



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Council Conclusions
on Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

- 1) Referring to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions;
- 2) Having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the European Council of 14 December 2007, recognising the importance of cultural and creative sectors in the framework of the Lisbon Agenda for growth and jobs¹ and recalling the Council conclusions of 24 May 2007 on the contribution of the cultural and creative sector to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives²;
- 3) Having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the European Council of 13-14 March 2008, which recognised that a key factor for future growth was the full development of the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens built on European culture and excellence in science³;
- 4) Having regard to the Presidency conclusions of the European Council of 11-12 December 2008, which, recognising that Europe must continue to invest in its future, called for the launching of a European plan for innovation, combined with the development of the European Research Area and with the reflection on the future of the Lisbon strategy beyond 2010⁴;

¹ 16616/1/07 Rev 1.

² OJ C 311, 21.12.2007, p. 7.

³ 7652/08.

⁴ 17271/08.

- 5) Referring to the provisions of the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009¹;
- 6) Having regard to the Commission's Communication of 10 May 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World² and to the Council Resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture³;
- 7) Referring to the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Work Plan for Culture 2008 – 2010⁴;
- 8) Referring to the Council conclusions of 22 May 2008 on Intercultural Competences⁵;
- 9) Recalling the Council conclusions of 20 November 2008 on the development of legal offers of online cultural and creative content and the prevention and combating of piracy in the digital environment⁶;
- 10) Drawing on the findings of the study on the economy of culture in Europe, published on 14 November 2006, and looking forward to the forthcoming study on culture and creativity, both commissioned by the European Commission;

¹ OJ L 348, 24.12.2008, p. 115.

² 9496/07 and ADD 1.

³ OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.

⁴ OJ C 143, 10.6.2008, p. 9.

⁵ OJ C 141, 07.06.2008, p. 14

⁶ OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 15.

RECOGNISING THAT:

- Culture and creativity are inextricably linked. Creativity is at the source of culture which in turn creates an environment that enables creativity to flourish;
- Creativity is a process of generating ideas, expressions and forms, either when looking for new ways of tackling existing problems, of re-interpreting reality or searching for new opportunities. Creativity is in essence a process that can amplify knowledge and lead to new ways of using it;
- Creativity, in turn, lies at the origin of innovation – understood as a successful exploitation of new ideas, expressions and forms and as a process that develops new products, new services and new ways of running businesses or new ways of responding to social needs. Creativity is therefore of great importance for the innovative capacity of citizens, as well as organisations, businesses and societies;
- Culture, creativity and innovation are vital for the competitiveness and development of our economies and our societies and are all the more important in times of rapid changes and serious challenges;

CONSIDERING THAT:

- Creativity is present everywhere in society, but one should recognise the specific role that culture, the cultural sector and cultural and creative industries, especially SMEs, play in fostering it;
- Arts and culture play an important role in education and lifelong learning, particularly as a means of promoting creative thinking, unlocking the creative abilities of people and helping develop new skills for new jobs in an evolving socio-economic environment;
- Many sectors invest directly or indirectly in culture and cooperation with cultural actors both as a fundamental resource and as a stimulus for their creativity;
- Culture and access to diverse cultural expressions provide opportunities to enhance intercultural competences, stimulate creativity and creative skills for citizens;
- Culture and cultural actors contribute to the development of values, principles and norms at an individual and societal level and impact on people's behaviour and social dynamics; they are thus recognised as efficient mediators between social, ethnic and other groups to foster inclusive societies and can promote the idea of European citizenship;
- Culture and creativity are driving forces for the development of European regions and cities, as they enhance local attractiveness and help revitalise local economies, including through the clustering of cultural and creative industries at local and regional level;
- Because of the creativity it generates and stimulates, culture can be an important actor in tackling the challenges that the European Union is now facing, particularly the demographic changes, social cohesion, globalisation and sustainable development;

POINTING OUT THAT:

- As a consequence, strategic investment in culture, as well as in cultural and creative industries, in particular in SMEs, is vital for promoting culture as such and for strengthening a dynamic creative society in the European Union, for creating jobs and enabling the fulfilment of the Lisbon goals;
- Such an investment should be further considered as an integral component of the future of the Lisbon strategy beyond 2010;
- In this context, it is of strategic importance to further promote synergies between the cultural sector and other sectors as well as to ensure that the potential and specificity of the cultural sector are taken into account in other policy areas;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF COMPETENCE, TO:

- Foster the potential of cultural policies to promote creativity, in particular through the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, access to and participation in culture, the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field and works of art, the protection of cultural works and of creators, as well as the development of cultural and creative industries, especially by facilitating their access to financing and creating an appropriate business environment;
- Pay particular attention to the possibilities and challenges offered by new technologies in generating creative content and interpreting conventional means of transferring knowledge innovatively;

- Make full use of the Open Method of Coordination for sharing experience in this respect within the framework of the work plans for culture adopted by the Council;
- Strengthen the involvement of the relevant civil society sectors and stimulate their participation through appropriate dialogue;
- Ensure protection of intellectual property rights and step up the fight against counterfeiting and piracy in the cultural and creative sectors;
- Further develop national cultural statistics and ensure, in coordination with Eurostat better comparability between them;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- Strengthen the ties between cultural and creative sectors and innovation and all other relevant policies;
- In this respect, reinforce synergies, both vertically and horizontally, between all the public authorities involved in this process (ministries or other relevant authorities) and regional and local entities;
- Stimulate networking and exchange of experience between regions and cities on creativity strategies, in particular with respect to connecting cultural actors with other sectors (clustering, partnership in public services, etc), with civil society stakeholders and actors in the wider economy;

- Use the already existing financial mechanisms at national and European level (e.g. structural funds) to strengthen the links between creativity and competitive advantage;
- Nurture creativity and innovation, namely by recognising artistic talents, rewarding their excellence and disseminating innovative works. In addition, share experiences and foster creativity in formal, informal and non-formal education and training in a lifelong learning perspective;
- Promote access to and encourage the use of new ICT technologies in the cultural sector and the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural content;

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- Further explore the close – but still largely underestimated – links between culture, creativity, innovation, economic performance and the wider economy;
- Pursue the analysis of the links between culture, education and creativity, and explore the impact of creativity and innovation in economy and society, better taking into account the specific contribution of culture and the stimulus that this can bring to other sectors;
- Promote the exchange and use of good practices stemming from the projects funded in the context of the already existing Community instruments aiming at fostering creativity;
- Further support at Community level the networking of regions and cities and civil society organisations investing in creativity;

- Continue mainstreaming culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation across other relevant policy areas at Community level;
 - Improve information on the existing, though disperse, financial mechanisms which SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors can benefit from;
 - Explore the relevance and feasibility of enhancing, in the longer term but without prejudicing the final decision on the next programming period, Community financial support to cultural and creative industries, with special attention to SMEs.
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