

**RESPONSE TO THE EU CONSULTATION ON
'DESIGNING THE FUTURE PROGRAMME OF CULTURAL COOPERATION FOR
THE EUROPEAN UNION AFTER 2006'**



1. The missions of the European Union

The task entrusted to the Union in the cultural field relates essentially to transnational cultural cooperation. This requires joined expertise in the structures and development of cultural cooperation in Europe. What do you think about this?

The current underlying principle for action by the European Union in the cultural field is clear: it should supplement the national cultural policies of Member States by providing support for activities that can be better achieved on Community level than on the level of the Member States. This principle is in many ways valid: the diversity of cultures in the Member States is one of the strengths of the European Union. It is important to safeguard this diversity without attempting to make the cultural traditions and policies of Member States more comparable and harmonised, such as is currently taking place in the field of education. In the field of education, higher education systems are being made more comparable in the framework of the Bologna Declaration; these developments towards a more unified European Higher Education Area are justified: hopefully the challenges regarding the mobility of students and professionals, the recognition of qualifications and the confusing picture of higher education in the European Union to the outside world will be met through this process. The same objective could never apply to culture: how could Spanish culture be more 'comparable' to the Swedish one? It would be absurd to try and harmonise existing national cultures in an effort to create a common 'European culture'. Therefore the role of the subsidiarity is very important, as it ensures that cultural diversity will stay one of the starting points for cultural cooperation on European level. It is this rich diversity that makes the European culture.

This emphasis on cultural diversity, however, does not mean each national approach to culture should be an island of ignorance. On the contrary, exchanges and cooperation in culture are essential, for the following reasons:

- Learning about other cultures is one of the corner stones of the European integration process. The European integration can never be limited to economic issues: only an open-minded approach and understanding of different cultures can lift the integration to a higher level of cohesion. In order to achieve this, an active approach to the exchange of information and persons is vital.
- The existence of so many different forms of expression and traditions present cultural actors with a unique opportunity to profit from this cultural wealth and develop new forms of expression. Such jointly developed activities will give European artists a deeper sense of belonging to the European integration process and make them more sensitive to those aspects in the cultures of the Member States that they share. Again, an active policy of cooperation needs to be developed to achieve this goal.

In relation to these issues, it is vital to envisage what kind of activities should be supported. Setting up a music festival with music originating from various European countries might help to develop the understanding of cultural diversity, but this will not necessarily have a lasting effect. If, however, artists are brought together to co-operate on a joint artistic product, this can have a much more profound result in terms of cooperation on European level. It is in this context perhaps relevant to mention that in the field of music, although mobility is taking place by many music ensembles throughout Europe, there is hardly any cooperation on a European level in the field of contemporary music. In fact, there is hardly any cooperation on a European level between professional music ensembles as such, although many of these ensembles have strong international profiles, mainly in the realisation of concert tours abroad.

It is essential that any policy regarding European cultural cooperation is supported by the political will of the Member States. A short-sighted interpretation of the subsidiarity principle by some of the Member States has paralysed the development of an effective European policy, especially in terms of budget allocation. The time has come to give cultural cooperation a clear place in the overall process of the European integration; at this moment the budget allocated to culture is not much more than pocket money, especially when compared to the large sums reserved for other European policies. The final outcome of the European Convention will be crucial in regard to the place of culture in the overall future development of the European integration process.

2. European added value of the activity

EU action in the cultural field calls for more precise objectives with a high European added value, such as:

Strengthening the mobility of artists and of professionals in the cultural sector;

Promoting the circulation of works;

Supporting intercultural dialogue and exchanges.

What do you think about this?

Although we understand the reasoning behind these three points, we must make some comments.

- In relation to the strengthening of the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural sector, EU action can be described at two levels:
 - EU action to ensure that formal obstacles do not hamper the mobility of artists: taxation rules, social security issues and recognition of qualifications. The European Union has a clear responsibility to create policies that will enable artists (just as any other professionals) to move freely throughout the union. Whether or not the EU should provide support to artists to actually travel around Europe is another question. It must be clear that, especially in the music sector, mobility already exists at a rather high level. The current music market is organised in such a way that musicians with an international reputation already travel frequently: it would be unnecessary to provide EU funding for such activities as well. In addition, whenever a musician in a European country plans to give concerts abroad, some national governments provide support to realise such international activities.
 - Therefore the EU should provide more facilitating support for musicians wanting to perform in other European countries by providing access to information that deals with relevant matters: information on work permits, tax rules, social security issues, etc. It should also stimulate initiatives dealing with the recognition of qualifications. Having an increasingly mixed portfolio of professional obligations, such as performing, community work and teaching (this is particularly the case in the field of music), qualifications will become more important in the future, even for artists. As is clear from the 2002 'Study on the mobility and free movement of people and products in the cultural sector', problems with the recognition of qualifications remain one of the main obstacles for artists to move around Europe and find employment in another country. Special attention needs to be given to this issue in relation to the arts, as it is clear that for a highly diverse subject area as the arts, the comparability and recognition of qualifications will not work the same way as for mathematics or engineering.
- The same principles are relevant for the promotion of the circulation of works. There does not seem to be a more international and mobile art form than music: musicians and music ensembles travel all the time. Again, the EU should provide assistance in facilitating these movements by developing European wide procedures and legislation that take away all the existing obstacles. Supporting the actual mobility might not be necessary, as in music the level of mobility is rather high already. However, a high level of mobility does not always imply actual cooperation on European level. One could for example envisage a project bringing together contemporary music ensembles from 5 different European countries for a jointly developed project in music creativity and then present the results of this project on a European wide concert tour. This way the connection to joint creativity in a multilateral environment is ensured.
- An issue of the utmost importance is **the connection between education and culture**. For most societies, the connection between education and culture is a natural one. On the European level, we have in the European Commission a Directorate General for Education, Audio-visual and Culture and in the European Parliament a Committee for Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sports. There seems to be a natural link between Education and Culture, but what does it really mean? What would happen if it were to be decided that no European dimension was necessary in education and culture?
 - How would young people learn about other European cultures, creating understanding among the various cultures in Europe?
 - How would people learn about their own cultural identity, strengthening the multicultural diversity that is so unique for the European Union?
 - How would professional artists be able to move around Europe freely without adequate language skills, relevant information about employment opportunities and the recognition of qualifications, which even in the cultural sector is increasingly important?
 - How would professionals be given the opportunity to change jobs within the European Union without having the support of lifelong learning and continuing education opportunities?
 - How would training institutions be able to prepare their talented students for an increasingly European and international job market?
 - How would cultural organisations be able to reach out to new audiences in other European countries through educational activities?

The connection between education and culture is evident. So why is this not reflected on the level of the European programmes?

- In 1999, the European Parliament initiated the CONNECT Initiative, an action designed to support projects connecting education and culture. This Initiative was extremely valuable but it has unfortunately been discontinued, as its objectives were to be taken over by the so-called Joint Actions, a horizontal programme aimed at connecting SOCRATES, LEONARDO, YOUTH and CULTURE 2000. However, there is still no obvious cultural component in the Joint Actions.
- Training institutions in the arts are facing increasing bureaucratic problems with the accessibility to European programmes: in CULTURE 2000 applicants from training institutions are often referred to the education and training programmes, in the education and training programmes they are referred to CULTURE 2000! The AEC and some of its member institutions have had experience with this on many occasions. This is not a motivating situation. We are therefore following with interest the collaboration between the MEDIA programme and some of the educational programmes and would like to propose similar links in the field of culture.

We therefore strongly suggest paying greater attention to the connection between education and culture, because without culture there will be no education and without education there will be no culture.

3. Visibility of the Community activities

Greater visibility is necessary in order to make EU citizens aware of the role of Europe in cultural cooperation, the development of exchanges and the promotion of cultural diversity.
What do you think about this?

Many of the issues in relation to the visibility of activities supported by EU action are connected to the themes 4 and 5. It is clear that the visibility will strongly depend on the type of activity supported. Were, for example, European funding to be given to a festival, the event would probably happen anyway without EU support which would simply join a long list of supporters, funders and sponsors. There is then little real visibility. Emphasising projects that have a distinctive European character through their themes, multilateral approach and working methods, will improve the European dimension and therefore its link to the EU financial support.

4. Nature of the activities

It is desirable for action by the European Union in the cultural field to promote sustainable cooperation with multiplier effects rather than ephemeral projects that have little link with reality and the needs of the cultural sector. This promotion could in particular be assisted by the creation of European cooperation "platforms", i.e. intermediary structures with the ability to incite and encourage cooperation and support operators of various sizes. What do you think about this?

We fully agree that there should be a stronger focus on the promotion of initiatives that are sustainable and have long-term multiplier effects. Although some cultural projects are excellent vehicles to symbolise the European unification process (for example the European Union Youth Orchestra), it is a serious drawback that these emblematic projects draw heavily on the scarce resources of the cultural budget. An allocation from the public relations budget of the European Union would be more appropriate for such initiatives. We are therefore strongly in favour to support projects at the grassroots level, which have the potential to reach a wider range of audiences and which can have a lasting impact, for example through a stronger focus on the participation of young people. A 'European' cultural experience will enhance the understanding of cultural diversity and a sense of belonging to the European integration process for the young. This, again, implies a greater role for education and training in the cultural activities, as said before in point 2. However, the cultural programmes have denied this role until now. Taking into account the field represented by the AEC, professional music training, it is important to understand that this has a strong involvement in both the cultural and the educational sectors. This makes professional music training sensitive to developments in both fields and it should be clear that it cannot be seen as belonging to one of those sectors only. In most European countries, professional music training is part of the regular systems for higher education, while in some countries professional music training resorts under the responsibility of the ministries for culture. In all cases, its strong connection to the music profession and therefore to the cultural sector in general is clearly shown by the active role of professional music training institutions in local communities. Many students are already active professionally during their studies and many training institutions are involved in various festivals and other musical events on national and international levels, as a current survey organised by the AEC has clearly shown. A strict separation between the music training sector and the professional music sector will therefore always be artificial, although this is often the case when dealing with the European cooperation programmes in education, training and culture.

In relation to mobility on European level, a recent EU study on the mobility of artists clearly states that the mobility in professional training in the performing arts on European level (*Study on the mobility and free movement of people and products in the cultural sector* - Study DG EAC 08/00 executed by the partnership CEJEC - Université PARIS X-EAEA) is still too limited. In this report, the following conclusions relevant to training in the arts were made:

- There is insufficient or no cooperation and exchanges at the Community level between training institutions in the Member States schools and vocational training centres.
- There is a lack of a real policy for training in the arts in the European Union.
- There is insufficient teaching of artistic subjects in secondary schools.
- There is insufficient teaching of foreign musical repertoires in national music schools.
- There is insufficient teaching of foreign languages in Conservatories and academies.

It is evident, therefore, that cooperation between professional music training institutions in and outside the European programmes should be stimulated and developed.

In this context, it is also important to stress that in the field of professional music training there are some specific characteristics that complicate cooperation on European level. For example:

- The individual character of music education, in which one-to-one teaching is still the most effective method of training, creates an unusually strong connection between teacher and student. This makes some cooperation activities, especially when dealing with the exchanges of individual students, in professional music training a sensitive and sometimes complicated. The specific artistic and educational intensity of the student-teacher relationship is one of many educational practices that distinguish music from all other disciplines; it is therefore crucial for the music institutions to address such issues in terms of music itself.
- Musicians teaching in professional music training institutions are mostly professionals with small part time contracts allowing them to pursue a performance career at the same time. This often makes it difficult to involve teachers in substantial European cooperation activities, especially because it might mean loss of income when the musicians would be unable to take on paid work because of a voluntary participation in a European project.
- Another important fact, which distinguishes music very clearly from the other art disciplines (except dance), is its long developmental process: various studies have shown that in most music genres, the music activities start at a very young age. After a young start, most musicians (both professionals and amateurs) continue their music activities and music learning until or well after retirement age, which in a way makes music the ultimate example of a life long learning process.

These three points make it often very difficult to develop initiatives in the European programmes, which are strictly divided into types of learning (formal/non formal education), sectors (education, training and culture) and levels (the various levels in SOCRATES).

Taking all these factors into account, it is possible, and hopefully helpful, to envisage the following structure of the cultural cooperation programme, provided that sufficient funding were to be provided by the European Union with the political backing of the Member States:

- A programme **without annual priorities** for disciplines in culture: artistic creation is not bound to years, but should be developed on a continuous basis.
- A programme **with 'vertical' strands**: fine arts, music, theatre, etc. As it is not desirable to have the various disciplines in culture compete with each other, these strands could also take into account the special characteristics of the individual disciplines in the arts.
- A programme that provides **support to short-term as well as long-term projects**, as is currently the case in Culture 2000.
- A programme that concentrates on **multilateral cultural cooperation at grassroots level** instead of large emblematic initiatives with a limited significance to the cultural sector or bilateral initiatives that can just as well be supported by Member States.
- A programme that **supports European cultural networks** that are important catalysts for the cooperation on the European level in the field of culture.
- A programme that clearly takes into consideration '**horizontal issues**', such as education and training, research, the use of new technologies and employment issues. This should include initiatives that deal with the European dimension of professional continuing development of professional artists, making a connection to the EU policy for lifelong learning and the Lisbon Convention, which defined Europe as a 'knowledge-based society'.
- A programme that offers support for **cultural cooperation with third countries**, as a vehicle for cultural exchange and intercultural understanding.

- A programme without **unnecessary bureaucratic criteria**, such as the 5% own funding rule, which, especially in the candidate countries, is a serious obstacle for some cultural operators.
- A programme with **transparent selection procedures**.
- A programme that gives **access to various types of partners**: cultural operators, schools, training institutions, employment organisations, regional development initiatives, etc.

The idea of creating European 'platforms' to promote cooperation in culture is an interesting concept. However, a closer look must be taken at the actual role and objectives of these 'platforms', while taking into account already existing initiatives. If these 'platforms' were there to represent, encourage and support operators, it might be sufficient to look at existing European cultural networks that already fulfil that role, such as the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) and the European Music Council (EMC). They would need to be organised 'vertically' awarding to discipline (fine arts, music, etc) with a few horizontal 'platforms' discussing issues such as education and training or employment matters.

Again, it might be sufficient to take existing networks as a basis and, with some additional support, develop these into more formalised 'platforms', which would not only serve as discussion and dissemination platforms for the cultural sector, but would also advise the European Union on matters regarding cultural policy. We would, however, not be in favour of using these 'platforms' for the selection and implementation of EU funded projects, as we feel that the European cultural sector at this moment lacks the structure and professional attitude to be able to take on such a task. In order to ensure objective application procedures, the role of the European Commission must be continued, with the help of outside experts, clearly defined criteria and transparent procedures. The 'platforms' should have an important role in defining and advising on such criteria and procedures. In any case, these 'platforms' should not be bureaucratic structures taking up substantial amounts of funding.

5. Inter-institutional cooperation

This would involve promoting improved synergy between the cooperation projects develop by member states on the one hand and by the European Union on the other. This operation would include emblematic measures promoting the feeling of belonging to a single community, such as the European capitals of culture. What do you think about this?

Our opinion regarding emblematic measures has been expressed in point 4. With regard to inter-institutional cooperation, clear agreements will need to be made about which type of activities will be supported by Member States and which by the European Union.

6. European cultural industries

The music and publishing industries could be taken specifically into account in community action. What do you think about this?

Great care must be taken with the meaning of the term 'cultural industry'. Does it include the cultural sector as a whole or only the commercial industries? Without a clearer definition, it is very difficult to form an opinion regarding this matter.

At the same time, we would be strongly opposed to any kind of movement towards a preferential treatment of initiatives by the commercial sector to those proposed by the non-profit sector. As was mentioned in relation to the mobility of artists and the circulation of works, the European Union must play an essential role giving both the commercial and non-profit sectors the tools to avoid obstacles caused by technical matters (taxation, social security, working permits, etc.). It can never be the purpose of a European cultural cooperation policy to support commercial cultural industry activities directly. However, a greater collaboration between the commercial and non-profit sector would be advisable. In this context, it is again vital to mention the connection to education and training. Without this crucial component, culture will never be able to connect itself to the decision taken by the Lisbon Convention, stating that Europe should become *"the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion"*. Support should be given to initiatives that bring together training institutions and professional organisations, making sure that professionals in the cultural sector will be adequately trained and regularly updated to face the challenges of the future.

7. Finally

The AEC is very grateful for having this opportunity to express our views which we hope will contribute usefully to the plans being prepared by the European Commission. We remain willing to offer further assistance, as and when requested.