

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EU COMMUNICATION ON CULTURE BY THE EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATOIRES (AEC)



A. Important challenges

1. Are art and culture linked to the process of European integration and how can they contribute to it? (*max 500 characters*)

Firstly, art and culture are crucial factors in the European common identity and heritage. Therefore, they are not just linked to the European integration process, but should be seen as key building blocks in this process.

Secondly, the arts can be powerful tools for intercultural dialogue, as well as contribute to the various European political agendas (e.g. the Lisbon Strategy). Music in particular, as the ultimate form of non-verbal communication, can bring people together, promote and develop creativity as a transferable skill, improve social cohesion, and create a common understanding without having to use translation. The employment potential of the arts is also increasingly understood.

2. Which are in your view the most important cultural challenges for Europe and for the European project in the 10 years ahead? Please explain briefly your choice.

The nature of the European integration process

Citizens are no longer attracted by a purely economical European integration. The integration needs further development and therefore a stronger cultural dimension is crucial, which will make the integration process more profound and effective.

Intercultural dialogue

To strengthen civil society and foster social inclusion, the EU has to identify and reinforce the spaces where cultural identities enter in dialogue. Long-term support for the creation of lasting intercultural relationships and the development of intercultural competences is needed.

The European cultural heritage in the wider world

Europe has a unique cultural heritage. Some of it may come under pressure due to global commercial interests. The EU has to develop a joint policy for the promotion, support and protection of this common European heritage.

3. Do you think that culture plays a role in individual personal development and social cohesion in Europe? If so, please indicate how this role could be supported at European level? (*max 500 characters*).

As mentioned above, we strongly believe in the capacity of the arts (and music in particular) to contribute to personal development and social cohesion. In order to make this effective at the European level, support should be given to structures in which this role of the arts is being further explored. These are mainly structures that bring citizens together at European level in various contexts, such as thematic and disciplinary

European networks, and individual exchanges organised by cultural, educational and youth organisations.

4. Do you see a role for culture as a stimulus for creativity in Europe and as a catalyst for innovation and knowledge? If so, please indicate how this role should be supported at European level? (*max 500 caracteres*)

It is clear the arts should not be measured in economic terms only. However, it is our opinion that the arts (and music in particular) can have a profound impact on the aims of the Lisbon Strategy through an enforced synergy between education and culture. The ‘missing link’ between culture and the Lisbon Strategy is education, as a strong synergy between education and culture enhances creativity as a transferable skill resulting in a further development of innovation and knowledge. A contribution of music and arts education to the ‘Education and Training 2010’ agenda in the Lisbon Strategy should be further explored: the experiences in music and the arts with talent scouting, selection, creative teaching and learning approaches could be of benefit to (higher) education at large.

B. The cultural sector, Community policies and cooperation in the European Union

1. Which are the most important challenges for the cultural sector in the European Union in the 10 years ahead?

An European agenda for culture

Within its political agenda, the EU must develop a coherent cultural policy, flowing into strategy and programming. It should be based on statistics and research, a sufficiently funded programme with clear objectives, and a cross-cutting agenda in other policy areas.

European organisations in the artistic sector

Many European networks exist in the arts, but few are professionally organised. It is important to start a process of capacity building, which will develop these networks into organisations able to reach the aims of a European agenda for culture.

Respect for cultural diversity

In order to protect the unique variety of cultural expressions and artistic traditions in the EU, future cooperation in the field of culture must be based on a high level of intercultural dialogue and mutual respect to counteract any developments towards harmonisation based on narrow commercial or political interests.

2. In your opinion, which are the Community policies and their specific aspects that have the greatest impact on the activities of the cultural sector at European level or to which the cultural sector could make an important contribution? How are you affected by these policies, which developments in these policies could contribute to the development of your sector and its cross-border activities, what might this contribution consist of, serving which specific aims and with which partners? Have you identified any concerns or difficulties in relation to these policies? Which European developments could facilitate the involvement of your sector?

Education and Training

Representing an organisation working on the border of education and music, we believe that the synergy between education and culture should be further enforced. Although recognised by many, this synergy has not yet led to concrete action. For example, a contribution of music and arts education to the 'Education and Training 2010' agenda in the Lisbon Strategy has not yet been fully explored.

Employment and social affairs

Another issue in relation to the role of culture in the Lisbon Strategy, one should take into consideration the increasing contribution of the cultural and creative industries to the EU economy in terms of employment.

Research, development, technology and innovation

So far, the EU research funds have had a purely technological and scientific character. It is, however, increasingly evident that for some sociological, pedagogical and social research issues, culture and arts can play an important contribution. In addition, one should not underestimate the innovative potential of many technologies developed in and used by the creative and cultural industries.

3. In addition to the Community policies and areas mentioned above, have you identified other fields in which coordination or cooperation at European level could significantly contribute to the fostering of the cultural sector? If so, which one(s)? What should such coordination/cooperation consist of and what would be the added value? (*max 500 caracteres*)

As the previous question has shown, we believe it to be essential that the central place of culture and the arts should be acknowledged in all policies of the EU, in line with article 151.4. This means that a mainstreaming agenda should be implemented, based on data collection and appropriate funding.

C. International aspects and co-operation with international organisations

1. What is the scope of your activities and/or co-operation with and/or in third countries (outside the EU)? In which geographical areas and in which cultural sector(s)? Which should in your view be the objectives of the European Union in its relations with third countries in the field of culture? Which types of action(s) would contribute to these objectives? (*500 caracteres*)

We would like to stress the importance of giving the arts and culture an active role in development activities in third-world countries and in the cooperation with third countries. Music in particular is a discipline that has a strong international dimension, with a capacity to exchange information to the benefit of all relevant parties. While giving support in terms of development and cooperation, European artists and citizens could benefit from the influence of musical traditions and practices present in other parts of the world. This way, benefits would go both ways.

2. What is your experience of relations/cooperation with other international or regional organisations active in the cultural sphere, such as UNESCO or the

Council of Europe? How do you see the relationship between action at EU level and within the framework of those organisations? (500 caracteres)

The EU should acknowledge and actively pursue synergies with various international cultural bodies as well as deploy their enormous intellectual capital. The Council of Europe's track record in research, training, and evaluation of the national cultural policies should prompt the EU to develop a role that would be complementary and equally shared by the cultural field and the national governments. When it comes to culture, the EU must assert a strong voice in UNESCO, WTO and OECD, in regional initiatives (Barcelona process) and in post-conflict engagements (Western Balkan).

D. Arrangements for dialogue and co-operation at European level

1. Do you think there are particular difficulties in the framework of the dialogue between the cultural sector and the European institutions? If so, what are they? How do you think this dialogue should develop, both with regard to the cultural sector and the European institutions in order to make it more structured and sustainable? (*max 500 caracteres*)

The dialogue between the cultural sector and the European institutions is being complicated by the low levels of available funding and a lack of professionally organised European organisations in this field, as mentioned in B.1. The EU must acknowledge the importance of giving sufficient support to such thematic and disciplinary networks in the arts, otherwise it is unlikely this dialogue will ever improve. This will work both ways: not only will European organisations be able to develop professionally, but the European institutions will also have a clearly structured field with which they can communicate.

2. What could be in your opinion the objectives common to the whole of the cultural sector at European level? (*500 caracteres*)

The following objectives could be envisaged:

- a) Give arts and culture the role they deserve in the EU overall political agenda through the development of an ambitious European agenda for culture.
 - b) Enforce the European cultural sector by giving support to well organised European networks and organisations that have objectives connected to the European integration process.
 - c) Enforce the transversal role of culture, in particular in relation to education and training, employment, research and the cooperation with third countries.
3. Among the areas of action in which more advanced coordination between Member States of the EU might be feasible, which are the ones with significant European value added for the world of culture? Should this coordination involve all Member States or could it be developed by a group of interested countries?

Education and training

In addition to the above-mentioned benefits that can be gained from a closer synergy between education and culture, there are lessons to be learned from the increasingly intensive cooperation at European level in education and training. Although a process

similar to the 'Bologna Declaration Process' would not be desirable in the field of culture, models of cooperation exist that could be useful.

Trans-European Networks

Experiences in other fields useful for culture are the experiences with trans-European networks in education, training and research. These networks (typically including all EU countries, e.g. the Thematic Networks in ERASMUS), are models of how long-term European cooperation at disciplinary level can be highly effective and function as tools for European policy development and implementation.

E. Other comments

This contribution has been prepared by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), a network representing more than 240 institutions for professional music training (conservatoires, music academies, Musikhochschulen, etc) in all European countries, including non-EU member states. Its aims are to support European cooperation in the sector and to analyse, discuss and promote European issues relevant to the sector. In particular, it sees important opportunities to be gained in the European integration process by enforcing the synergy between education and culture in general, and between education and music in particular.

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