programmes in the area
of higher education is obtainable from:**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/
programmes_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/programmes_en.html)

The 'diploma supplement'

The heterogeneous nature of university systems and diplomas is an obstacle to studying or working in another country. A student seeking to pursue studies in a foreign university or an employer wishing to evaluate the level of studies of an applicant, has no European diploma to use as a reference point. As from 2006, a 'diploma supplement', will therefore facilitate readability, and hence recognition de facto, by offering a standard description of studies. It will be issued upon request by any establishment issuing university diplomas in the 25 Member States of the European Union and in the 15 other countries taking part in the 'Bologna Process' designed to establish equivalences between higher education systems in Europe. This innovation is the fruit of collaborative work by the European Union, the Council of Europe and Unesco.

Further information is obtainable from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/ects_en.html

The Turin Foundation: modernising training systems

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is an EU agency based in Turin. Its mission is to help the partner countries, candidate countries, the countries of eastern Europe and central Asia, the countries of south-east Europe, and the Mediterranean countries, to reform their vocational training systems. The ETF accordingly conducts studies and analyses, for example on employment markets or training systems, organises conferences and information and awareness-raising symposia, or training for policy decision-makers. It has played an important role in helping the new Member States to prepare for entry into the Union, a role taken over since 1 May 2004 by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, based in Thessaloniki.

Further information is obtainable from:

<http://www.etf.eu.int/>

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Europe at the international crossroads

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Education and training

are the key to economic and social development

Under the European Union's development aid policy, the EuropeAid Co-operation Office manages programmes designed to improve higher education systems and thus the training of human resources.

By way of example, the ALFA programme proposes that universities form a network to offer Latin American students and European students in the second and third university cycles, scientific and technical training in higher education establishments in the Member States of the Union and 18 countries of Latin America ⁽¹⁾. A second strand will support efforts to improve institutional and economic management in the participating universities. The ALBAN programme proposes grants to third-cycle students and Latin American professionals, who will become decision-makers in their countries, so as to enable them to follow in Europe and at their own initiative a period of training in a university, a research centre or a training establishment.

The Asia-Link programme provides support for the setting up of regional and international partnerships between universities in Europe and Asia in order to improve teacher training and to develop courses and teaching material: 17 countries of south and south-east Asia including India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam, and also China, take part in this programme.

Further information is obtainable from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/alfa/index_en.htm

<http://www.programalban.org/index.jsp>

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/projects/asia-link/index_en.htm

⁽¹⁾ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Broader action thanks to international organisations

In the areas of education and culture, the EU has set out to cooperate with those international organisations which are active in this area, for example, Unesco, the Council of Europe and the OECD ⁽¹⁾. This gives the Union a natural relay for extending its action internationally, as these organisations bring together many countries ⁽²⁾. It is in higher education that this cooperation has made its most significant mark. It makes it possible to combine flexibility of intergovernmental cooperation, which is a feature of these organisations, with the methods and framework for action of the European Union.

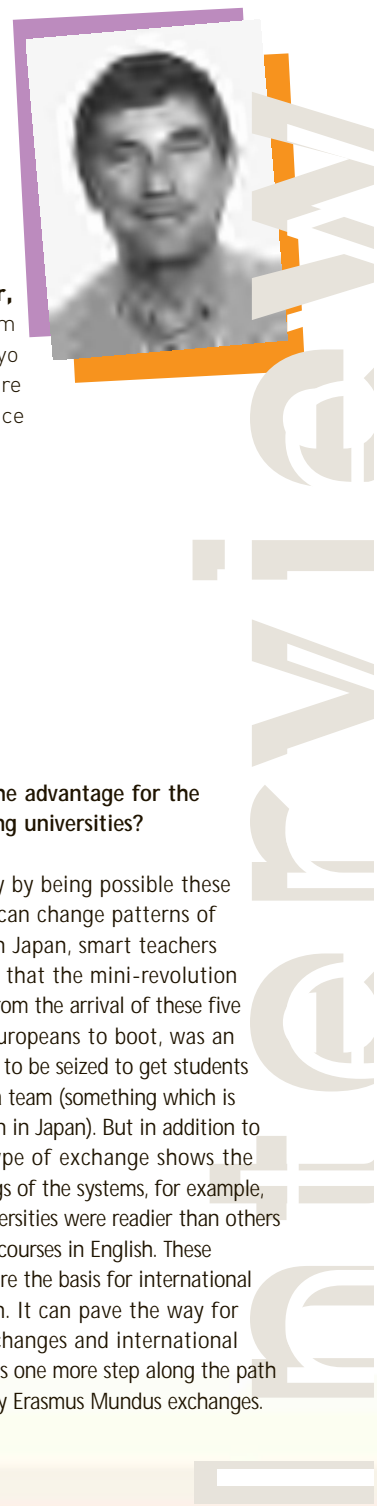
Europass, for example, was developed by the European Union and is electronically available via the Internet. It is a tool designed to encourage mobility among students and European workers. To do this, it uses a standard format and lists the competencies, qualifications and occupational experience of the holder. It comprises a series of documents which include a 'language passport' describing the language proficiency, a standard CV and a 'diploma supplement'. The 'language passport' and the CV are completed by the holder of the Europass passport while the 'diploma supplement' is issued via the university system.

The 'language passport' and the 'diploma supplement' were developed in conjunction with the Council of Europe and Unesco, and this has made it possible to extend the scope of Europass way beyond the frontiers of the European Union.

The EU is also cooperating with the OECD to establish an information system for those wishing to undertake studies offered by an institution in another country, the purpose being to guarantee a certain level of quality. This guarantee is necessary considering the recent proliferation of international training provision, particularly over the Internet.

⁽¹⁾ Articles 149 and 151 of the Treaty on European Union.

⁽²⁾ 190 in the case of Unesco, 45 in the case of the Council of Europe, and 30 in the case of the OECD.



Marc Bourdier,

who holds a doctorate from the University of Tokyo and lectures at the School of Architecture of Paris-La Villette, France

You are responsible for coordinating the Ausmip project involving four European universities situated in Paris, Munich, Lisbon and Brussels and four Japanese universities situated in Tokyo, Chiba and Kyushu. Tell us about this project.

This is a university exchange project between Japan and Europe supported by the European Commission and the Japanese Ministry of Education. Between 2002 and 2005, it will have allowed 80 students in architecture to work abroad on the theme of urban regeneration. Under these arrangements, 20 European fifth-year architecture students went to study in 2003–04 for a period of seven months in two Japanese universities, while 20 Japanese students spent the same period in two European universities. Each student took with him a research theme, for example, the preservation of heritage, urbanism in the artificial Japanese islands, the economic mechanisms of urban regeneration, etc. Their research reports were validated when they came back. They are excellent and I hope to get them published.

What problems did you meet when mounting this international project?

The main problems were the fees, which are much higher in Japan than in Europe, and the recognition of this part of education in the university course. But things went smoothly: the universities signed agreement protocols guaranteeing the students validation of the seven months of study in the other country by their university of origin and exemption from the fees in the host universities, the principle being that each student pays the fees of his university of origin.

What did the students who spent these seven months in the other country get out of the experience?

We organised a first seminar in May 2004 with the 40 students who took part in the first year of exchange. It was spectacular: in seven months, their lives, the way they looked upon the world, had changed. They had discovered things which they did not imagine existed, had to modify certain misconceptions they held and came back with more questions than certainties: isn't this the best that could happen to them? I was amazed by how intelligently they came to terms with this cultural shock and the perspective that they developed.

Where is the advantage for the participating universities?

First, simply by being possible these exchanges can change patterns of teaching: in Japan, smart teachers understood that the mini-revolution stemming from the arrival of these five students, Europeans to boot, was an opportunity to be seized to get students to work as a team (something which is not common in Japan). But in addition to that, this type of exchange shows the shortcomings of the systems, for example, certain universities were readier than others to organise courses in English. These exchanges are the basis for international cooperation. It can pave the way for teacher exchanges and international Master's. It is one more step along the path laid down by Erasmus Mundus exchanges.

Contact

marc.bourdier@paris-lavillette.archi.fr



Helping cinema to thrive all over the world

In terms of revenue and employment levels, the cinema is a major cultural industry. It also generates emotion, dreams and shared experience. To see films produced by other countries is to understand our differences but also what we have in common, to better know one another and perhaps to open up to a greater extent to someone who is already no longer quite a foreigner. To create and export films is to claim identity and make it known to other nations. As part of this programme to support the audiovisual industry and its cooperation action, the EU provides support for the creation and dissemination of the films of Europe and its partners in the rest of the world, while promoting cultural diversity in international forums.



Jérôme Plon © Duo Films



Photo: Bougoum Saïdou



Supporting cinema

Producing and distributing a film is complex and costly, particularly on the international scene. It implies a wide range of partners, requires vast financial and technical resources and there is no guarantee of success. Competition is keen and the world markets are saturated by American films. In order to help its cinema, the European Union in 1991 introduced the MEDIA programme to support the development, promotion and distribution of European films in Europe and on the international markets, and also to provide training-related support. Through this international cooperation, the EU is contributing to the development of the cinemas of its partners.

Using the European Development Fund (EDF) it offers support for the production of fiction and animation productions from 78 ACP countries. Since 2000, the Union has co-funded 89 films from these countries. These include *Lumumba* by Raoul Peck (Haiti), distributed in over 30 countries, *Heremakono* of Abderrahmane Sissako (Mauritania) and *Moolaadé* by Ousmane Sembene (Senegal), high-quality films which have been acclaimed at major international festivals: Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Ouagadougou, etc.

The EU also funds an audiovisual support programme for the countries of the Mediterranean (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Palestinian Territories, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Turkey). Since 2000, this 'EURO-MED audiovisual' programme has funded six projects involving support for the production,

distribution and management of Euro-Mediterranean joint productions. It will, as from 2005, also provide support for the preservation of the cinema and radio heritage and to set up a protective legal framework for copyright and diversity of provision. 'EURO-MED audiovisual' will also enable the professionals in these Mediterranean countries to have training co-funded for Europeans by the MEDIA programme: scriptwriting, digitalisation, financing, joint production, marketing of films, etc.

Cinema's own palaver trees: festivals

'A festival is clearly a big event. First and foremost, it is a cultural event, a cinematographic event, being a forum for exchanges and meetings, and the ideal place for the world of cinema to meet, identify and compare notes on the cinema. It is the cinema's own palaver tree; it is there that information and ideas are exchanged' stresses the Belgian director Thierry Michel (¹). These festivals are sometimes the only place where certain films can be seen and professionals from every continent can meet.

(¹) Address at the Conference on Relations between European Festivals and Southern Festivals, organised by the Coordination européenne des festivals de cinéma, Brussels, June 2003.



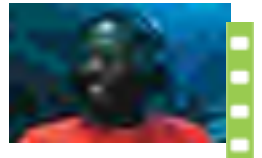
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In order to raise the profile of European productions, dozens of European Commission delegations every year organise European film festivals all over the world, often in conjunction with embassies and cultural establishments of the Member States of the European Union. To support this effort and also to encourage foreign festivals to present European films, the MEDIA programme has introduced aid for festivals in non-Union countries. This service should make it easier to promote and screen foreign films abroad. In this way, the Union contributes to diversifying the films screened, and to show that there are, alongside American and national productions, other cinemas, other themes, different sensitivities.

The MEDIA programme also supports every year 100 or so European festivals where, alongside European films, films of all nationalities are presented. It subsidises the Coordination européenne des festivals de cinéma, which groups 220 festivals, including in non-EU countries, such as Russia, Turkey, Croatia and Switzerland. This organisation, primarily responsible for promoting and distributing European films, provides training for festival organisers, including foreign festivals, conferences and seminars, and provides aid to foreign festivals with the help of the MEDIA programme (see the box on page 14).

The world's films at the cinema

As well as promoting films, distributing them remains the key factor in cinema economics. Yet this is where the major sticking point is: the markets are invaded by American productions, in Europe as elsewhere. And European, Asiatic, African, Mediterranean or Latin American films are finding it very difficult to make inroads. In 2003, a mere 2.2 % of admissions in Europe were for films other than European or American, compared with 72 % for films from the USA. The EU's ambition is to open up cinema theatre showings, where the situation often amounts simply to an uneven contest between a majority of American films and a minority of national films, to films from a range of different horizons.



Europa cinemas: seeing how others view things

The Europa cinemas network was set up in 1992 with the support of the MEDIA programme in order to ensure in each Member State the distribution of films from the other countries of the Union. With funding from the EURO-MED audiovisual programme, this network was, in 2002, extended to several Mediterranean countries. Europa cinemas thus broadened out to cover 44 additional theatres with 78 screens which regularly show European and Mediterranean films, and supports over 30 distribution companies in these countries. On a reciprocal basis, 106 European theatres members of the network showed Mediterranean films in 2003. Europa cinemas henceforth groups a total of 567 theatres (1 320 screens) in 310 cities in 51 countries. Since 2003, Europa cinemas manages the 'Africa cinemas' programme set up with the support of the European Union, the French Foreign Ministry and the Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie, to make it easier to distribute and show African films in sub-Saharan Africa.



Further information is obtainable from:
<http://www.europa-cinemas.com/home.html>



On the international scene

Cultural diversity is one of the founding principles of the European model. Under the Treaty on European Union, it is an obligation not only to respect this diversity but also to support it⁽¹⁾. In the cinematographic industry, this diversity is under severe threat: national productions are finding it very difficult to retain their market share in the face of the might of the north American cinema, even in their own country. For the cinema, as for other cultural industries, the Union upholds the principle of cultural diversity on the world stage. This principle, which is a world issue and not purely a European issue, means asserting the need for every citizen in the world to have access to his own culture as well as to other cultures and for each country to have the wherewithal to implement this.

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#24 Europe at the international crossroads

(1) Articles 149 and 151 of the Treaty on European Union.



In the negotiations conducted under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the European Union's mission is to ensure 'that the Community and its Member States maintain the possibility to preserve and develop their capacity to define and implement their cultural and audiovisual policies for the purpose of preserving their cultural diversity'. This is an approach shared by many countries at the WTO, not only the vast majority of non-Union European countries, but also partners such as Canada, Korea and Argentina.



Culture and globalisation

However, the WTO, whose mandate is to oversee the liberalisation of world trade, is not the appropriate forum for protecting cultural diversity and dealing with international cultural issues. Another forum, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco), has been working on this for a number of years. On the basis of a universal declaration on cultural diversity adopted unanimously by Unesco at the end of 2001 with the active support of the European Union, negotiations were started in October 2003 to draft an international convention designed to be a legal reference point for the promotion of diversity, cooperation and cultural exchange.

Further information is obtainable from:

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/extern/extern_en.htm



MEDIA

partner for festivals throughout the world

The organisers of festivals taking place in non-EU countries have, since 2003, benefited from an advisory and assistance service put in place by the European Union's MEDIA programme. This service is provided by European Film Promotion (EFP), which groups the national film promoting establishments at European level, by the Coordination européenne des festivals de cinéma and by the Europa Cinemas network. It targets festivals which show at least 35 % of European films and — as a function of requirements and expectations — can intervene before, during and after the festival. This service can help festivals organise their programmes by providing them with advice (such as concerning rights holders) but also a range of films and distribution rights which have been negotiated. This service also promotes the films selected, by paying for the costs of subtitling or sending copies, and the travelling costs for producers, directors or sales agents, as well as by organising round tables on topics of common interest. Lastly, through Europa Cinemas, help is provided to distributors and managers outside the Union who purchase the rights to these films.

This mechanism is more than just a tool for promoting European cinema in the world; it also helps to develop genuine partnership between European professionals and foreign festivals. The presence of European films and professionals enhances their international dimension and attracts regional directors and distributors. In 2004, around 10 international film festivals were involved, including those of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, Buenos Aires and Mar del Plata in Argentina, Moscow in Russia, Pusan in Korea, Tokyo in Japan, and Hong Kong.

Further information is obtainable from:

MEDIA programme: http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/festi_en.html

Coordination européenne des festivals de cinéma: <http://www.eurofilmfest.org/>

European Film Promotion: www.efp-online.com



Claude-Éric Poiroux
Director-General of
the Europa Cinemas network

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You are simultaneously a cinema operator, director of the 'Premiers Plans' Festival of Angers and Director-General of the Europa Cinemas network, which covers Europe, the Mediterranean and, more recently, Africa. What resources do you have for restoring a balance between the number of north American films and national films being shown in our theatres?

There is no miracle solution, only long-term initiatives which can converge. The initiative of Europa cinemas, supported by MEDIA, has allowed us to associate 1 300 screens where showings remain balanced: 55 % given over to European cinemas (33 % non-national, 22 % national) and 30 % American. It is the only network which has succeeded in reversing the balance of forces you mention in a lasting way. But defending the European cinema is also to open up the market to other cinemas from around the world: 15 % of the network's showings are thus taken up by African, Latin, Mediterranean or Asiatic films, although this market in Europe is under 3 %. This situation is not, however, homogeneous on the continent: while Spain, the Benelux countries and France are interested in films from Latin America, this is less so for Greece, Poland and the Czech Republic. This natural balance that we seek for our screen showings is still something to be achieved in all 25 countries.

By supporting its cinema on foreign markets, is Europe not running the risk of occupying the little ground left by American cinema for films from the Asian, African or Latin American countries?

If we defend European cinema in the theatres of São Paulo or Buenos Aires, all the film-makers of the Latin American continent know that their films will be screened, while they are virtually not distributed in the major multiplex cinemas which are mainly north American. The European cinema is the only one which can compete with Hollywood cinema in export terms and it thus opens up the route for films from other regions of the world. Accordingly, in the theatres of the Europa Cinemas network established in the Mediterranean countries, we support the showing of European films and we have observed that this policy generates a knock-on effect which is increasingly of benefit to Mediterranean films. Ten copies of the Palestinian film by Elia Suleiman, *Intervention Divine*, were used to screen it in Morocco. This was a first! Moreover, many Mediterranean films have been co-produced with Europe: European cinema shows clearly that it can be an active partner and a standard bearer for the other cinemas of the world.


What role does a festival such as yours play in encouraging the diversity of films?

Festivals can, better than commercial theatres, play a role in the discovery of a part of production which does not have access to traditional distribution. Every year the 'Premiers Plans' festival attracts 60 000 viewers who come to discover the premieres of works of which they knew nothing about beforehand. The effects of promotion and publicity mean that commercial films often arrive surrounded by hype, whereas in a festival the surprise effect is total. It is an opportunity to allow the public to see that, on the fringes of the market, there is a huge little-known part of the cinema which comprises often original, rich and promising works.

Contact
cepoiroux@europa-cinemas.org



Shared **cultures**

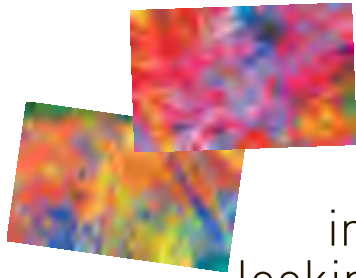


Whatever form they take, cultures are expressions of values, beliefs and visions of the world. Through cultural exchanges come dialogues, in full respect of what constitutes the ethos of every people. The European Union arose from the principle of the diversity of the multiple cultures which go to make up its common heritage. Through its programmes and policies it seeks to share this principle with its partners throughout the world while demonstrating by example that exchanges can go hand in hand with cultural development.

The Member States of the European Union, depending on their history, their diplomacy and their vision of culture, have forged relatively close links with other countries and, in some cases, pursue active policies to promote their national culture. The cultural actions of the Union in relation to non-EU countries are essentially undertaken as part of its development aid policy, culture being one of the vehicles of economic and social development, while at the same time not neglecting exchange between cultures and the promotion of cultural diversity.

Thus, every year, the Culture 2000 programme, which is designed to strengthen European cultural cooperation, finances projects mounted by European partners outside the Union. In this way, it seeks to contribute to the flourishing of European cultures and comprehension between peoples. It has thus provided support for

projects in Egypt, Japan, Serbia and Montenegro, and Russia, and it will, in 2005, provide funding for half a dozen cultural co-operation projects in order to celebrate this year proclaimed as the 'Year of People-to-People Exchanges' by the European Union and Japan. The point is to encourage contacts between European and Japanese people and thus foster better mutual comprehension, with culture being one of the essential vehicles.



Culture 2000: internationally outward- looking cultural cooperation

Backed up by a total budget of EUR 240 million for the period 2000–06, the Culture 2000 programme cofinances every year some 200 cultural cooperation projects in the areas of the performing

arts, plastic and visual arts, literature and literary translation, heritage and cultural history in the form of festivals, master classes, exhibitions, creative and reflection workshops, tours, lectures, etc. Every project includes, on average, the participation of five cultural organisations, which means that, all in all, millions of operators from all over the continent have grown accustomed to meeting and working together to the greater satisfaction of all those who love culture.



The countries taking part are the 25 Member States of the European Union, along with Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland, Bulgaria and Romania. Culture 2000 also allows for cooperation actions in the non-European countries.

Further information is obtainable from:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/index_en.html



Europe dances to the Russian tune

From 10 September to 9 November 2003, St Petersburg played host to the TanzTheater Europas festival, organised at the initiative of the Goethe Institute (Germany) and with the support of the Culture 2000 programme, co-organisers from Finland, Austria and the Netherlands and partners in numerous European countries. The Baltisches Haus (Russia) lent its cooperation to the festival.

For the citizens of St Petersburg, accustomed to the tradition of classical ballet, as well as for the international public, this festival was the opportunity to discover the most innovative contemporary choreographic forms and language and, at the same time, the wide variety of the European cultural scene. Some 22 companies — from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Russia — were there. The many choreographers invited included some big names from the contemporary scene: Tero Saarinen, Anouk van Dijk, Sasha Walz, Jan Fabre, Pedro Peuwels and Mischa Van to mention but a few.

Further information is obtainable from:
<http://www.goethe.de/oe/pet/depheat.htm>

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#24 Europe at the international crossroads



The European Union and the Council of Europe: preserving a common heritage

The European Union contributes to enhancing and preserving its cultural heritage but also that of other countries as part of its cooperation with a Council of Europe. By organising the European Heritage Days or by preserving old buildings in the Balkans, the EU and the Council of Europe help to create awareness of common historical and cultural roots which go beyond frontiers.

When these Heritage Days were introduced in 1991, only 11 countries were involved. Now they take place simultaneously in 48 countries. This means not only the 25 Member States of the Union but also the other countries of the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention. This growing success is reflected in the fact that, during the 2003 Days, over 20 million visitors discovered some 30 000 monuments and sites, a cultural heritage more often than not inaccessible during the rest of the year. For the 2004 event, which took place between Friday 3 September and Sunday 5 September, the participating countries organised guided tours of buildings and historical sites, circuits, lectures, exhibitions and workshops on subjects as varied as water, food and drink, sports venues and gardens.

Another joint EU/Council of Europe initiative under way concerns the preservation of the very fragile heritage of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo) and Romania.

After assessing the state of preservation of the architectural and archaeological cultural heritage, including religious heritage, and identifying the monuments and sites requiring urgent measures, technical studies on their restoration and conservation were conducted and training initiatives carried out in the field of restoration professionals. The studies will form the basis for international institutions and donors for the funding of tangible restoration operations.

Further information is obtainable from:
http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/Heritage/

Meeting new publics

Another way of getting European music known in other countries is orchestral tours. With the help of the EU, for instance, the European Union youth jazz orchestra, the European Union baroque orchestra and the European Union youth orchestra, bringing together young musicians from all over the continent, travel all over Europe but also in other regions of the world in order to not only play musical works but also to show Europe's budding talent.

Further information is obtainable from:

European Union youth jazz orchestra: <http://www.swinging-europe.com>

European Union baroque orchestra: <http://www.eubo.org.uk>

European Union youth orchestra: <http://www.euyo.org.uk/>



Exporting Europe's cultures more efficiently: the example of music

In order to promote and sell their music, irrespective of genres, on foreign markets, many countries set up music-exporting bureaux. These one-stop shops make it easier for national professionals to take part in professional fairs in other countries, carry out prospection activities on foreign markets or subsidise tours abroad.

The pioneering countries, Sweden and France, which opened export bureaux in 1993, were followed by the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium and Denmark, which have promotional organisations focusing on exporting, and by Norway, Finland, Germany and Austria, which have recently begun to promote their music on the international markets.

But there was a need to go further: to pool the resources of these export bureaux in order to better sell European music throughout the world. With the help of the EU, the European Music Office, which represents professional associations and organisations from the music industry, works to network

these export bureaux in order to undertake joint actions, develop exchanges of information and improve the knowledge of the European music sector professionals concerning foreign markets, particularly the USA. In 2004, a team was up and running in New York, with the aim of laying the foundations of a European bureau to offer services to national organisations based in Europe: analyses and monitoring of the North American market, contacts with the sector's professionals and the media, consultancy.

Further information is obtainable from:

<http://www.musicineurope.org>

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The European Union has grown and thrived thanks to the recognition and respect of its own cultural diversity. So it was perfectly natural for it to encourage, through agreements with 10 Mediterranean countries and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, to raise the profile of identities and to foster cultural exchanges, to enhance heritage and artistic production. In the ACP countries, the European Development Fund provides support for the cultural industries, for the movement of artists and works, training and meetings in the most diverse areas: cinema, music, theatre, dance, literary and comic books, plastic arts, etc. It also contributes to secure better knowledge of the arts and artists of these countries in Europe.



Culture: an important dimension in development

In the area of heritage and in general, the European Union is eager to incorporate into its programmes the economic and social development of its partners and the populations concerned. In Ghana, for example, it funds a programme to restore and enhance two places of historical interest in terms of relations between Africa and Europe, the forts of Elmina and Old Accra. This project, requiring nearly EUR 2 million, is undertaken in conjunction with Unesco and will not only make it possible to restore historical buildings of great value and to improve their urban environment (port, former residences) and the very low standard of living of the local populations (street surfacing, drainage, water supply), but also to create social, tourist and economic activities capable of creating jobs, resources and development.

Further information is obtainable from:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/index_en.htm





Dr Ray Thomas
Director of the British Council
Brussels

CICEB is a network of 10 national cultural institutes (1), which decided to work together in order to set up projects in Belgium. You are President of CICEB until September 2004: how do you work concretely, and on what kind of project?

CICEB is a framework for cooperation, not a straitjacket. As long as four of our members decide to work together on a project, it becomes a CICEB project. But individual members are free to choose whether they wish to participate in a particular project or not. One of our recent and ongoing activities is a project about capturing and celebrating the uniqueness of European enlargement through film. We have commissioned eight short films involving teams of young artists from old and new EU Member States, to be distributed throughout Europe in the autumn of 2004. We hope thus to share the meaning of enlargement and different European cultures with as wide an audience as possible. We are working with partners across Europe – producers, TV companies, film festivals – as well as with the networks of the CICEB members. The project is supported by the EU Culture 2000 programme.

How do national cultural institutes collaborate outside of Belgium?

The nature and extent of the collaboration varies widely from one country to another, of course. In France, the FICEP (Forum des instituts culturels étrangers à Paris), set up in 2002, has 33 member institutions (from Europe but also from the Middle East, North Africa, China and Canada) and organises an annual cultural week. In most countries outside Europe, there is regular contact between the institutes, and some cooperation on joint activities and projects, especially on European themes. The Goethe Institut and the British Council enjoy particularly close working relations in many countries. In Glasgow, the Alliance française and the Goethe Institut have just co-located in superb new premises and are developing closer cultural collaboration. Other possibilities of co-location (sometimes also involving the British Council) are being explored in Santa Cruz (Bolivia), Palermo (Italy), Ramallah (Palestinian Territories) and Ekaterinaburg (Russia). One of our ambitions within CICEB is to build a European platform of national cultural institutes, which would provide a means of cooperation with third countries, working together at a local level and in response to local reality.

Have members of CICEB carried out projects in non-European countries in collaboration with the European Union? Could they contribute to publicise the idea and knowledge of a European culture, with its richness and diversity?

Outside the EU, many of the member organisations of CICEB have very close involvement in EU initiatives and programmes through their local offices and centres. The British Council, for example, has for many years managed a wide range of development projects in third countries on behalf of the EU's aid scheme, working in partnership with organisations throughout Europe.

We believe that the extensive networks which most of CICEB's members have in countries outside the EU can be of immense value in promoting the European Union and its activities abroad. The Alliance française, for example, in 1 200 locations, is the most extensive cultural network in the world. This is particularly the case in many developing countries where institutes such as ours offer the only alternative cultural products to those of the mass market. The 'platform' could provide a powerful impetus to this, although this is probably an objective for the longer term. In taking this forward we will remain committed to the idea that cultural diversity, both within and beyond Europe, is something that enriches us all.

(1) CICEB members are: Alliance française, British Council, Ceske Centrum, Det Danske Kulturinstitut, Goethe Institut, Instituto Cervantes, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Louvain Institute for Ireland in Europe, Österreichisches Kulturforum Brüssel, The Finnish Cultural Institute for Benelux.

Contact
ray.thomas@britishcouncil.org/belgium

Education, culture, youth: the ABC of dialogue between peoples

The achievement of lasting peace was the primary aim underpinning the establishment of the European Communities. By pooling their economic interests, by creating common political bodies, by facilitating exchanges, meetings and travelling within Europe, by reconciling diversity and dialogue, by encouraging the feeling of a shared destiny, conflict became outdated and unthinkable. Yet the 1990s showed that even on Europe's own doorstep, i.e. in the Balkans and the Middle East, there was still conflict. And the bomb attacks in Madrid also show that Europe is not shielded from the tension which is rife in the surrounding neighbourhood. It was in keeping with its mission, and important for the Union, to contribute to stability in the world: it is one of the aims of the strengthening of its international cooperation, with particular focus on the Mediterranean region.



Neighbourhood policy

The enlargement of the European Union has triggered debates on its natural or cultural frontiers and prompted the EU to rethink its relations with its new neighbours. It has accordingly devised a 'neighbourhood policy' whereby close links are forged with the countries bordering on the Union, and an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness based on co-operation is established.

This new 'neighbourhood policy' stems from the principle that it is in the Union's interests not to shut itself off within its own borders, but to cultivate around it a circle of friendly countries which share its values and fundamental aims. This policy must make it possible to extend a substantial part of the advantages of enlargement, mainly peace, stability and well-being, to the east and to the south of the Union thanks to new forms of cooperation. It concerns, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and will encompass Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. It will also apply to its partners in the Mediterranean, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia and the Palestinian Authority. Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are not covered by this policy, inasmuch as they are candidates for membership of the Union and as such benefit from specific cooperation actions.

A circle of friends

Similarly, the western Balkan countries benefit from specific 'association and stabilisation' agreements which open up for them the possibility of becoming fully-fledged members of the Union.

Action priorities will be established jointly, with the focus on financial support agreed upon by the Union (nearly EUR 1 billion between 2004 and 2006). The Union undertakes to cooperate with its neighbours on matters of security (the fight against terrorism and crime, prevention of regional conflicts, etc.) and economic and social development, looking ahead to opening up greater access to its markets and gradual access to certain European programmes. The implementation of this policy is linked to the respect for shared values, in particular human rights, good neighbourliness and the principles of the market economy.

The candidate countries: access to European programmes



After the accession of 10 new countries in May 2004, there are now only four candidate countries left: Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia. As candidate countries, they have gradually taken part in the European programmes on education, training and youth (Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth), and culture (Culture 2000), with the exception of Croatia which has been a candidate officially only since May 2004.

Turkey, which joined in the first three programmes in 2004, has applied to take part in the Culture 2000 programme and it is expected to be allowed to do so in 2005. In addition to its participation in the Youth programme as a candidate country, Turkey continues to benefit from the EURO-MED Youth programme as a member of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership on the same footing as nine other Mediterranean countries.

The MEDIA programme has, since 2003, been open to Bulgaria which has aligned its legislation on European law with regard to audiovisual matters, which is not yet the case for Turkey, Romania and Croatia.

The access of the candidate countries to the programmes intended for the Member States is an element of the so-called pre-accession strategy, a sort of mini-enlargement before the actual event. These countries pay an annual contribution to the European Union budget (part from their national budget and part from help from European pre-accession funds) and are subject to the same rules of participation as the Member States.





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The Mediterranean: a priority region

The neighbourhood policy is based on cooperation which has been taking place since 1995 with 10 Mediterranean countries⁽¹⁾. The historical and cultural links between Europe and these countries go back many centuries but are not the only reason. The intercultural dialogue is a need in the Union, which accepts large communities of immigrants from these countries. It needs to be strengthened and structured if it is to play its full role and contribute to calming the conflicts which poison international relations, with a ripple effect which produces opposition between different communities in Europe. Education, culture and youth-related issues are essential elements of this dialogue.

The Euro-Mediterranean partnership covers political cooperation, economic cooperation, but also social and cultural cooperation. In this context, European programmes fund joint projects for developing the audiovisual sector in these countries (see page 11) and to preserve their cultural heritage (see page 20). The Union also cooperates with this region in the area of higher education, encouraging universities to design common courses or to

exchange students and teachers (see page 5). These cooperation projects, cinematographic co-productions, exchanges of experience and trips, all of course constitute dialogue between cultures and cultivate cooperation based on equality and mutual respect. In order to allow this dialogue to become firmly anchored in the whole of society and be the driving force in Euro-Mediterranean relations, the Union has opened up its youth-related action to the 10 partner Mediterranean countries and helped to set up a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation in May 2004.

(1) Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey (Cyprus and Malta, which were part of this partnership, joined the Union in May 2004).



Youth is the starting point for everything

To reach the youth of the Mediterranean countries, that is, 96 million people, is to prepare the citizens of the future who will strive for dialogue and peace. This is the underlying spirit of the EURO-MED Youth programme, set up in 1999. This programme was intended to encourage mutual knowledge and comprehension and has enabled 14 000 young European and Mediterranean young people and youth leaders to meet on the occasion of exchanges around themes such as countering racism and xenophobia, the role of women in society and citizenship. It has also funded 'voluntary services' among young people, that is, unpaid activities of public interest undertaken in another country for six to 12 months in areas as varied as the media, the environment and personal care.

Admittedly, 14 000 out of 96 million is a drop in the ocean, yet the effects of the programme spread wider, particularly at local level, with the introduction of networks and structures for the benefit of youth. Youth organisations were virtually non-existent in the Mediterranean countries. National coordinators have been appointed in most of the partner countries, including in the Palestinian territories in 2004. Their task is to help and

train the local NGOs and any youth-related group to mount projects, including help with the (not always easy) procedures involved in obtaining the necessary visas. In addition, young people having taken part in these activities will take with them another vision of Euro-Mediterranean relations, which they will pass on to their families, friends and contacts. The point is therefore to use these relays to strengthen associations in the partner countries, to prepare young people to play an active role as citizens and, through meetings and exchanges, to remove prejudice, arouse curiosity concerning others and generate the desire to examine differences but also shared values.

Further information is obtainable from:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/priorities/euromed_en.html

Sport: a natural ground for understanding

Sport channels the international values of the Olympic spirit, brings together professionals and amateurs from all walks of life in teams and at sports grounds, and focuses the interests of the whole world, particularly young people, on the occasion of international events. This makes it an ideal place for dialogue between peoples. The incorporation of sport as a fully fledged competence of the European Union in the Draft Constitution adopted on 18 June 2004 by the European Council will, once the Constitution has been ratified by the 25 EU Member States, provide a legal basis for initiatives highlighting the educational and social role of sport in Europe and in the rest of the world. The new Article 182 'Education, youth, sport and vocational training' of the Treaty indeed stipulates that 'the Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture and sport, in particular the Council of Europe'.

To consult the Draft Constitution go to:

<http://ue.eu.int/igcpdf/en/04/cg00/cg00086.en04.pdf>



Putting **dialogue** on a systematic basis

The dialogue between peoples and cultures has become a necessity in a world in which, paradoxically, commercial, human, physical and virtual exchanges have reached unprecedented levels. Focusing it initially on the Euro-Mediterranean area was the wish of Romano Prodi, President of the European Commission from 1999 to 2004, asking a group of intellectuals from the academic and cultural world to come up with ways of consolidating this dialogue.

This high-level advisory group drafted a report concluding on the need, over and above the activities carried out under cooperation programmes, to give this dialogue a structure and look at it in all its dimensions: educational, social, economic, media and institutional. In concrete terms, the advisory group proposes the introduction of an independent foundation with the task of mobilising partners from civil society — local authorities, associations, trade unions, etc. — to advise on policy, observe the

different configurations of this dialogue and promote them, and to take stock at regular intervals. Its recommendation was to begin with education, knowledge of others and language learning, a pre-condition if this dialogue is to move out of university and political elite circles; to use human relays, networks, associations, institutions, and the virtual tools to channel dialogue; to create areas for meetings, encourage travel, particularly for young people, to give it form; to mobilise the media in order to spread the message. This Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for a dialogue of cultures and civilisations was set up in 2004 in Alexandria in Egypt.

