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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world

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"Culture is all the dreams and labour tending towards forging humanity. Culture requests a paradoxical pact: diversity must be the principle of unity, taking stock of differences is necessary not to divide, but to enrich culture even more. Europe is a culture or it is not."
Denis de Rougemont

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture lies at the heart of human development and civilisation. Culture is what makes people hope and dream, by stimulating our senses and offering new ways of looking at reality. It is what brings people together, by stirring dialogue and arousing passions, in a way that unites rather than divides. Culture should be regarded as a set of distinctive spiritual and material traits that characterize a society and social group. It embraces literature and arts as well as ways of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

As Dario Fo rightly pointed out, *"even before Europe was united in an economic level or was conceived at the level of economic interests and trade, it was culture that united all the countries of Europe. The arts, literature, music are the connecting link of Europe"*. Indeed, Europeans share a common cultural heritage, which is the result of centuries of creativity, migratory flows and exchanges. They also enjoy and value a rich cultural and linguistic diversity, which is inspiring and has inspired many countries across the world.

The originality and success of the European Union is in its ability to respect Member States' varied and intertwined history, languages and cultures, while forging common understanding and rules which have guaranteed peace, stability, prosperity and solidarity - and with them, a huge richness of cultural heritage and creativity to which successive enlargements have added more and more. Through this unity in diversity, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity and promotion of a common cultural heritage lies at the very heart of the European project. This is more than ever indispensable in a globalizing world.

In today's Europe, cultural exchanges are as lively and vibrant as ever. The freedom of movement provided for by the EC Treaty has greatly facilitated cultural exchanges and dialogue across borders. Cultural activities and the demand for cultural goods are spreading, with unprecedented access thanks to new communication tools. At the same time, globalisation has increased the exposure to more diverse cultures from across the world. This has heightened our curiosity and capacity to exchange with and benefit from other cultures, and contributed to the diversity of our societies. However, this has also raised questions about Europe's identity and its ability to ensure intercultural, cohesive societies.

World-wide, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue have become major challenges for a global order based on peace, mutual understanding and respect for shared values, such as the protection and promotion of human rights and the protection of languages. In this respect, the entry into force of the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity

of cultural expressions on 18 March 2007 is to be seen as a fundamental step, to which the EU has greatly contributed.

Europe's cultural richness and diversity is closely linked to its role and influence in the world. The European Union is not just an economic process or a trading power, it is already widely - and accurately - perceived as an unprecedented and successful social and cultural project. The EU is, and must aspire to become even more, an example of a "soft power" founded on norms and values such as human dignity, solidarity, tolerance, freedom of expression, respect for diversity and intercultural dialogue, values which, provided they are upheld and promoted, can be of inspiration for the world of tomorrow.

Europe's cultural richness based on its diversity is also, and increasingly so, an important asset in an immaterial and knowledge-based world. The European cultural sector is already a very dynamic trigger of economic activities and jobs throughout the EU territory. Cultural activities also help promoting an inclusive society and contribute to preventing and reducing poverty and social exclusion. As was recognised by the conclusions of the 2007 Spring European Council, creative entrepreneurs and a vibrant cultural industry are a unique source of innovation for the future. This potential must be recognised even more and fully tapped.

Purpose of the Communication

Awareness is growing that the EU has a unique role to play in promoting its cultural richness and diversity, both within Europe and world-wide. There is also acknowledgement that culture is an indispensable feature to achieve the EU's strategic objectives of prosperity, solidarity and security, while ensuring a stronger presence on the international scene.

Based on extensive consultations[1], this Communication explores the relationship between culture and Europe in a globalizing world and proposes objectives for a new EU agenda for culture. This agenda is to be shared by all stakeholders (the Commission, Member States and involving civil society and the European Parliament). The Commission therefore also seeks to establish new partnerships and methods for cooperation between them.

2. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EU TO CULTURE[2]

'Culture' is generally recognised as complex to define. It can refer to the fine arts, including a variety of works of art, cultural goods and services. 'Culture' also has an anthropological meaning. It is the basis for a symbolic world of meanings, beliefs, values, traditions which are expressed in language, art, religion and myths. As such, it plays a fundamental role in human development and in the complex fabric of the identities and habits of individuals and communities.

In the context of this Communication, the main focus will be on the importance of the various facets of culture in developing strategies both within the EU and with third countries.

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1 See http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/communication/consult_en.html and http://ec.europa.eu/development/body/theme/human_social/pol_culture1_en.htm

2 For further details, see the annexed staff working paper "Inventory of Community actions in the field of culture".

The basis for the action of the EU in the field of culture lies in the Treaty. Article 151 states that:

> *"The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common heritage to the fore."*
>
> *"Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action …."*
>
> *"The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe."*
>
> *"The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures."*

Culture is and will therefore primarily remain a responsibility of Member States; in some countries it is largely dealt with at the regional or even local level. Article 151 does not provide, for example, for harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States. Action at EU level is to be undertaken in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity, with the role of the EU being to support and complement, rather than to replace, the actions of the Member States, by respecting their diversity and stimulating exchanges, dialogue and mutual understanding.

2.1. The role of the EU's internal policies and programmes

The EU already contributes to promoting cultural activities in Europe through its programmes and policies in many ways:

- The Community's culture programmes have been very productive. The present Culture Programme (2007-2013)[3] will go further in facilitating mutual understanding, stimulating creativity, and contributing to the mutual enrichment of our cultures. It will help thousands of cultural organisations to create and implement cultural and artistic projects improving the knowledge and dissemination of European cultural heritage, promoting cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creation, and literary translation. It will also support bodies active at European level in the field of culture and give recognition to major European cultural achievements through European prizes in architecture, cultural heritage and music as well as European Capitals of Culture.

- Many other programmes have a huge positive impact on culture either through specific cultural projects, the use of foreign languages which they promote, the close link between learning and culture or the personal cultural experiences they stimulate: among these programmes are "Europe for Citizens" (2007-2013)[4],

[3] Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 (OJ L 372, 27.12.2006).

[4] Decision No 1904/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 (OJ L 378, 27.12.2006).

which is also based on the culture article of the Treaty and promotes active European citizenship as well as programmes supporting lifelong learning (including Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus), multilingualism and exchanges of young people.

- In the cinema and audiovisual sector, the MEDIA programme[5], in place since 1991, promotes the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. It is also designed to promote intercultural dialogue, increase mutual awareness amongst European cultures and develop cultural potential. Furthermore, a Recommendation on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities was adopted on 16 November 2005 setting out concrete actions in the field of film heritage.

- A range of other Community funding programmes make an important contribution to culture. Support offered by the Cohesion policy or rural development policy can be instrumental in promoting, for example, the restoration of cultural heritage and the promotion of creative industries in view of enhancing the attractiveness of regions or supporting the training of cultural professionals. This is also the case for information society development (e.g. the Digital Libraries Initiative which aims at making Europe's diverse cultural and scientific heritage easier to access online) or research (with the Research Framework Programmes).

A number of Community policies also play an important role in shaping the regulatory framework for the cultural sector.

For the Community's action under Article 151(4) of the Treaty, the challenge is often to strike the right balance between different legitimate public policy objectives, including the promotion of cultural diversity.

- There is a strong link between the promotion of culture and creativity and EU copyright and related rights legislation. This legislation protects the rights of authors, producers and artists to ensure they receive adequate revenue for their works while allowing a wide dissemination of protected works or phonograms, thereby promoting citizens' access to Europe's rich and diverse cultural heritage.

- The "Television without Frontiers" Directive, adopted in 1989, by setting the conditions for the transmission across borders of TV broadcasts within the European internal market, has created a legal framework for the free circulation of European audiovisual content within the EU. This has contributed significantly to the strengthening of media pluralism and cultural diversity. In this context, cultural diversity is also fostered through promotion measures for European and independent productions.

[5] Decision No 1718/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 (OJ L 327, 24.11.2006).

- In state aid, following the introduction of Article 87(3)(d)[6] by the Maastricht Treaty, cultural considerations play a role. Under this provision the Commission has in the past approved a wide range of national measures which have benefited such diverse areas as museums, national heritage, theatre and music-productions, printed cultural media, and the cinematographic and audiovisual sector.

- The EU has designated 2008 the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue[7] to give expression and a high profile to best practices and processes of intercultural dialogue aiming at establishing a sustainable strategy beyond 2008. Particular attention will be paid to the multilingual dimension of this dialogue.

- Finally, on the basis of existing Community funding programmes, the Commission wishes to make 2009 a European Year of Creativity and Innovation through education and culture in order to raise public awareness, promote policy debate within Member States, and contribute to fostering creativity, innovation and intercultural competences.

In recent years, Member States have explored new forms of flexible cooperation in order to work together more closely in the pursuit of shared objectives. The Council has agreed on a multi-annual work plan for the period 2005-2007[8] and flexible forms of cooperation on specific topics, such as the mobility of museum collections, have developed. Regular ministerial conferences have also contributed to exchanges of best practices and dialogue on policies.

The European Parliament has regularly called for strengthened cooperation in its reports and recommendations[9]. Furthermore, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have underlined the role of organised civil society and of local and regional authorities.

These experiences, combined with the results of the broad consultation processes undertaken in preparing this Communication, have led the Commission to the conclusion that the time is now ripe to develop a common cultural agenda and new partnerships and methods for cooperation with Member States, civil society and third countries.

2.2. EU's external relations

Culture is recognized as an important part of the EU's main cooperation programmes and instruments[10], and in the Union's bilateral agreements with third countries. It is also a key element of the co-operation developed with the Council of Europe, which has allowed the joint implementation of the European Heritage Days as well as some actions in the Western Balkans.

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6 'Aid to promote culture and heritage conservation where such aid does not affect trading conditions and competition in the Community to an extent that is contrary to the common interest, may be considered to be compatible with the common market'.

7 Decision No 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 (OJ L 412, 30.12.2006).

8 Conclusions of the 2616th Council meeting Education, Youth and Culture, 15-16 November 2004.

9 Ref. Report on cultural cooperation in the European Union – Giorgio Ruffolo - A5-0281/2001.

10 Such as the Cotonou Agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, the Neighbourhood and Partnership Programme with neighbouring countries and Russia, and the Development and Cooperation instrument concerning Asia and Central and Latin America.

A wide variety of cultural projects and programmes have been implemented for many years as part of the Union's financial and technical assistance across all developing regions of the world. These cultural actions target the preservation and restoration of heritage sites, the production and circulation of works of art, the creation or restoration of museums, the local capacity-building of cultural operators and artists and the organisation of major cultural events. The Commission also runs funds and actions to support the emergence and strengthening of cultural industries, in particular the cinema and audiovisual sector, in partner countries, as well as promote local access to culture and cultural diversity in third countries.

In close connection with this, the Union has increasingly focused on promoting support for human rights, including the protection and promotion of cultural rights, the rights of indigenous peoples as well as the rights of persons belonging to minorities and socially marginalized people.

Intercultural dialogue as one of the main instruments of peace and conflict prevention is obviously among the basic objectives of such actions. Priority actions in that direction were launched under the impetus of a consultative group set up by the Commission's President, which also led *inter alia* to the setting-up, in Alexandria, of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, and the creation of specific debate on culture within the political dialogues with many third countries.

The Commission has also recently begun to reinforce its public diplomacy, including cultural events, often involving cooperation with and among Member States' cultural institutions to convey important messages in third countries about Europe, its identity and its experience of building bridges between different cultures.

On a more general level, the Commission has tabled multi-annual thematic programmes under the financial perspectives 2007-2013 in order to finance Community interventions in developing countries and regions, on the one hand, and at international level, on the other hand. The thematic programmes "Investing in People" and "Non-state Actors and Local Authorities in Development" are available to complement geographical cooperation through the country strategy papers in the field of culture. Recent opinion polls clearly show that, under the pressure of globalization, the great majority of Europe's citizens – led by the Heads of State and Government in June 2006[11] - want Europe to be more present in the world, with an external policy which well reflects its values. Culture is of course central to this multilateral, consensus-building approach.

The rapid entry into force of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions illustrates the new role of cultural diversity at international level: as parties, the Community and its Member States have committed themselves to strengthen a new cultural pillar of global governance and sustainable development, notably through enhancing international cooperation.

3. OBJECTIVES FOR A EUROPEAN AGENDA FOR CULTURE

The extensive consultation process carried out in 2006 has enabled the Commission to identify a strong consensus for a new EU agenda for culture, so as to build on past

[11] When the European Council approved the Commission's proposal 'Europe in the World – Some Practical Proposals for Greater Coherence, Effectiveness and Visibility' – COM(2006) 278.

achievements and reinforce on-going activities. This would be built on three interrelated sets of objectives:

- promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs;
- promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations.

These objectives would guide EU action in the future. Each actor would be called upon to contribute, in full respect of the principle of subsidiarity:

- for the Member States and their regions, this would mean further developing their policies in these areas with reference to common objectives and an endeavour to steer joint activities *inter alia* through an open method of coordination and exploring opportunities offered by EU funding;
- for stakeholders in the field of culture, such as professional organisations, cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations, European networks, foundations, etc., this would mean a close engagement in dialogue with EU institutions and support for the development of new EU policies and actions, as well as developing dialogue among themselves;
- for the Commission, this would mean mobilising its internal and external policies, Community funding programmes, as well as a renewed role of animation, exchange of good practice and dialogue with the full range of actors;
- for all actors, this would mean a renewed sense of partnership and ownership of EU action to achieve these objectives.

The following section explains each of these broad objectives in greater detail.

3.1. Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue

"It is art that can structure the personalities of young people with a view to open their minds, to instil the respect of others and the desire of peace." Yehudi Menuhin

The flowering of the cultures of the Member States in respect of their national and regional diversity is an important EU objective assigned by the EC Treaty. In order to simultaneously bring our common heritage to the fore and recognise the contribution of all cultures present in our societies, cultural diversity needs to be nurtured in a context of openness and exchanges between different cultures. As we live in increasingly multicultural societies, we need therefore to promote intercultural dialogue and intercultural competences. These are also essential in the context of a global economy with regard to enhancing the employability, adaptability and mobility of artists and workers in the cultural sector as well as the mobility of works of art. As citizens are among the main beneficiaries of developing cultural diversity, we need to facilitate their access to culture and cultural works.

The following specific objectives should be addressed:

- Promote the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of all artistic expressions beyond national borders:

  – mobilise public and private resources in favour of the mobility of artists and workers in the cultural sector within the EU;

  – promote the mobility of works of art and other artistic expressions;

  – improve European coordination for aspects affecting mobility of cultural workers within the EU in order to take into account the needs resulting from short term and frequent mobility between Member States.

- Promote and strengthen intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue, in particular by developing 'cultural awareness and expression', 'social and civic competences' and 'communication in foreign languages', which are part of the key competences for lifelong learning identified by the European Parliament and Council in 2006[12].

3.2. Culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs

"Intelligence is programmed for the creation of differences." Francesco Alberoni

Cultural industries and the creative sector are substantially contributing to European GDP, growth and employment. As an illustration, a recent independent study carried out for the Commission estimated that more than 5 million people worked in 2004 for the cultural sector, equivalent to 3.1% of total employed population in EU-25. The cultural sector contributed around 2.6% to the EU GDP in 2003, with growth significantly higher than that of the economy in general between 1999 and 2003[13]. These industries and the creativity which they generate are an essential asset for Europe's economy and competitiveness in a context of globalisation.

The role of culture in supporting and fostering creativity and innovation must be explored and promoted. Creativity is the basis for social and technological innovation, and therefore an important driver of growth, competitiveness and jobs in the EU.

The following specific objectives should be addressed:

- Promote creativity in education by involving the cultural sector in building on the potential of culture as a concrete input/tool for life-long learning and promoting culture and arts in informal and formal education (including language learning).

- Promote capacity building in the cultural sector by supporting the training of the cultural sector in managerial competences, entrepreneurship, knowledge of the European dimension/market activities and developing innovative sources of funding, including sponsorship, and improved access to them.

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[12] Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10).

[13] See study on the Economy of Culture in Europe, conducted by KEA for the European Commission, 2006, at http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/studies_en.html.

- Develop creative partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors (ICTs, research, tourism, social partners, etc) to reinforce the social and economic impact of investments in culture and creativity, in particular with regard to the promotion of growth and jobs and the development and attractiveness of regions and cities.

3.3. Culture as a vital element in international relations

"Any culture is born in mixing, in interaction, in confrontation. Conversely, it is in isolation that civilization dies." Octavio Paz

As parties to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the Community and the Member States have reaffirmed their commitment to developing a new and more pro-active cultural role for Europe in the context of Europe's international relations and to integrating the cultural dimension as a vital element in Europe's dealings with partner countries and regions. This should help promoting knowledge of and understanding for Europe's cultures throughout the world.

To achieve this integration it is crucial to develop active inter-cultural dialogue with all countries and all regions, taking advantage for example of Europe's language links with many countries. In this context, it is also important to promote the richness of cultural diversity of our partners, to serve local identities, to promote access to culture of local populations and develop an economic resource which can have a direct impact on socio-economic development.

Bearing that in mind, the EU will follow a 'twin-track' approach, consisting of:

- the systematic integration of the cultural dimension and different components of culture in all external and development policies, projects and programmes - as a means of strengthening the quality of its diplomatic efforts, and the viability and sustainability of all EU cooperation activities; and

- support for specific cultural actions and events – Culture is a resource in its own right, and access to culture should be considered as a priority in development policies.

The following specific objectives should be addressed:

- to further develop political dialogue with all countries and regions in the field of culture and promote cultural exchanges between the EU and third countries and regions;

- to promote market access, both to European and other markets, for cultural goods and services from developing countries through targeted actions as well as through agreements that grant preferential treatment or trade-related assistance measures;

- to use its external and development policies to protect and promote cultural diversity through financial and technical support for, on the one hand, the preservation of and access to cultural heritage and, on the other, the active encouragement and promotion of cultural activities across the world;

- to ensure that all its cooperation programmes and projects take full account, in their design and their implementation, of local culture and contribute to increase people's access to culture and to the means of cultural expression, including people-to-people contacts. Especially important is education, including advocacy for the integration of culture in education curricula at all levels in developing countries;

- to promote the active involvement of the EU in the work of international organisations dealing with culture, and in the United Nations 'Alliance of Civilisations' process.

4. NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND WORKING METHODS

In order to deliver its agenda for culture, Europe must rely on a solid partnership between all actors, which has four essential dimensions.

4.1. Further developing dialogue with the cultural sector

The Commission is committed to pursuing a structured dialogue with the sector, which would provide a framework for the regular exchange of views and best practices, input into the policy-making process, follow-up and evaluation.

For reasons of legitimacy, the cultural sector should continue organising itself as far as possible in order to permit the identification of representative interlocutors. The Commission welcomes the progressive structuring already taking place with the emergence of some representative organisations as well as some cooperation structures such as a civil society platform on intercultural dialogue.

The Commission recognises, however, the special characteristics of the sector, notably its heterogeneity (professional organisations, cultural institutions with different degrees of independence, non-governmental organisations, European and non EU networks, foundations, etc), as well as the lack of communication in the past between the cultural industries and other cultural actors, and the challenges which this poses with regard to greater structuring of the sector. The effect of this has been to diminish the voice of the cultural sector at the European level.

With a view to developing a better dialogue between the Commission and these different actors, the Commission proposes the following steps:

- to undertake a mapping of the sector in order to identify and better understand the full range of its stakeholders;

- to set up a "Cultural Forum" for consulting stakeholders and to foster the emergence of a self-structuring platform or a set of stakeholder platforms;

- to encourage the expression of representative views by individual artists and intellectuals at the European level ("cultural ambassadors"), including exploring the opportunity and feasibility of an on-line virtual European forum allowing for the exchange of views, artistic expression and reaching out to citizens;

- to encourage social partners in the cultural sectors to further develop their autonomous social dialogue under Articles 138 and 139 of the Treaty. On this basis, sectoral social dialogue committees already exist for the live performing arts and the audiovisual sector;

- to bring a cultural dimension to European public debates by using the representations of the Commission. Putting culture at the centre stage will enhance dialogue and reach out to new audiences.

4.2. Setting up an open method of coordination

As mentioned earlier, the Member States adopted a joint work plan in the Council for 2005-2007. The work plan now needs to be renewed and the Commission believes that the time is ripe for Member States to take their cooperation one step further, by using the open method of coordination (OMC) as a mechanism to do so, in a spirit of partnership.

The OMC offers an appropriate framework for cooperation in the field of culture between the Member States. It is a non-binding, intergovernmental framework for policy exchange and concerted action suitable for a field such as this, where competence remains very much at Member State level. It consists of agreeing common objectives, regularly following up progress towards them and exchanging best practice and relevant data in order to foster mutual learning.

OMC exist in the fields of employment, social protection, education and youth. The OMC in these areas have helped to strengthen Member States' policy making, as regular participation in a European process raises the profile of these policies at the national level and creates an additional stimulus for them. It also enables Member States to learn from one another. And it allows the actors in these policy fields to have a voice at the European level which they would not otherwise have.

It is essential, however, for the special features of the cultural sector to be fully taken into account in the design of an OMC in this area. In a spirit of partnership with Member States, this implies adopting a flexible approach, entailing the setting of general objectives with a light regular reporting system.

The Commission proposes that acting on the basis of this Communication, the Council of Ministers endorses the objectives suggested above, setting priorities and agreeing on a biennial follow-up exercise. As part of this exercise, the Commission would draft a joint report with high level representatives of Member States every two years summarising main issues and trends and discussing progress across Member States with regard to the common objectives.

Member States would be encouraged to fully associate local and regional authorities and national cultural stakeholders in the follow-up process and to describe in their national reports how they have been involved. At EU level, the Commission would involve stakeholders in the process through the Cultural Forum indicated above. In the year preceding the publication of the report, the Commission would organise a meeting in order to gather inputs from civil society.

The European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions should be involved in the process.

In pursuing the objectives of external relations, the relevant external EU framework, including the Foreign Affairs Ministers, would be involved as appropriate. The Commission would seek, together with the Member States, to increase EU-wide coordination of activities regarding cultural cooperation. This would include the identification and exchange of best practices. The preparation of Country Strategy Papers and Joint Assistance Strategies would continue to be a focus for enhanced coordination and harmonisation efforts.

4.3. Supporting evidence-based policy-making

The Commission will play a supporting and coordinating role, where appropriate, in relation to each of the above objectives and the proposed OMC.

The pursuit of the above objectives implies improving understanding of the contribution of the cultural sector to the Lisbon agenda in order to facilitate evidence-based policy. It involves sharing existing data, case studies, cooperation on evaluation and impact analysis methodologies. However it also requires reviewing and, where necessary, improving national statistical information and ensuring better comparability of national statistics, coordinated by Eurostat.

In this context, the Commission will launch a series of studies and inter-service cooperation, to support the proposed objectives and evidence-based policy-making and actions. It will stimulate the networking of actors involved in impact assessment and cultural policy evaluation at European, national, regional or local level.

4.4. Mainstreaming culture in all relevant policies

Article 151(4) of the EC Treaty calls on the Community to take cultural aspects into account in its action under the other provisions of the Treaty, in particular in order to respect and promote the diversity of its cultures.

To better serve this task, the Commission shall strengthen its internal inter-service coordination and deepen its analysis of the interface between cultural diversity and other Community policies in order to strike the right balance between different legitimate public policy objectives, including the promotion of cultural diversity, when making decisions or proposals of a regulatory or financial nature. For example, the Commission has recently created a new inter-service group to this effect.

With regard to the external dimension, particular attention is paid to multi- and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, promoting understanding between the EU and international partners and reaching out increasingly to a broader audience in partner countries. In this context, education and particularly human rights education play a significant role. The new Erasmus Mundus programme will contribute to this. The Commission supports dialogue and culture-related activities in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the "Investing in People" programme, institutions such as the Anna Lindh Foundation in the Euro-Mediterranean region, as well as within the UN Alliance of Civilisations. With some partner countries in the ENP region, in Asia and elsewhere, specific cultural cooperation programmes are established (like the Culture Fund for India). These activities are of an interdependent nature.

In order to efficiently support cultural specific actions in ACP countries, the European Commission is proposing to create a EU-ACP Cultural Fund as a joint European contribution to supporting the distribution and in some cases the production of ACP cultural goods. This Fund will encourage the emergence of local markets and industries, thus facilitating and encouraging the access of local people to culture and to the various means of cultural expression, and will also increase the access of ACP cultural goods to European markets through a better access to distribution networks and platforms in the EU.

The 10th European Development Fund will provide a start-up for funding this Fund that will be complemented by EU Member States contributions.

5. CONCLUSION

"*Culture is not a luxury, but a necessity*." Gao Xingjian

The Commission considers that the time is ripe for a new European agenda for culture, which takes account of the realities of today's globalizing world.

This Communication puts forward concrete proposals both with regard to a set of shared objectives and new methods for stepping up cultural cooperation in the EU.

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

The Council is invited to take the appropriate steps to decide on a set of shared objectives and on an appropriate reporting process within the proposed open method of coordination, and the European Council to endorse them in its conclusions.