

Culture, the heart of a knowledge-based economy

the strategic use of culture in the European project



ECP Lisbon Agenda Research Group
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Cover letter addressed to Mr José Manuel Durao Barroso, President of the EU Commission.

Dear Mr Barroso,

Following your courteous visit and inspiring speech to the members of the European Cultural Parliament (ECP) at the fifth session of the European Cultural Parliament in Lisbon in December 2005, we, members of the ECP, would like to invite you, as President of the EU Commission, to initiate a process inside the Commission whereby the ideas expressed in this paper are shared and given the widest possible exposure. In our humble opinion the relevant bodies where this paper could be fruitfully discussed would include Directorates General such as those responsible for Education and Culture, Enterprise and Industry, Information Society and Media, and Research.

We thank you for your kindness and look forward to your response.

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ECP Secretary General
On behalf of the ECP Lisbon Agenda Research Group
22 July 2006

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Introduction

The document outlines the central role that culture ought to play in the formulation of an agenda for the future of Europe. As the result of a research project, undertaken by the ECP Lisbon Agenda Research Group of the European Cultural Parliament*, it describes the opportunities for a new and essentially strategic use of culture. This new development may contribute to the economic, social and educational transformation that is shaping the new Europe. Recent examples show such strategic uses of culture already developing in different domains of society. It is our conviction that the Community should recognize this and act on it to allow culture to play an essential role in the fulfilment of its fundamental aims and ideals.

The importance of a knowledge-driven economy for the future of Europe is highlighted by the European Council in the Lisbon Agenda (2000), which speaks of

"...a challenging programme for building knowledge infrastructures, enhancing innovation and economic reform, and modernising social welfare and education systems."

The agenda formulates a new strategic goal for the next decade, where Europe is set

"...to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustaining economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion."

The role of culture for the implementation of the Lisbon Agenda is outlined in the four main objectives mentioned in article 151 of the European Community Treaty, which speaks of

contributing to the flowering of the cultures of Member States, whilst respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore;

encouraging contemporary cultural creation;

taking the cultural dimension into account in all community policies;

encouraging cooperation between the Member States and with third countries and international organizations.

The cultural policy of the European Community has been implemented mainly through the Kaleidoscope, Ariane, Raphael (1994-1999) programmes, and Culture 2000 (2000-2006). The third generation programme will cover the period from 2007 to 2013. We submit this document in the hope that it may play a role in the development of a successful European cultural policy for the next ten years.

* See www.kulturparlament.com

THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE FOR EUROPE

The ambition to become 'the most competitive economy in the world' is a challenge that requires real innovation and true creativity in order to succeed. The future of Europe depends on our ability to balance growth and sustainability, diversity and cohesion, vision and constraints. For a competitive economy to be sustainable and support a cohesive Europe, new values are needed to drive its development in order to balance the dynamic forces of globalization, competitiveness and commercialization.

Organizations and individuals sense the need for such a different approach to values. The very premise on which the ECP was founded in 2002 was that "ethical and aesthetic values must constitute the essence of a new European society". Throughout the Community people are actively developing new ways in which culture can play a role in the construction of a sustainable future. Apart from looking at alternative models for prosperity, such alternative models also offer new opportunities for the creation of social cohesion.

The strategic use of culture goes beyond the notion of culture as arts and heritage, and creates a new driving force for change and innovation in different domains of society. It injects new ideas into business and the economy, inspires communities to promote new ways of participation, responsibility and cohesion, and re-energizes education.

This development is especially important for Europe. It embodies a new opportunity to transform Europe's unique cultural diversity into a strength and source for practical innovation and transformation. Such a rephrasing of the meaning and potential of culture allows us to connect the regenerative qualities of culture to the European economic and social challenge.

As members of the European Cultural Parliament we are strongly aware of this development. We see the need to stimulate the strategic use of a humanistic cultural perspective to support Europe in becoming a competitive economy characterized by strong social cohesion rooted in cultural diversity. We therefore strongly urge the Community to celebrate the value of culture and embrace this opportunity to create an innovative cultural policy to drive its economic, social and educational programmes.

CULTURE AS A BASIS FOR EUROPEAN INNOVATION AND GROWTH

Reference to Europe's rich and diverse cultural traditions as an important asset in its development has become so common that it risks losing much of its force unless it is backed by solid intellectual analysis and the right level of financial support. Declining financial support to culture will have detrimental effects not only directly on creative individuals and organisations, but also on society as a whole.

The definition of culture is often narrowed down to heritage and the arts. A wider interpretation would include practically all areas of human activity. To avoid having to use this extremely broad definition, this report, while emphasising the potential of culture as a strong social and economic resource for the community, does not lose sight of the special contribution to culture made by artists and creators. We need to develop the ability to use culture as a means for dealing with the growing complexity of our society as well as for constructing or creating its future whilst at the same time making it more meaningful in the present.

The contribution of culture to the creation of a competitive economy and a cohesive society may be far deeper than would appear at first sight. Business, education, social development as well as civic society are now becoming increasingly aware of the importance of culture as a stimulus. Apart from providing many examples of the use of culture to shape processes and products in all fields of human activity, this document provides ample proof as to how culture can lead to deep transformations of current practice through its fundamentally different form of research and reflection in response to a growing urgency for real change. In business, entrepreneurship alone cannot guarantee the development of a strong knowledge-based economy; we need innovation and creativity. Our social and educational systems require radical changes to overcome their ineffectiveness and inefficiency. The renewal of civic society calls for the setting-up of new institutions that facilitate participation and social cohesion. In order to inspire, facilitate, and support these transformations, culture can and should play a crucial role.

One of the elements that deeply affects the role and dynamics of culture in contemporary society is the wider access of different social groups to information and technology. We are now witnessing the growth of new ways of production, distribution and consumption that lead to increased cultural production and completely new products and services. In the case of the arts, the complexity and diversity of the network society affects the relationship between culture and the public, redefining the boundaries between high and low art, art and design, and 'pure' and applied art. In the case of heritage, the Internet and IT have facilitated new ways of presenting collections of historical objects and making them accessible to a wider public. However, despite the benefits derived from these developments, technological change on its own cannot deeply alter our relationship to culture. The ongoing development of the information and knowledge society confronts us with the need for a more fundamental change. We need to develop the ability to use culture as a tool, as a resource and framework for dealing with the growing complexity of our society while at the same time making it more meaningful.

As already stated, it is now necessary to adopt a notion of culture that goes beyond that of arts and heritage. A broad notion of culture should include the many ways in which culture is already used to create meaningful change in the widest spectrum of social domains. Here are some examples.

In Sweden a large Fields of Flow research programme, carried out at e Stockholm University, the Stockholm School of Economics and the Royal Institute of Technology and supported by the Swedish National Banks Tercentenary Foundation, has mapped the increasing role of aesthetics in sectors of business and industry. As a consequence, business and management education is carried out in close cooperation with art education.

Åbo Akademi in Finland will host the new ECP initiative, the European Nomadic University for Art, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe (NUROPE). The aim of the project is to study concrete cases of local interaction between culture and the economy, and will have teams of students visiting such locations throughout Europe for analysis and further study (www.nurope.eu).

Throughout the buildings of the Humanitas home for the elderly in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, art and cultural artefacts are a dominant presence. Following the organization's motto 'use it or loose it', the large collection of paintings, statues, murals and pictures creates a stimulating environment that invites people to use all their senses and critical skills of reflection. This acquired sense of a new vitality allows all those living and working in the buildings to perform more efficiently. It decreases stress and reduces the cost of care.

Comedia, the English organization known for its work on urban sites, runs a project in the Albanian cities of Shkodra and Pogradec. The objective is to deal with urban problems such as garbage, transport, housing and lack of confidence and to see how artistic approaches can help overcome them. Local teams have been set up to implement the programme under the guidance of Comedia.

More than 20 Dutch schools became 'cultural profile schools'. They use cultural artefacts, visual and performing arts to teach subjects like mathematics, languages and economics. The group serves as a pilot by which the Ministry of Education seeks to develop more intense and comprehensive ways of making culture an integral part of the curriculum and stimulate the talent of culturally inclined pupils.

In 2005 a group of creative, interdisciplinary individuals was invited by the Improvement and Development Agency (UK Local Government) and the Institute for Social Cohesion at Warwick University to help find creative solutions to the problem of possible civil unrest and increase social cohesion.

LEVELS OF APPLICATION

Culture can play a number of roles at different levels in the transformation of society and social relations. Three levels may be distinguished: the strategic, the tactical and the operational.

the strategic role of culture

At the strategic level the use of a cultural and aesthetic viewpoint creates a fundamental transformation in the economic, social and educational domains. An example would be the way in which cultural reflection can lead to fundamentally new ways of adding value to business and society.

the tactical role of culture

At the tactical level cultural activities create better solutions in domains other than culture itself. Here we find culture and aesthetics contributing to education and being used in social development as a tool for social cohesion. Such applications fundamentally alter current practices and act as a stimulus for innovation.

the operational role of culture

At the operational level cultural projects and aesthetic competences strengthen current solutions. Here we find the renovation of cultural practice as we know it, such as creating new cultural venues, integrating new technologies, providing new cultural services and stimulating business development.

These different levels of application show a distinction between culture understood narrowly as arts and heritage, cultural activities applied in other contexts, and the use of culture as a different perspective that allows for qualitatively different solutions.

This new cultural perspective with an inherently humanistic character has been developing during the last decade. When applied, it is able to create solutions that are more sensible, synergetic and often more effective and efficient, even in seemingly complex situations. It is our conviction that this perspective adds a quality we are often looking for in economic and social contexts when we speak about sustainability and vitality. The holistic nature of this humanistic and cultural perspective prevents us from creating solutions that may have the negative effects we are trying to avoid.

Throughout Europe creative individuals, educational institutions and businesses are already successfully developing and applying models and activities along these lines.

THE NEED FOR NEW SOLUTIONS

To realize the ambitions of the Lisbon Agenda, the strategic need for new kinds of solutions is evident. The information society raises some fundamental issues that have structural consequences for our systems that the authors of the Agenda may not have anticipated.

One of the fundamental issues that the information society faces is how to promote quality and excellence. This becomes apparent in the media and education. While we are dependent on information more than ever before, quality

newspapers, literature, cinema, television and radio struggle to retain their audiences while new, simpler media formats abound.

While we need wisdom and knowledge more than ever, our educational institutions are finding it extremely hard to stimulate the interest and imagination of students who are now using simpler and much more efficient means for acquiring information and knowledge. If we really want to achieve the European ideal of becoming "*the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world*", improving quality and promoting excellence becomes a central issue.

Another challenge is the increasing complexity of our world. As the rate and unpredictability of change increase, problems are determined by a cluster of different and unexpected factors, often originating from other domains. Developing solutions in such situations requires collaboration and an ability to function in a trans-disciplinary context. We need new approaches that allow us to deal with these complexities and create solutions that are at the same time new and efficient.

Living in a network society requires us to deal with changing relationships and the adjustment to new partners. While on the one hand this is a great source for new opportunities, existing arrangements might become less meaningful. One example is economic liberalisation. On the one hand it creates opportunities for new partners to create services and enter the market, on the other it might weaken the public domain. In each case, the creation of value and meaningful alliances under such new conditions becomes essential.

Issues like excellence, complexity and the formation of networks fundamentally affect the quality of life. As fundamental features of our society they are structural and permanent. However, we are threatened with economic stagnation and a loss of social cohesion unless we are prepared to face the challenges they present. What we need above all is long-term planning and the ability to adapt to the new situation through decisive action and imaginative leadership.

We are convinced that the strategic use of culture is an important tool in facing these challenges. The ability to create meaning in a complex situation is a basic skill shared by creative individuals. Business is turning to art academies as reservoirs of talent, while leadership programmes seek deep cultural experience to develop the skills of their leaders. Firms and other corporations, driven by the bottom line, have already understood that the investment in creative individuals produces real economic value.

The strategic use of culture is not only an important opportunity, but may prove to be a crucial requirement to further the development of Europe.

NEW USES IN SOCIETY

Throughout society new ways have been developed to use culture in situations that require improvement, inspiration or downright transformation. Culture in these situations is characterized by the use of imaginative and innovative approaches to the solution of problems. In this sense culture may be understood as a specific way of looking at things, a perspective that aims to create meaningful experiences and a better quality of life.

Here again are a few examples:

Business organizations look at art schools. Business and leadership education is increasingly inspired by art to such an extent that we may foresee "aesthetic management" taking the place of "scientific management" in new creative industries. Stockholm University, Copenhagen Business School, Universität Witten Herdecke and St Gallen University are leading this development. They have been followed by other institutions, including the Harvard Business School in the USA and the Banff Centre for Leadership in Canada.

In the UK a small organization called Heads Together has artists working with neighbourhoods, schools and youth projects to improve the quality of life. They aim to use the transformative power of involvement in significant creative activity to effect positive changes in community settings and develop everyone's creative potential. Their work inspires radical change in situations that have seen little improvement in decades using other means.

In the Netherlands, the Walter Maashuis, a small arts organization, and the National Royal Academy of Sciences co-create a series of events in which artists and scientists engage in transdisciplinary research to develop new views on topics of combined interest.

In Sweden an interesting example of cross-fertilization between culture, business and politics is The Design of Prosperity (TDP) yearly summit of Borås, organised by The Swedish School of Textiles and The Business School of Göteborg. TDP brings together high-class international artists, designers, philosophers, exponents of the world's religions, futurologists, technologists, art and business scholars, and creative entrepreneurs with Swedish politicians and business leaders. The common objective is to develop new understanding of patterns of change and innovation through a trans-disciplinary cultural perspective. (www.thedesigndofprosperity.se)

The "Music Mind Spirit Trust" in the UK, founded by the ECP member Paul Robertson, a virtuoso violinist, is an interesting example of how artists can develop a project with a broad impact in fields like education, social research, health and neurology.

The City of Görlitz in East Germany was restored to its former glory, making it a great attraction for tourists, art lovers and architects from all parts of Europe. The driving force of the initiative were a group of cultural curators and heritage enthusiasts who succeeded in restoring a forgotten and partly destroyed architectural jewel.

The current mayor of the city of Tirana, the artist and ECP member Edi Rama, facilitated a project to paint the outside of buildings, giving the city 'a new face'. Though this was no solution to the desperate decay of the infrastructure, it provided a much-needed psychological injection of pride, ownership and engagement for a

community with very limited resources to improve their quality of life. Many leaders of democratization in former socialist countries have an artistic background.

The International Management School of Bled in Slovenia embedded a strong cultural programme as an essential element in the education of its MBA students. This has long been the success-recipe for the German private Witten-Herdecke University. The University of St Gallen has also opted for integrating cultural studies with its management training.

Under the Spark! Programme, groups of art and design students worked on seven different locations in Europe to develop culture as an economic factor for urban regeneration and demonstrate the power of new design services as a factor in social integration and contemporary design management. An initiative of the Cumulus network of 40 European Art and Design Universities, enabled by the EU's Culture 2000 programme, they exemplify the growing awareness of the new methodology provided by artists and designers to tackle the challenge of regional community development.

In the Netherlands the SKOR foundation for arts in public space funds artists to investigate new and innovative scenarios for structural reconfiguration of agricultural land for other uses.

Since 1996 Michelangelo Pistoletto, ECP-Member and the representative of "Arte Povera" seminal contemporary art movement, has been leading Cittadellarte Fondazione Pistoletto, an ambitious initiative which highlights the idea that art is the most sensitive and complete expression of human thought. Pistoletto argues that the time has come for artists to take on the responsibility of establishing ties among all human activities, from economics to politics, science to religion, education to behaviour – in a word, to weave together all the threads that make up the fabric of society. The Cittadellarte also collaborates with private companies (e.g. Gruppo Ermenegildo Zegna, Illy and FURLA) for implementing social responsibility and the ethic of aesthetics in the running of their business, product innovation, and marketing.

Room 13 is a democratically run studio operating along normal business lines. The difference is that the management team is aged eight to 11 years. It is an autonomous arts studio, independent of the Caol Primary School, outside Fort William in the UK. Pupils are free to leave their lessons whenever they wish – providing their class work is up-to-date - to go to Room 13. They work with artists-in-residence Rob Fairley and Claire Gibb to create artworks of such imagination and sophistication that they were the sensations of the Barbie Art Prize, the children's version of the Turner Prize.

In 2005 United Response (UR), a charitable organisation that supports over 1500 people either with a learning disability or a mental health need and employs over 2000 staff in the UK, asked a group of people with mental health needs to take part in a project

that enabled them to harness the power of photography, producing a set of images that communicate the reality of their daily life. The resulting workshops created a breathtaking wealth of images and testimonies which have provided a compelling backdrop to current developments in mental health legislation in the UK.

In 2003 the Copenhagen Business School launched its Centre for Art & Leadership research programme. The Centre has as its goal the fusion of philosophy and art in order to capture and stimulate the creative practices of management (business economics), primarily with regard to leadership and organisation, through the totality of its inner contradictions, in order to develop a sensitivity for the unity, the core, through which the secret of its force is kept alive. ECP member, conductor Peter Hanke was appointed as Artistic Director. Based on results of this initiative a trans-disciplinary merger of conducting teaching and leadership development in general on a European scale has become possible.

PROVIDING AN INPUT IN ALL POLICY DOMAINS

This new way of looking at culture enables us to recognize its importance in fields of human activity which have so far not been considered as related to it in any way. In the economy culture can make an important contribution to the creation of prosperity when its added value to economic processes and activities makes them more sustainable. It can enhance the nature and quality of caring by establishing vital connections between the needs and desires of all social groups, including the disadvantaged. It can provide new and imaginative ways of extending social recognition to those who have traditionally been excluded from the social and productive network, and of giving a new sense of dignity to those who are in need of rehabilitation. It can give concrete meaning to the notion of citizenship by enhancing the individual's sense of participation and belonging, through the fostering of meaningful relations through dialogue.

These examples show that a cultural and aesthetic viewpoint can inject a new sense of vitality into people's lives and enable them to give passionate expression to their interests and concerns, and to deal with problems imaginatively, in ways not previously explored. However, such aims can only be effectively realized when necessary policy changes supporting these opportunities are made in the respective domains. In order to be successful, the efforts of creative individuals need financial and administrative support. But to create vital and effective policy solutions, the cultural sector must be in a position to assess the quantity and quality of its work by means of the proper scientific tools.

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF CULTURE

There is absolutely no doubt that a deeper and broader contribution of culture to the development of Europe needs to be properly assessed. However, the immaterial character of such a contribution makes such its assessment much more difficult than in other fields. We do what we can: we chart quantities in the cost of building a theatre, its staff and even its productions; we count the number of visitors and tickets sold. But far more difficult to measure is the resulting inspiring image of the city, the sense of joy that visitors carry with them when leaving a performance, and the experience of a beautiful work of art. Still, we know they have the power to change and enrich the life of the citizens and attract

the attention of qualified people, who would then contribute to the material and spiritual wellbeing of the place.

On entering the European Union, many questions were asked of Latvia to see whether it satisfied the necessary criteria. Had Latvia been asked for the number of music schools per capita, it would have been placed first in the European league, showing a cultural vitality lacking in many other countries with aging audiences. By not asking the right questions we may miss valuable opportunities for development and growth.

Recent policy in The Netherlands aimed at stimulating the integration of minority groups into society by funding cultural events on the basis of the number of non-native visitors. Unfortunately funding by using the 'bums on seats' formula generally leads to subsidising performances whose aim is simply that of attracting a large audience, where the most successful will be mainstream, not all of which are artistically interesting.

By measuring what we can measure we make the financial investment in culture visible; we now know the cost, but the real contribution of culture eludes us. Measuring the movement of artworks, the number of visitors, projects, performances and other activities, shows very little of the real or possible cultural value of the events covered. Consequently, the contribution of such measurement in creating cultural policy (as currently proposed) can only be very limited. Still, urban and economic development departments operating in the largest cities of Europe have realized that an investment in culture is one of the most powerful instruments at their disposal to stimulate the economies of their cities and so earn a significant return on investment.

Over the last years extensive studies have been carried out assessing the possible value of culture to society, but those involved become increasingly wary of such research because none of them have come close to assessing the intrinsic value of culture. The artistic community, convinced of the value of its work, is too busy creating its artworks to spend time on methods of assessment. The economists and researchers concentrate on projects that use current methods of assessment that may not be suitable for such a role.

The development of new assessment methodologies for the intrinsic value of culture must be stimulated; such initiatives already exist in other disciplines. Within the United Nations the 'Human Development Index' (HDI) assesses the national wellbeing by taking into account factors such as poverty, literacy, education and life expectancy. In the UK new instruments assessing the contribution of culture have been developed, but they have limited value for other countries. Other initiatives are less successful: in business the development of 'balanced score card' procedures aimed to chart immaterial factors such as knowledge and the company's organizational structure have proven fruitless. Some initiatives for new assessment methods are underway in the research that the ERICarts centre in Bonn is engaging in.

The President of the EU Commission, Mr José Manuel Barroso, makes it clear that culture is at the heart of European development. It would follow from this statement that the EU should invest in creating new, inspiring and useful

assessment instruments to bring out the value of the contribution from the cultural domain.

REQUIREMENTS FOR STRATEGIC USE

A new strategic use of culture has been developing in different domains, where it is used to innovate, inspire, change current practices and create viable new options in a number of fields. How can we stimulate the strategic use of culture to really further the European project?

Awareness

To create truly innovative cultural policy, awareness of the dynamic potential of the strategic use of culture is a necessary prerequisite. Any effective policy requires the committed input of all stakeholders: policy makers, artists, creative individuals, business people and the general public. Therefore a dedicated effort is needed to create an awareness of the need for a new approach for all stakeholders.

Skills

It takes skill to make cultural activities valuable and meaningful in other social contexts. Such skill needs to be developed and evaluated. Not everyone is able to inspire an audience and appeal to its aesthetic sense as the beginning of a transforming experience or even the realization of new business solutions.

That is why it is necessary to create education and training for a new breed of professionals that can operate on the border between culture and other domains. Modifications to and inclusion of specific programmes within existing institutions and other EU programmes are necessary.

Practical applications

To stimulate the adoption of new practices we need to provide existing examples and already available methods. A range of current projects needs to be inventoried and described. These can become a source of inspiration and act as paradigms for new methods to be developed. Pioneer practitioners can help in analysing practice and setting benchmarks.

Adoption in all Community policy

One of the four objectives for the cultural activity of the European Union, as established in article 151 of the European Community Treaty, emphasizes the need of *"taking the cultural dimension more into account in all Community policies."*

The strategic use of culture as outlined in this ECP document is a development that clearly fits the objectives of the Community stated above. Now, 15 years after their initial formulation in 1991, the need to reach those objectives is becoming even more urgent.

POLICY

THE NEED FOR INSPIRATION

When the Lisbon Agenda formulated the ambition for the European economy "to become the most innovative economy in the world", it took upon itself an enormous challenge. Under scrutiny in 2005, the challenge proved to be greater than expected. It was for this reason that the European Council re-focused its views on growth, innovation and employment, the strengthening of social cohesion and the mobilisation of national resources as part of the Lisbon Strategy.

Although we might be led to think that it is possible for us to postpone drawing up an adequate cultural policy without suffering undue consequences, the underlying developments driving social change will not stop. The demographic development of the coming decades will have massive consequences for the labour force, pensions, care and education. The challenge of integrating the new partners into the European Union is enormous. In addition, the opportunities created by the exponential development of information technology and the transformative effect these have on many businesses also need to be taken into consideration.

As this document shows, it is becoming increasingly clear that culture can and must play a role in any situation that requires creative solutions. We believe that an active policy should be developed to stimulate the strategic use of culture. Such a new role for culture cannot be identified with the traditional concept of culture as art and heritage, but needs to be rooted in a broader concept that takes into account its dynamic future potential. That is why cultural policy should be bold, courageous and proactive in seeking to stimulate new forms of cultural use that may pervade every aspect of human life and activity.

CULTURE BROAD AND DEEP

Policy makers operate in the tension that exists between the 'broad' use of culture throughout society and the 'deep' use of culture for its own intrinsic value (*ars pro arte*). On the one hand, the applied value of cultural products and services in business, education, care and civic society increases the importance of **culture as a resource** (the application of culture in other domains). On the other hand, this focus on results might make policy makers reluctant to invest in the intrinsic value of **culture as a source** (artists and creators and the cultural sector per se).

To ensure a sustainable cultural policy we need to create an inspiring balance between source and resource. The broad use of culture as a resource is only possible when intrinsic culture as a source is not neglected. Policy should strive for a balance between the two.

A RISKY SITUATION

When arguing for the growing necessity of culture in the face of the challenges ahead of us, it is useful to survey the current situation of cultural funding in Europe.

To become the most competitive economy in the world, Europe needs to become the best place to work in. This requires long term vision, consistent policy and investment. Current reality and the results of policy to date show the reverse. As a result of financial deficits in state or local budgets all over Europe, the funding of culture is declining.

A decrease in the funding of culture in a country like Germany has led to closed theatres and concert halls or radically shortened seasons in many places. In Central and Eastern Europe the transfer from "party rule" to "market rule" has had brutal effects on musicians, dancers, actors and other cultural operators.

The tendency on the part of the public sector to reduce its contribution to the arts – now evident also in Continental Europe and Scandinavia – often results in an increase of "popular" programmes of a purely commercial nature, at the expense of creativity, originality and artistic freedom.

The European Forum for Arts and Heritage, EFAH, and the European Cultural Foundation, ECF, have launched a campaign to raise the EU contribution to culture per EU citizen per year to 0,70 Euro. The campaign has identified a crucial problem in EU priorities, but unfortunately has had little success so far.

Berlin has become the most attractive Arts City in the world, particularly for the fine arts. Young artists and art gallery owners from all over the world are coming to the new German capital, but only 5% of them can make a living from art.

Policy stimulating only new initiatives creates an inadvertent loss of existing cultural activity and strength.

Policy stimulates young and innovative artists. This is detrimental to the cultural ecology because to stay in the arts is often more challenging than breaking through.

The building of a new centre for modern music in the Netherlands was so much more expensive than predicted that there was hardly any money left for programming. Because it was never made clear that a budget for programming should be included in the project, it will take years before reasonable programming can become a possibility.

Anomalies in the French labour scene negatively impacted the cultural workers and the cultural festivals throughout the country, e.g. Avignon and Aix-en-Provence, for reasons that had little to do with culture.

PROPOSALS

A culturally driven Europe is the only way to create a competitive and sustainable economy and a cohesive society. This approach is specifically suited for Europe because it builds on its fundamental and historical strengths. The following practical proposals facilitate the development of a strategic use of culture that is a prerequisite to a culturally driven development of Europe.

1. Investigate the strategic use of culture to create a competitive economy by commissioning an intense dialogue between artists, scientists, business leaders and policy makers across the whole spectrum of the European Union, also at Member State level, to outline a new vision for the creation of prosperity. This vision should then be translated into specific policy into every domain of the European Union and its Member States.
2. Develop new innovative processes using a cultural perspective in which the active needs of communities catalyse relevant policies for social cohesion. The development of a 'creative innovation unit' such as that of the South Bank in London could be used as a model.
3. Fund a publication to stimulate innovative thinking in business, academic and policy institutions with a view to providing an overview of current practices and outlining innovative models of development and dissemination.
4. Encourage and stimulate the inclusion of business art in management training institutions and the training of public officials.
5. Facilitate the networking of cultural leaders at all levels, from all generations and domains of society. The ECP initiative of the Nomadic University NUROPE, hosted and supported by Åbo Akademi, Finland, might serve as a forum for this activity.
6. Build on the reciprocal experience between art and politics by researching the experience and contribution of current artist/politicians at all decision making levels.
7. We suggest that the President of the Commission proactively engages with the cultural sector by
 - (i) continuing to collaborate with cultural leaders and representatives of organisations like EFAH, ECF and ECP on a regular basis;
 - (ii) co-opting cultural personalities and ECP Members on ad hoc committees over which the President has jurisdiction, and including them in the delegations of official visits to Member States and outside the EU;
 - (iii) appointing annual 'artists in residence' for the EU or creating the conditions whereby each EU Presidency could appoint such a panel of artists during its own term. (ECP, as a neutral and independent organisation, could thereby be helpful with advice and recommendations).

8. Start a series of mobile, flexible master classes with the power to influence policy that would bring together policy makers and creative thinkers on major issues either regularly or on an ad hoc basis as the need arises.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE ECP

The ECP offers itself and the knowledge and expertise of its members to provide independent critical reflection on the cultural quality of policy and solutions to economic, social and cultural challenges. It fosters a new kind of research, reflection and discourse that stimulates true innovation for a vital society.

Two of its current projects may play an active role in the realization of the above proposals: the ECP Lisbon Agenda Research Group that created this document, and the Nomadic University (Nurope). The ECP Lisbon Agenda Group can contribute by further developing the proposals of this paper and actively participating in their realization; while the Nurope can help by investigating the interaction of European culture and the local economy, through its professional network of people and organizations.

Contributors

This document is the result of a research project undertaken by the ECP Lisbon Agenda Research Group consisting of a number of members and experts of the European Cultural Parliament (ECP).

The ECP is a forum for artists and other cultural personalities (in August 2006 about 130 Members) from all parts of Europe. The objective of the ECP is to strengthen the role of cultural and artistic ideas and initiatives in Europe. The ECP believes that culture plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion and change, and that the world will be a better place to live in if the creative resources of each and every individual are tapped (www.kulturparlament.com).

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Links to projects

European Cultural Parliament
www.kulturparlament.com

Nurope: Nomadic University for Art, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe, Finland
www.nurope.com

The Design of Prosperity, Sweden
www.thedesignofprosperity.se

Centre for Art and Leadership, Denmark
www.cbs.dk/cal

NESTA – the National Endowment of Science Technology and the Arts, England
www.nesta.org.uk

Cittadellarte – Fondazione Pistoletto, Italy
www.cittadellarte.it