

Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States

(2008/C 320/04)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

1. HAVING REGARD TO:

- the Treaty establishing the European Community,
- the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 20 October 2005 ⁽¹⁾,
- the UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property of 14 November 1970,
- Decision No 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) ⁽²⁾.

2. WELCOMING:

- the Presidency conclusions of the European Council in Brussels on 19 and 20 June 2008 ⁽³⁾, whereby cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue are regarded as integral parts of external policies as a whole.

3. REFERRING TO:

- the Council Resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture ⁽⁴⁾,
- the Council conclusions of 21 May 2008 on Intercultural Competences ⁽⁵⁾,
- and the conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 21 May 2008, on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 ⁽⁶⁾.

4. WELCOMING WITH INTEREST:

- the Commission Communication of 10 May 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World ⁽⁷⁾.

5. WHEREAS:

- intercultural dialogue can help to bring individuals and peoples closer together, and help towards conflict prevention and the process of reconciliation, especially in regions which are facing politically precarious situations,
- cultural exchanges and cultural cooperation, including in the audiovisual sphere, can help to establish relations based on partnership, strengthen the place and the role of civil society, foster processes of democratisation and good governance and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms,
- culture, an essential component of the knowledge-based economy, is also a sector with strong economic potential, in particular with respect to cultural and creative industries and sustainable cultural tourism,
- Europe's place in the world, from an artistic, intellectual and scientific point of view, depends to a considerable extent on the dynamism of its cultural creative work and on its cultural exchanges with third countries,
- cultural ties between Europe and the other regions of the world can be important for the development of intercultural dialogue and the setting up of common cultural projects; moreover, the Union has to ensure the promotion of its cultural and linguistic diversity.

6. CALL ON THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE AND WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

A. Pursue the following policy objectives:

1. strengthening the place and the role of culture in the policies and programmes conducted within the framework of external relations and promoting cooperation with third countries and international organisations with responsibility in the field of culture, in particular UNESCO and the Council of Europe, in order to improve the quality and diversity of the cultural activities carried out, and, more generally, contribute to the attainment of external policy objectives and to sustainable development;
2. promoting the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 20 October 2005 by:
 - encouraging the ratification and implementation of this Convention, which is a central element in the cultural relations of the Union and its Member States with third countries and one of the pillars of global governance,

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 2006/515/EC of 18 May 2006 on the conclusion of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (OJ L 201, 25.7.2006, p. 15).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 44.

⁽³⁾ 11018/08.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.

⁽⁵⁾ 9021/08.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 143, 10.6.2008, p. 9.

⁽⁷⁾ COM(2007) 242 final.

- taking full account in its external relations of the specific nature of cultural activities, goods and services, which have a dual nature, economic and cultural,
- entering into or pursuing a political dialogue with third countries, particularly on legislative and regulatory frameworks, in order to develop the place of culture in their policies,
- promoting external cultural policies that encourage dynamism and balance in the exchange of cultural goods and services with third countries, particularly emerging economies, in order to preserve and promote cultural diversity in the world and to contribute to the vitality of the European economy of culture,
- strengthening the contribution of culture to sustainable development and furthering cooperation and solidarity with developing countries in a spirit of partnership, in particular in order to increase the capacity of those countries to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expression, including cultural industries and contemporary creative work;

3. promoting intercultural dialogue through the pursuit of specific projects, awareness-raising activities and exchanges of good practice carried out successfully in the Member States and outside the Union in the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), in particular in the light of the stock-taking exercise on that Year that will be carried out by the Commission.

B. Define comprehensive and consistent approaches:

- drawing up a European strategy for incorporating culture consistently and systematically in the external relations of the Union and contributing to the complementarity of the Union's activities with those of its Member States,
- establishing specific strategies with regions and countries outside the Union with a view to clarifying objectives and approaches in the area of cultural relations; these strategies will in particular be tailored to the features and sustainable development prospects of their cultural sectors, to the state of cultural exchanges with the Union and to their economic and social situations,
- these specific strategies could be defined, in accordance with the distribution of powers established in the Treaty, at the end of processes involving expertise and consultation with the regions and countries concerned.

C. Strengthen, in this framework, support for:

- cooperative cultural activities undertaken with third countries at local, regional or national level, in par-

ticular with a view to promoting cultural and artistic exchanges and co-productions, contributing to the training and mobility of artists and cultural professionals, and strengthening, if necessary, the development capacities of the cultural sectors of the partner countries, especially through the exchange of expertise,

- the international promotion of European cultural activities, goods and services, including those of an audiovisual nature, such as external audiovisual services, and the mobility of European artists and cultural professionals outside the Union,
- multilingualism — especially through language learning, translation and the development of the potential of all European languages to develop cultural and economic dialogue with the rest of the world — and the development of intercultural skills,
- the mobility of young people under appropriate Community initiatives and programmes, their cultural and artistic education — including media literacy — and their access to artistic expressions in all their diversity,
- the protection of copyright and related rights and the prevention of and fight against counterfeiting and piracy at international level, in the framework of the relevant bilateral and multilateral agreements and political dialogue and cooperation with third countries,
- the protection, preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, and international cooperation, including through the exchange of experience in the light of the above-mentioned UNESCO Convention of 1970, in the field of the prevention of and the fight against theft and illicit trafficking of cultural goods, in particular those illicitly acquired through illegal excavations or pillaging of monuments.

D. Accordingly develop the following working methods and instruments:

- have recourse to analysis of the cultural sectors of third countries, including their development prospects and their regulatory frameworks, in order to contribute to a better definition of the strategies and activities to be undertaken; the Commission, in cooperation with Member States and third countries, will contribute to this analysis,
- use the experience of the Member States, encourage synergies with a view to contributing to the complementarity of the activities undertaken by the Union with those of its Member States and initiating more activities and joint cultural projects at international level; the open method of coordination for culture can play a role here,

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- ensure that, in the framework of existing financial instruments, operational programmes are defined and tailored to the characteristics of the culture sector, in particular to small production and distribution structures, and to the specific local features of the Member States and partner countries: better access by professionals to information on support programmes and activities, simplification of procedures for obtaining grants, registration of long-term financial assistance, etc.,
 - take into account the strategies put in place with each of the Union's partners in the negotiation of international agreements with regional organisations or third countries,
 - encourage the involvement of artists, cultural professionals, and, more broadly, civil society, in both Member States and partner countries, in drawing up and implementing external cultural policies,
 - lastly, promote wider cooperation between the cultural institutions of the Member States of the Union in third countries, including cultural institutes and their equivalents in those countries in particular through the constitution of networks.
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