

THE SYNERGY BETWEEN EDUCATION AND CULTURE – SUGGESTIONS FOR THE EU COMMUNICATION ON CULTURE



Introduction

During the public consultation for the EU Communication on Culture one of the issues frequently mentioned was the potential benefit resulting from a closer synergy between education and culture. We therefore assume that a clear reference to this synergy will be made in the upcoming EU Communication on Culture. In this brief paper we would like to make some short suggestions on how this issue could be articulated in the EU Communication as a starting point for further work in this area. In doing so, the question 'What can culture do for Europe?' has been taken as an essential point of departure.

Previous work done in this area at European level

Reference to this issue can be found in various studies and documents that have been produced recently at the European level:

1. The EFMET-project¹ produced a paper entitled 'Recommendations to the European Union on the role of music education and training in the new EU cultural programme'² in 2004. This paper, which was drafted by the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) on behalf of a consortium of European networks in the field of music, not only summarizes some of the main arguments for a closer synergy between education and culture, but also suggests how this synergy could be handled taking the complex rules and regulations of the European programmes for education and culture into account.
2. The study 'The Economy of Culture in Europe'³ clearly mentions the benefits of education in the arts as Challenge 3 in Chapter 5. More specifically, it states:

"Education to the arts provides students with essential skills that are transferable in other areas and that will be of growing importance in the knowledge economy. These include openness to a variety of styles and cultures, team work, concentration and imagination."

3. The 2006 EU study on the links between education and culture⁴ identifies some interesting examples of good practice and suggests ways to take this issue forward. However, it misses a very important opportunity to connect its work to the Lisbon Strategy and fails to identify various important initiatives in this area at European level. As a result, the above-mentioned question 'What can culture do for Europe?' is not addressed in a satisfactory way.
4. In the 'Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning' of 18 December 2006⁵, which has been developed in the framework of the 'Education and Training 2010' programme as part of the Lisbon Strategy, cultural expression and awareness are mentioned as one of 8 key competencies each European citizen should possess to be able to function in a knowledge-based society.

What do we mean with 'education and culture'?

The synergy between education and culture is a vast area that can cover many aspects and points of departure. To make it more tangible for the EU Communication on Culture we would like to suggest a further clarification of this issue. Below you can find a first attempt for such a clarification, which is certainly not exhaustive and would need further development at a later stage. 'Education and culture' can be approached as follows:

¹ For more information about the EFMET project, please visit <http://www.emc-imc.org/efmet/>

² For a full text version of this document, please visit http://www.emc-imc.org/efmet/archiv/EFMET_Recommendations_English.pdf

³ 'Study on the cultural economy in Europe' – study DG EAC 03/05 executed by the partnership KEA European Affairs, Media Group (Turku School of Economics) and MKW Wirtschaftsforschung GmbH (September 2006)

⁴ 'Study concerning an inventory of the best practices linking culture with education' – study DG EAC/59/03 executed by the Pôle Universitaire Européen de Lorraine (May 2006)

⁵ 'Recommendation of the European Parliament and of The Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning' (2006/962/EC) - Official Journal of the European Union, 30 December 2006

A. Culture IN Education

An active role for culture in general education is seen as essential because:

1. It helps young people to develop the participation in and the understanding of culture and the arts, which will enrich their daily lives
2. It develops creative, personal and interpersonal skills that can be essential transferable skills for workers in a knowledge-based society, as mentioned in the 'The Economy of Culture in Europe' study
3. It can provide social cohesion and intercultural understanding, which is essential for an Europe built on cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue
4. It will help to achieve the cultural expression and awareness as mentioned in the recommendation on key competences.

B. Education IN Culture

The education and training in culture in general and the arts specifically is another important angle to this issue:

1. The 'Economy of Culture in Europe' study shows the enormous potential for employment and growth of the creative and cultural industries within the overall EU economy. In order for Europe to capitalise on this positive development and to keep its leading role in the world, high level professionals will have to be trained in high level professional training institutions.
2. For a strong cultural component in general education as mentioned in A., well-trained artist-teachers will have to be trained in high level professional training institutions as well.
3. In the recent EU report on 'Equity and efficiency in European Higher Education'⁶ published in the framework of 'Education and Training 2010' agenda, a high number of drop-outs was identified in European higher education. Higher music and arts institutions are well-know for their low numbers of drop-outs as a result of young talent scouting schemes, highly developed selection mechanisms, and creative teaching and learning approaches tailored to the needs of individual students. The experiences with such approaches in the arts in general and in music in particular could be of benefit to (higher) education at large in the framework of the 'Education and Training 2010' agenda. This has already been acknowledged by the 'Creativity Project' recently initiated by the European University Association (EUA)⁷, but further exploration of this point would be beneficial.
4. The attractiveness of European higher education in the world (another key objective of the 'Education and Training 2010' programme and one of the main aims of the ERASMUS MUNDUS programme) is strongly developed in the artistic sector with students coming from all over the world to study in European music and arts academies. In addition, the cultural dimension can be important in other ways: a recent study on the perceptions of European higher education in 3rd countries⁸ clearly states as one of its findings that

"Europe was clearly perceived as the destination with the most interesting tradition and cultural heritage and with the most attractive arts, music and cultural offer".

It is obvious that culture and the arts could play an eminent role in promoting European higher education in the world.

Our recommendations for the EU Communication on Culture

Although we are convinced a greater synergy between education and culture can bring important benefits, we are aware this issue will be one of many addressed in the Communication. Therefore, we suggest formulating a brief paragraph on the synergy between education and culture with the following components:

1. Reference to the above-mentioned arguments for a closer synergy between education and culture.
2. The suggestion that a further study of this issue will be undertaken in the form of pilot projects in the framework of an EU Year for Education and Culture in 2009.
3. An increased attention to the synergy between education and culture in both the new culture and education programmes of the EU. This could be supported by the establishment of a permanent monitoring group

⁶ Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament 'Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems' – COM(2006)481 final, Brussels 8 September 2006

⁷ See for more information about this project <http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=109>

⁸ Study 'Perceptions of European Higher Education in Third Countries' – ERASMUS MUNDUS Project 2004 – 3924 / 001 – 001 MUN-MUNA31 executed by the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA)

within the Commission with officials from both the culture and education units. This monitoring group would also be responsible for the coordination of the various funding streams, as suggested in the EFMET-document 'Recommendations to the European Union on the role of music education and training in the new EU cultural programme'.

4. References to a small number of examples of good practice that address these issues. Allow us to give you a few of such examples with their relevant website addresses:
 - An impressive European project working on creativity and the active role of artists in the classroom is MUS-E, realised by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation (www.menuhin-foundation.com)
 - An example of how an artistic discipline is approaching the attractiveness of European higher education (in this case European higher music education) is the ERASMUS MUNDUS project 'Mundus Musicalis', coordinated by the Norwegian University for Science and Technology – department of music and the AEC (www.aecinfo.org/mundusmusicalis)
 - In the ERASMUS Thematic Network for Music 'Polifonia', coordinated by the Malmö Academy of Music and the AEC, a Profession Working Group consisting of representatives of professional music training institutions and organisations in the music industry studies the latest trends in the music profession at European level and how the links between professional training and the profession can be improved (www.polifonia-tn.org)
 - A large European project on the development of an European dimension in training programmes for music teachers in general education is the COMENIUS project 'meNET', coordinated by the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna (<http://menet.mdw.ac.at/bin/view>)
 - The main European associations dealing with higher education and the arts are the European Association of Conservatoires – AEC (www.aecinfo.org) and the European League of Institutes for the Arts – ELIA (www.elia-artschools.org).

We hope these ideas will help you in addressing this issue in the framework of the EU Communication of Culture. Obviously, these are some brief first thoughts only. If so required, we are willing to develop these ideas in more detail.

Martin Prchal, European Association of Conservatoires (AEC) December 2006.