

2009 – Gothenburg

The 8th Session of the ECP was held in Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-13 December 2009

Theme: *“Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media – Prerequisites for European Democracy”*

Preliminary programme

The 8th Session – Gothenburg, Sweden, 11-13 December 2009

Theme: *“Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media – Prerequisites for European Democracy”*

Venue: Gothenburg University – “Artisten”, Fågelsången 1.

Friday 11 December

10.00	Workshop organized by NUROPE, Nomadic University for Arts, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe, together with “Nätverkstan Kultur i Väst” (Programme to be found in www.nurope.eu/goteborg.html)
11.30	Press Conference
Morning and afternoon	Arrival and hotel check in
About 17.00	Gothenburg Christmas City event, Kungssportsavenyn

**ECP Session Report
11-13 December 2009 in Gothenburg**

18.00 Registration

Opening of Session

18.30 Speakers: Anneli Hulthén, Mayor of Gothenburg
Lars Nordström, Chairman Cultural Board, Västra
Götaland Margareta Wallin-Pettersson,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, University of Gothenburg

19.15 Musical Intermezzo – Katia Guerreiro(Portugal)

19.30 **Welcome Reception** offered by the City of Gothenburg

20.30 **ECP Senate Meeting**

Saturday 12 December

08.30 Further Registration

09.00 **Keynote: Peter Hjärne**, Chief Editor, Göteborgs
Posten: “Editorial Quality in the digital Age”

09.30 **Keynote: Åsa Bernlo**, Gothenburg Film Festival: “The
Quality of being diverse”

**ECP Session Report
11-13 December 2009 in Gothenburg**

- 10.00** **Panel Discussion** and General Debate on Quality and Reflection in Culture. Participants:
Jasenko Selimovic (Sweden) – Theatre, moderator
Andreas Richter (Germany) – Music
Gaspar Miklos Tamas (Hungary) – Philosophy
Yuriy Andrukhovic (Ukraine) – Literature
Savina Tarsitano (Italy) – Visual Arts
Lars Montag (Germany) - Film
- 11.00** Coffee break
- 11.15** **Thomas Hylland Eriksen** (Norway): “Happiness, Quality and Reflection in a European Perspective”. Discussion
- 11.30** Musical Intermezzo – Miha Pogacnik (Slovenia)
- 11.45** **New ECP-Members** on the theme of the session:
Jean-Marc Dreyfus (France) – History
Nicoleta Esinencu (Moldavia) – Literature
Ana Zuvella (Croatia) – Cultural Management
Catharina Thörn (Sweden) – Urban sociology
Ilmar Raag (Estonia) – Film
Johan Öberg (Sweden) – Literature
- 13.00** Lunch

**ECP Session Report
11-13 December 2009 in Gothenburg**

- 13.45** **Workshop** – NUROPE/Gothenburg/Västra Götaland Region and ECP: “Arts & Business – Culture as Growth factor”. Bengt Kristensson Ugglå, Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, Kristian Berg, David Karlsson, Johan Öberg, Bert Mulder
- 15.15** **Panel Discussion II** and general debate on Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media. Participants: Ove Joanson (Sweden) – Media, moderator
Laura Freixas (Spain) – Literature
David Lordkipanidze (Georgia) –Archeology
Helle Juul (Denmark) – Architecture
Sjon (Iceland) –Literature
Dino Mustafic (Bosnia & Herzegovina) – Film
Janis Garancs (Latvia) – New Media
Steve Miller (UK) – Visual Arts
- 16.15** **Panel Discussion and General Debate**, continued –
Magda Carneci (Romania) – Moderator
- 17.00** Bus transfer to Backa Teatern
- 17.30** “Gangs of Gothenburg”, Theater Performance, followed by reception and Workshop ECP/West Sweden/Gothenburg: “Culture as Integration Factor”.
Mattias Andersson, Mikela Lundahl and others
- Sunday 13 December**
- 08.30** Santa Lucia

**ECP Session Report
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“ECP and Friends”:

European Journalism Center – Willy Ruetten,
Maastricht

Institute for Cultural Diplomacy – Mark Donfried,
Berlin

08.45

A Soul for Europe – Steve Austen, Amsterdam, Dejan
Ubovic, Belgrade, Susana Marques, Guimaraes

Meritis Foundation – Linda Bouws, Amsterdam

Institute of Ideas – Claire Fox, London

The Festival Berlin – Florian B. Mueck, Berlin

“Youth ECP” – Jenny Garcia, London

An Oxford European Research Project – Lyudmila
Nurse, Oxford

09.40

Gunilla von Bahr, Gunnar Bjursell, Fredrik Ullén
(Sweden): **“Quality of Life” – Culture and Health**

10.30

Coffee Break

10.45

New ECP-Members (cont.): Nikola Maticic (Sweden):
“Music without Quality?” Discussion Mats Rosengren
(Sweden) – Philosophy/Rhetoric

11.10

Egle Rakauskaite (Lithuania): “Impressions from Vilnius,
European Capital of Culture 2009”

11.30

ECP Host City 2010! A presentation

11.50

Reports from workshops

12.30	Lunch
13.30	Concluding discussion on Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media
15.00	End of Session

Thanks to:

- City of Gothenburg
- Region Västra Götaland
- Gothenburg & Co
- University of Gothenburg

Statement on Quality by opera singer Nikola Maticic

On Quality and the art of Classical Music in Sweden Ladies and gentlemen, I've written this from a very personal point of view, as a solitary Opera Singer in Sweden, deeply concerned not only about our general lack of recognition of quality in the arts but in the general avoidance in our society of the concept. I have studied and worked outside of Sweden for more than ten years but have always put a keen interest into the goings on within my special field in this country. What I'm about to say might seem like I invoke the lamenting songs of Jeremiah, but rest assured; my humanistic brain still has unflinching dreams of great things to come for the art of Opera in our country and everywhere else. Because of my sometimes personal connections to the places and situations I mention, I will utilize some discretion, and hopefully the picture will be clear enough anyway.

The question at hand is this; Why do we need quality? Who needs it? Quality, as a concept, is not a final destination or a conclusive fact. Instead it is quite simply and profoundly the

constant and life-long ambition from both the artist and the lover of the arts to constantly try and push the boundaries of our humanity. Simply put; to constantly search for and refine that deepest common denominator. But this pushing requires the frustrating dialectic between the naïve idealism of the ambitious youths and the pragmatic practicality of the very few artists who actually made a viable career out of the arts. The quality, in itself, is in the process and the ambition of the individual. Any artist wanting to excel must specialize in quality, and the lover of arts has the right to demand this.

My acting teacher in Holland complained about Dutch theater; “We are too diplomatic! There is no conflict in the Dutch character, therefore we don’t make good drama”. Something similar can be said about us Swedes. We don’t demand things from each other. We hope for the best, in silence. But this Swedish lack of confrontation and demand within the arts is not something innately grown from the Scandinavian gene-pool. Like our newly developed food-culture it’s an acquired thing. And we haven’t yet. It’s therefore quite predictable when I meet new people at social occasions that some of them eventually ask me to sing something, to show them my voice, my sound, my... trick. After all, there are only slightly less than three hundred professional opera singers in Sweden. Most people never see one in person. A bit like a safari!

Invariably I think of medical doctors unable to squirm out of their performing impromptu examinations and diagnoses of blisters, lumps or pains at parties or other social get-togethers. -But why not? People ask when I very politely decline. Sometimes I give in and sometimes it even turns out that singing to strangers is all for the better. But I didn’t start singing just to heal people or improve the local economy. I started to sing just because it was possible. I started only because I could. It’s strange to be placed in an instrumental position, either in those personal situations or when the official debate specifies public health issues as inherently connected to enjoyment of the arts. But I understand and respect the curiosity even though I regret the underlying dynamic. The individuals that need and enforce this instrumental function of the arts are the people who actually don’t care about the arts, but are forced to deal with it, through their work, duty, ideology or social function. Politicians selected for the cultural committee by their party leader even though they don’t give a damn, or administration officials who just want a job, voters who are looking for reciprocity to their own special interests or journalists looking for a good new conflict to ignite. There’s a story that comes to mind, about an old Chinese Emperor. Please excuse me if you have heard this story before.

Famed for his love and deep appreciation of art, he sought out the greatest of all calligraphers to commemorate his general greatness. With his whole court trailing behind, the Emperor eagerly travelled to the humble abode of this particular artist. "Great artist", the Emperor proclaimed. "In my honour, you shall create your masterpiece". The artist, still with his forehead to the ground in front of the whole court and the emperor, answered; "It shall be done, greatest of all Emperors. Return in one year and you shall have your masterpiece". Without a word, the Emperor casually turned around to his immense retinue and they departed in a great yellow cloud of billowing dust. The following year the same situation unfolded, but this time the parting was less than harmonious. Should the Emperor return again without the artwork being finished, the artist himself would become the legendary artwork. Thus it was with grim apprehension that the Emperor approached the artist on the third occasion. "Well, artist"? The Emperor crooned. The artist sputtered into the dust: "Son of Dragons, Master of the Winds, most holy of Emperors, Your masterpiece is done!" A wave of anticipation breezed through the uncountable gathering. The artist scrambled on to his feet, with unimaginable precision he set up his tools, and placed a totally blank canvas in front of the smiling but confused Emperor.

With the eyes of a viper, the artist gripped a fresh brush in his hand, dipped it in ink and walked up to the blank canvas. He stilled his body and with the slightest moves of his wrist he painted the most perfect swan imaginable in the history of Calligraphy. "There" he said, putting down his brush "my unimaginable, unobservable Emperor. It is done". The stunned silence ripped through the air. "What? What? Who? What?" The Emperor started breathing again. "I waited all these years and you.. you" He pointed at the canvas with a trembling finger. The artist, being used to teaching his art to many young pupils, took the Emperor gently by the arm. "My most revered Emperor. I do not usually show this to any of my customers, but I know you are a lover of the arts and therefore I know you will understand. Please follow me." Together they walked into a huge barn behind the Artists house. Inside the barn, stacked high, thousands and yet more thousands of canvases hung, from floor to ceiling. Everywhere! On each and every one of them, a perfect swan. The Emperor stood still, taking it all in, then looked at the artist. And with a whisper he said; "You are indeed the greatest of all artists".

In the beginning of this year, the present Swedish government published the results of their Commission of Enquiry on Culture. Amongst other things, they decided to remove the word QUALITY from the original text written in the Seventies. Certainly, if I prefer a Ford Pinto to a

Porsche GT we might say many things about me, but not that I base my choice on a sense of quality. On some matters, Quality seems to be easily defined. But in art, quality is the core value. That's the whole point of the matter. How can that issue be excluded from the discussion? You don't need to follow politics or current affairs long before you realize something about the general culture in our country; it is not a good PR-strategy for politicians or strong business leaders to be officially passionate about art just because it makes their lives more meaningful. In Sweden, the people who care most about the arts are the ones who don't have the power or the wallet to sponsor it.

In fact, the rich people don't seem to care about art at all, except for curious investment or, sometimes a little braggadocio. Imagine the message a Van Gogh in the lobby sends to your clients.

In politics, on the other hand, art has somehow managed to wrest itself free from qualitative accountability, and yet still retain funding. On the surface it looks inspiring; the Gothenburg Opera is expanding, we have the recently publicized plans to revamp the Stockholm Concert Hall and of course, the constant talk of how all the other Scandinavian cities manage to build pompous new opera houses except for Stockholm, but the discussion always veers away from any talk about if they actually are qualitative enough to expand. I mean, we are, after all, putting billions on the table.. But the tip toeing around the subject is not new, and for a reason. The discussion of quality in art has always been vaporous and the effects not always positive. Sometimes it has seemed like quality was the last thing on anyone's mind. In the Seventies, art played an instrumental role in strengthening the political ideals of that time. During the nineties, art and culture was effectively branded an economic force, strengthening tourism and healing the sick. This also implied that all areas of government had to follow the same regulations, including the arts. Which meant, for instance, that purpose-built several hundred years old theaters had to start paying market rent to the city as if they could move somewhere else (and who would be able to use the Opera house when emptied?) if they couldn't afford it and the retirement age of all artists including ballet dancers and operatic singers was bumped up to the artistically ripe age of 65.

That particular problem has been dealt with, more or less, albeit only after a great deal of protests. And it is indicative of the qualitative anomalies that this kind of system might produce. In fact I would claim that the elusiveness of quality in art is related to such seemingly diverse issues as the present lack of ideology in politics or the difficulties facing

free scientific research. They are all ingredients of the same stew. Still, I suggest that the gravest danger to the art of classical music is when the younger generation stops criticizing. They are no longer used to listening to this kind of music. Listening is an art form in itself, and to them, it's now become a foreign language. We have failed utterly to give them a language of listening.

This has to do with image, and we in the business of classical music are all guilty of this. We have failed to communicate the immense power of our art form and the possibilities it has. Imagine that marketing departments in Opera still struggle feebly with the odd image that opera is for the posh, even though a ticket to a Bruce Springsteen concert or a football game is many times more expensive than any opera ticket and that most office workers earn more or less the same as any regular opera singer.

A sitting ticket for a Champions League game is several hundred euro. And that's not the expensive seats. On top of that you need the hotel and the traveling expenses. But football is for the people, so the prize is suddenly immaterial. It's an own goal that the business of Opera is still struggling with this. Imagine an ancient art form, developed over centuries, practiced in solitude by old masters and young apprentices, striving for perfection. The mastery of their bodies in the moment of highest demand. Many such art forms are respected and revered by young people all over the world, namely the martial art forms. If any branding department is in search for a matching analogy, this is it. The most advanced and complex form of art that ever sprung out of European history. And not only marketing departments have let themselves go; Since there are no people today at the concert houses anywhere in Sweden specialized in the art of singing, the whole casting process is now effectively run by agents. Some agents are fair, certainly, but the fundamental issue is that the concert houses cannot tell the quality of a singer, do not know themselves what type of artists they want and only have the agents to go to for advice. And since there are only two agencies for singers in Sweden, you can imagine how this affects the dynamic.

Recently I was in a production at a Swedish opera house where one of the soloists fell ill and a substitute was flown in from overseas. After the show our producer came up to me and asked if he should be satisfied with the substitute. The producer, the actual individual centrally responsible for the production, had no way of telling the quality of the artist. Unfortunately, I was not surprised by this. At our national educational facilities, all musical academies educate concert singers on expensive courses that span several years. The only

drawback is that there is no career for a concert singer in this country and hasn't been for decades. There is no classical singer in Sweden that makes a living on pure concert work. Churches stopped paying valid fees a long time ago and also frequently hire amateurs for a pittance even for more complicated pieces. The reason is simple; the audiences in the churches seem not to care about the quality of the soloists anymore, and the churches do not feel like they need to and many are not able to pay for quality.

And on top of that, both of the main Swedish operatic educational facilities, with one of the most expensive curricula in our country, with only fighter pilot-training costing more, today sport top leadership who are hired purely as managerial staff, principals without any knowledge on artistic or musical matters. They are not hired to guide the students in their careers or their artistic choices. They are there to manage the organization and the staff. I understand the reasoning, I really do. That's not the point. A new world needs new thoughts, and these leaders are good people that understand this paradigm well. The point is that there is nobody else in the staff that have the capacity to guide and prepare the students in their future career. Not at the academies, not at the operatic schools, not in the churches, not at the concert houses, not at the opera houses, nowhere! What I'm saying is that this new system has quickly isolated the artists from the practice of the art form itself. The effect is slowly being noticed; at a recent audition to one of the professional opera choruses, there were two vacancies. Thirty people auditioned many recent graduates from our academies around the country. The standard of the singers were such, unfortunately, that only one place could be filled. And to compound this fact; Today in the business of Opera, nobody at the opera houses or the concert halls or the churches, for that matter, are given the duty or possess the knowledge of working with, planning, developing and strengthening the artist in the long term, in his or her career.

It is today solely the task of the artist himself to make sure he trains the right roles, in the right way, with the right attitude and the right technical rigor. And to tell you the truth, you just can't do that on your own.

The world of opera is innately international, and the development outside of Sweden has been much tougher, faster, harsher and less forgiving. As all young artists today are forced to become freelancers, there will be many times when the artist is alone when facing immense challenges. In the older tradition, artistic directors and opera houses allowed younger singers to work for years inside the house, to build their knowledge and technical

and artistic strength. Outside of Sweden, apprenticeship contracts are starting to emerge, giving younger singers the opportunity to receive training while working in smaller roles on the big stages. I have personally written and said to the leaders of our national houses for years urging them to start this system. I am still hoping!

Taking a step back, all this perhaps reveals an ominous view over the art of opera, but what of the future?

In my view, everyone would survive even though an opera house was to be shut down forever. The art would perhaps be reduced to nothing, but people would go about their lives just like normal. In fact, exactly like normal. We need to understand this, as caretakers of an art. It is not a force of nature. It is a very human and contemporary art form. The National Agency for Higher Education that is tasked by the government to evaluate all educational bodies, allow the schools themselves to set the standards by which they are to be graded, and then, together with an external consultant, evaluate if they meet their own standards. At no point is the school evaluated against the need of the art form or the art world or business of that art form itself, by the active body of artists or the active audience that depend on such educational facilities for replenishment and renewal. In essence; the evaluation system encapsulates the educational bodies, making it separate from the very art it serves. And there is a strong structure or system deficiency hindering the debate on quality. The artistic and educational bodies are all hemmed in by their political decree. But it is my belief that the effort to reboot the discussion on quality is the strongest way to infuse life into the art again, because it is not the artists that keep the art alive, it is the people who find fulfillment and meaning in the enjoyment of the arts who do this. As an artist I do not profit from the lack of demands. I need my audience and my critics to have a wide vocabulary and a skilled ear. I do not profit from the empty void of discussion on the ideals and goals of art. In the media, criticism is essentially dead. The lack of insight and factual knowledge, or even ambition, from the point of journalism has left a huge and painful void, making it mostly irrelevant to the practitioner in terms of artistic value.

We need critique, we need demands and we need our audience to grip the handle of quality by the hilt and hurl it heavily against our glass tank. Otherwise we will suffocate on our own CO2. It is through that serious communication that the art will thrive and live. The artist and the lover of the arts. But one cannot live without the other.

And I suspect that society as a whole needs it, too. Quality in political ideology, in administration, in reasoning, in finances, in compassion, in ethics and in science, is of equal value to our society as quality in the arts. Within this text, this Jeremiad, this Lament, I have outlined specific areas or trouble-spots. Just by doing this I hope that solutions are equally recognized. Changing a structure is painful and will cause conflict, but the goal must be the quality of the art form and the quality of the relation between the artist and the lover of the arts. Always. I hope that, even if at first we might blunder and make mistakes, and perhaps throw a hurtful word or two, through this process we will find a deeper meaning and observe greater possibilities, both as artists and lovers of the arts. Thank you for your time.

Views in the debate on quality and reflection in culture and media

Some views expressed by participants in the debate on quality and reflection in culture and media.

- The information society/digital society has radically changed conditions for producing media. The media should take this challenge and keep insisting on quality, starting with local news. In the future we will have to live with both “citizen journalism” and quality journalism.
- In the field of films the role of Film Festivals is important in promoting diversity. Films from smaller countries are given a chance – an important contribution to quality.
- The transition from communism to market economy in Eastern Europe has in many cases had detrimental effects on quality in the arts, since no authority is prepared to take the financial responsibility for arts education and arts institutions.
- A freelance producer (e.g. in film) is forced to concentrate on quality as a means of personal development and competition.
- An independent orchestra consisting of very qualified musicians may have the possibility of producing better quality than a state orchestra.

- Artists and advocates of quality should not make concessions to various political, social or other non-artistic considerations when producing and supporting arts. Too many compromises will hurt the quality of arts and weaken its position as a creative and innovative force in Society.

- There are tendencies in the world of opera (a European specialty) that incompetent managers and artistic directors contribute to the undermining of quality among singers and musicians.

- Quality in media is necessary for the democratic infrastructure of Europe. Informed citizens are the basis of democracy. It contributes to transparency, efficiency and trust.

- Quality in culture contributes to social and political awareness.

- Quality in culture and media is also important in the enlargement process of the EU.

- Quality in culture and media is part of “the European Model”.

- Quality in education is necessary for culture and media and contributes to European competitiveness.

- Quality in Culture promotes a European identity.

- Plato on quality: High standard of excellence can only be recognized in the light of long practice.

Resolution in support of cultural institutions and the arts community of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Resolution taken 13 December 2009, in support of cultural institutions and the arts community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Cultural Parliament is appealing to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to them by its citizens and, in accordance with European cultural standards, to support and finance the preservation of cultural historical heritage and cultural institutions, which are of vital importance to the people of the country.

The European Cultural Parliament will in accordance with its mandate write a letter to the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the EU commission in which it will propose that the B&H government fulfill the obligations it accepted as a condition for joining the European Union – especially those concerning the preservation of cultural historical heritage and the arts.

Statement on unjust court proceedings against Yury Samodurov and Andrey Erofeev

On December 13th 2009, during its annual session held in Gothenburg, the European Cultural Parliament adopted the following resolution:

We, the members of the European Cultural Parliament, take note of the court proceedings against Yury Samodurov, the former Director of the Sakharov Museum in Moscow, and Andrey Erofeev, a former curator at the State Tretyakov Gallery, who are facing serious and unfounded charges of inciting religious and ethnic hatred by the organization of a “Forbidden Art” exhibit in 2007.

We express our grave concern about these proceedings and are of the opinion that, in prosecuting this case, the Russian authorities are violating their commitments and their obligations in domestic and international law to respect the right to freedom of expression.

We regard freedom of expression as a basic and essential right to all human societies and consider the proceedings a misuse of anti-extremism legislation used to silence human rights defenders.

We consider this matter urgent and call on the prosecutor's office to drop the charges against Samodurov and Erofeev and close the case on the grounds that no crime has been committed.

The members of the European Cultural Parliament
December 13, 2009 Gothenburg

Press Release on the unjust court proceedings

European artists and intellectuals call on Russian prosecutors to drop criminal charges against Museum directors.

On 13 December the European Cultural Parliament, ECP, adopted a resolution protesting against the court proceedings against two leading personalities in the Russian world of Arts – Yury Samodurov, the former director of the Sakharov Museum in Moscow, and Andrey Erofeev, former curator at the State Tretyakov Gallery, who are both facing serious and unfounded charges of “inciting religious and ethnic hatred” through the organization of a “Forbidden Art” exhibit in 2007. This exhibition was opened in the Sacharov Museum* in Moscow in 2007 and was closed after a few weeks upon order of the authorities. Mr Samodurov and Mr Erofeev may now be facing years of imprisonment. The ECP Members – some 80 artists and intellectuals from more than 30 European countries – expressed grave concern about these court proceedings, by which Russian authorities are violating their commitments and obligations to respect basic human rights, including freedom of artistic expression.

The ECP Resolution calls on the prosecutor's office to drop the charges against the two Museum directors.

In another resolution the ECP appealed to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfill its responsibilities, according to European standards, to support and finance the preservation of cultural historical heritage and cultural institutions, which are of vital importance to the country which is still suffering from cultural and ethnic division.

The European Cultural Parliament, which has more than 150 Members from 43 European countries, including Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, held its 8th session in Gothenburg, Sweden on 11-13 December 2009. ECP discussed quality and reflection in culture and media and several members expressed concern that "fast news" in the digital world of today would reduce the level of ambition regarding quality and analysis in the media. Sinking quality constitutes a threat against Democracy. Many ECP Members also pointed at sinking quality awareness in several fields of arts, e.g. in the world of opera.

For any further information please contact the Secretary General of the ECP, Karl-Erik Norrman:

karl-erik.norrman@kulturparlament.com

tel. 0049-170-1644 950.

* The Sacharov Museum is by itself a symbol of the fight for Human Rights in Russia and carries the name of the Russian human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrey Sacharov (1921-89).

Opening Session



Karl-Erik Norrman, founder of ECP and former Swedish ambassador, opened the 8th session with a warm welcome to Gothenburg. He encouraged each participant to "bring back home the vital, interesting, intellectual and inspiring messages that are going to be shared during these days." Karl-Erik Norrman also introduced the theme of the year with the following conclusion:

"Why this theme? Well, there are more and more concerns about these issues. There is not only a climate crisis and an economical crisis but also a crisis of quality and a crisis for democracy.

There are many signs in the world of culture, arts and media that speed and profit are the number one priorities. And of course we can't forget the factor of globalization. Globalization itself gives us fantastic opportunities, but it is also a challenge for the world since there is a tendency of more and more superficiality, banality and stupidity to be found in the media and pseudo-culture. In the European Cultural Parliament we only have members who are prepared to fight for a sustainable culture in the world. You share one thing – a strong responsibility towards high quality in culture."

Hosting speeches and welcome:



Annelie Hultén, Mayor of
Gothenburg



Professor Lars Nordström, Chairman,
Cultural Board
Västra Götaland



Margareta Wallin-Pettersson, Pro Vice Chancellor, Artisten – University och Gothenburg

Representatives from Gothenburg; city/region/university welcomed the members of the ECP to the wintry realms of Sweden during the darkest time of the year, illuminated by Christmas lights and the traditional appearance of the Swedish Lucia.



Keynote speakers:



Peter Hjörne, chief editor of Göteborgs Posten, "Editorial Quality in the digital Age"

I firmly believe that the media companies have an advantage over most other companies in that we already have a mission. To tell the truth, to be published and be damned if you will, in order to make a better society.

Quality is the key. If we manage all these challenges we, the quality media organizations, can survive. We will not be alone; we will have to share the stage with celebrity sites and all sorts of social media. But I think we stand a good chance of disappointing the British

playwright Tom Stoppard by staying alive. For it was he who said: "I am all for freedom of the press. It is the damned newspapers I cannot stand."

Questions asked after the speech:

+ Are you making profit on the online version of the newspaper?

Peter Hjørne: It is the same thing as with the papers. The news companies operate them. News has become a commodity and no one wants to pay for it so it's not profitable.

+ Where should the money go – to citizen journalism as a part of the editorial work or to high quality journalists who do a good job?

Peter Hjørne: I'm a liberal so I would say both. It's important in the future that there is enough money and time for both.

[target= _blank .pdf>Full speech in pdf \(28 KB\)](#)



Åsa Bernlo, Gothenburg Film Festival, "The Quality of being diverse"

We want to bring the best films from all over the world to our audience. We want to give them the possibility of a choice. Because, how diverse can a choice ever be if it is a choice between blockbusters alone? These productions are more easily accessible and that is the gap we have to fill and the difference we want to make. The difference between having a limited choice and having the whole world at hand.

No matter how accessible the world has become through computers in our homes, there is still a great demand for experiencing films from all over the world, in the company of others in theaters throughout the world.

[target= blank .pdf>Full speech in pdf \(41 KB\)](#)

Intermezzo



ECP Member Katia Guerreiro, Fadosinger from Portugal, gave us a taste of the traditional music-culture of her homeland Portugal.



ECP Member Miha Pogacnik (Slovenia), Culture ambassador of the Republic of Slovenia
Polyphonic European Identity

With help from his violin he demonstrated the process of the union between Western and Eastern Europe. Whilst playing the violin he “deconstructed” a piece of Bach’s Siziliana: “Everybody is screaming but it’s the foundation of new ideas. This is the new quality: pure dialogue, which is gentle and kind. Then a turnaround – what was below is above and reversed. It finally becomes one melody. A great force brings it to one piece.”



Nurope Intermezzo

The Normadic University for Art, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe held a mirage in connection to the ECP session. Some participants made an installation in images and words of many languages.



Lucia intermezzo

On the 13th of December, Sweden celebrates the martyr Lucia. Therefore, Jenny Soffel, Anna Kasel and Nik Dee-Dahlström presented a condensed version of Santa (Saint) Lucia to give the ECP-members the possibility to enjoy this old Swedish tradition.

Panel discussion 1

Panel Discussion I and general debate on Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media



Participants:

Jasenko Selimovic (Sweden) - Theatre, moderator

Andreas Richter (Germany) - Music

Gaspar Miklos Tamas (Hungary) - Philosophy

Yuriy Andrukhovic (Ukraine) - Literature

Savina Tarsitano (Italy) – Visual Arts

Lars Montag (Germany) - Film director

Jasenko Selimovic (Sweden)

... guided us through this panel discussion. He faced us with questions like: 'Is there a fast quality?' and 'Is there a possibility to learn how to deal with the internet?'



Andreas Richter (Germany)

Quality in the field of music has to do a lot with aspects like how good an artist is and how well informed and educated the audience is.

Depending on how much one or the other is willing to participate in the music, it affects the quality. "One can increase the quality. If the members of an orchestra can participate in the main decisions of the orchestra and increase the creativity of every member, that's a potential to increase the quality."



Gaspar Miklos Tamas (Hungary)

"The freedom of late capitalism is the freedom of the unfree." The free man is suspicious of quality. For example, to understand the great philosophers in the world it takes more than studying them on the surface. But the love of difficulty is nowadays called elitism.



Lars Montag (Germany)

Lars Montag described his way of improving the quality in his film making work, especially in times of crisis. “ The only way out of the crisis is to go in it. Say hello to the pain, make mistakes and flirt with the instability. I choose this for me. That’s my way to improve quality.”



Yuriy Andrukhovic (Ukraine)

When we speak about quality in arts and culture we also have to consider social and political aspects.

It’s ridiculous that 20 years after the collapse of the UDSSR, there is still spoken about a common Soviet culture. Ukrainian culture is very different from neighboring countries, for instance, Popstar is a certain style of culture and everyday life in the Ukraine.



Savina Tarsitano (Italy)

Her fascination for nature and human interaction guided her to her second career as an artist. She engages and connects communities and unfortunates in various parts of the world through art and creativity and uses art as a language to integrate.

“We have to work with conditions and deadlines. Therefore quality slid in the background.”



In the discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:

-Quality happens in the audience - It is important to think about what happens to the people reading, seeing and listening.

-Quality happens in time - One needs to stop and think about the quality of the work. Quality needs reflection.

-Quality has to do with independence, especially economical - It is easy nowadays to start thinking about money instead of quality.

-Quality is transcended - The old criterias for quality in media, commercials etc have not been replaced by new ones, but simply been lifted.

Furthermore:

Democratization of quality can end up in a trash society. How can we learn how to deal with it? Mass culture lowers the standards, it becomes a commercial enterprise. Sentimentality and sensuality stand out as the opposite of difficulty. This is not a result of democracy. It is perverting democracy and the masses are not to be blamed.

It is the cultural elite who have lost heart in their own ability, equalling modern consumer art with classical art forms. There is room for different arts and different audiences. It is also a question of the quality of our education. Is it lower now? How can we educate quality awareness?

The antidote to soft sweet trash is small, slow and scary.

The discussion ended with the question: "Is there any notion of old, primate quality?"

Panel discussion 2

Panel Discussion II and general debate on Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media

Participants:

Magda Carneci (Romania) – Media, moderator

Laura Freixas (Spain) – Literature

David Lordkipanidze (Georgia) – Archeology

Sjon (Iceland) – Literature

Dino Mustafic (Bosnia & Herzegovina) – Film

Janis Garancs (Latvia) – New Media

Steve Miller (UK) – Visual Arts

Magda Carneci (Romania)

Right now there is a huge change going on regarding quality. It is not easy to find a consensus about quality since it is a big subject with many different points of view.

“Quality has to do with the important needs of individuals. It has to do with consensus around values, what transcends and makes the human begin to evolve and progress.”



Laura Freixas (Spain)

Laura Freixas founded “Gendering quality in culture” and points out that since quality is about diversity, there has to be gender diversity.

Research about Spanish films has shown that men and women, in the role of the filmmaker, treat violence differently.



David Lordkipanidze (Georgia)

To find indicators of quality is not easy. It is easier in science. But to prove the quality of science to the audience is not as easy since science isn't that accessible. But there could be a solution. David explains: "If we will be able to dialogue high quality science using our research tools and art, this could be the key to have clear links with the media and prove the Excellency of quality."



Sjon (Iceland)

2008 Iceland faced an economical collapse, which changed the way artists are looked upon. The general consensus is that the media failed so there was suddenly a strong demand on artists to analyse and deal with the current situation. This shows that in Iceland there is a great confidence in an artist with the art of bringing the truth. Sjon continued: "One of the big problems today is that artists and cultural people don't draw a strict line between art and entertainment."



Dino Mustafic (Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Bosnia's problems started 20 years ago and today the war continues but on other levels. One of its victims today is culture. Bosnia has existed since 1084 AC and has been a land with different people from different cultures. Art and culture has an ability to connect people and this is showing effects in Bosnia. But both the quantity and quality of culture is declining in Bosnia since the government is cutting the budget for the culture institutions.



Janis Garancs (Latvia)

Janis is involved in initiatives that are trying to build a bridge between art and people through visual art. He describes a future scenario where people have digital chips in their bodies, and by switching chips they can exchange experiences.



Some think that “true arts” only can happen in stable media, while to others, it’s the opposite. “Some artists have no interest in riding the wave and prefer to work in stable media, where they can concentrate quietly on what they wish to express.”

Steve Miller (UK)

Quality is a matter of intellect and finance, since financial barriers stand in the way for people to experience high quality. In these terms there are museums focusing on high quality exhibitions. Quality needs to be accessible.



Comments from the audience after the panel discussion:

“Cultural people must be doing more to provide the groundwork that makes culture float – education!” – **Fredrik Delouche**

“Shouldn’t we go back to teaching children what to hear, and to smell, how to read and write? We are at a turning point where many children are no longer capable of doing all these things. The only meaning of education is to find a job – it is not to be educated for the sake of education.” – **Henniger Köppen**

In the discussion, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Quality is about diversity** - Gender diversity has a great role in quality
- Quality has something to do with making people conscious of their field** - With consciousness comes knowledge, which automatically increases quality.
- Small countries like Iceland may help us to come over our complex about superiority.**
- Art and culture bring people together.**
- Visual arts can build a bridge between art and people.**
- Quality has the ability to be recognised by people.**

Resolutions:



Miran Mohar (Slovenia), Eugene Asse (Russia)

Resolution on “The forbidden art” – censorship in Russia.

A resolution was presented and adopted protesting against the court proceedings against two leading personalities in the Russian world of Arts - Yury Samodurov, the former director of the Sakharov Museum in Moscow, and Andrey Erofeev, former curator at the State Tretyakov Gallery, who are both facing serious and unfounded charges of “inciting religious and ethnic hatred” through the organization of a “Forbidden Art” exhibit in 2007.

The ECP Resolution calls on the prosecutor’s office to drop the charges against the two Museum directors.



Dino Mustafic (Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Resolution in support of cultural institutions and the arts community of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Cultural Parliament is appealing to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to them by its citizens and, in accordance with European cultural standards, to support and finance the preservation of cultural

historical heritage and cultural institutions, which are of vital importance to the people of the country.

New ECP-Members on the theme of the session:

Jean-Marc Dreyfus (France) – History

The killing of six million Jews is not a topic that is linked to culture, but it is the only memory the whole of Europe has in common. The banality of many portrays of holocaust is a great concern and the populist culture tries to solve this by pre digesting it, through, say, Hollywood. “There is an issue to find the relation between culture and holocaust.”, Jean-Marc concludes.



Nicoleta Esinencu (Moldavia) – Literature

Gave some tasters of her work as a playwright. She studied theater science and scenography and later worked as a dramatist at the Eugène Ionesco Theater. Her play “FUCK YOU, Eu.ro.Pa!” triggered violent political debates in Romania and the Republic of Moldova and won the Dramacum Award.



Ana Žuvela Bušnja (Croatia) – Cultural Management

Research Fellow at the Institute for International Relations (IMO), Zagreb, Croatia. Her research interests include cultural transition and development, cultural management and development of cultural policies and strategies, cultural democracy and interconnections between standing cultural policies and the arts. She is also active in operational and fundraising activities of the Culturelink Network.



Catharina Thörn (Sweden) – Urban sociology

All over the world cities enhance their city centers, regenerating neighborhoods better fitted for the marketing strategies. In this development culture is strategically used to create smooth and cool environments for the creative class to enjoy themselves. Based on three examples (in Gothenburg, Hamburg and Berlin) it is argued that when culture is reduced to being a necessary component in economic growth we lose something vital. That is culture as a breeding ground for imagination and the ability of finding other solutions, explanations and perspectives.

**Nikola Maticic (Sweden) – Opera**

In Sweden it is up to the artist to make sure the quality is good, since the audience doesn't have the interest or knowledge to see good quality, nor does the producer in many cases. The young people have not learned how to listen. Opera as an art form has changed, both for the artists and the audience. It is considered to be entertainment for the rich, even though it costs as much as a football ticket. When art is being discussed in the Swedish government the issue of quality is often excluded. What the society needs is a communication between artist and public to ensure quality in arts.

**Lars Montag (Germany) – Film**

Terrorists have attacked Bluewater, California! It turned out it was three German rappers who faked it. The German news agency DPA wanted hard penalties. Did you believe it? It was all staged news that was fed to the German media and swallowed immediately. Lars Montag wanted to see how the fast-news-hysteria of today affects the quality work of a journalist. He faked an entire city and hired actors for the "interviews". The project cost less than 1000 euro but proved something worth hundreds of thousands of Euro. Media, even so-called 'quality media' has lost a lot of their credibility in times of the internet.



Mats Rosengren (Sweden) – Philosophy/Rhetoric

Professor of rhetoric in an intervention on quality and reflection: From the very start, Plato tried to define what real knowledge is and the distinction between opinions and eternal knowledge. Pythagoras stated that man is the measure of all things. What then is the quality of knowledge? We have to redefine Platos definition...



Doxology – a rhetorical approach to epistemology

Professor Rosengren has been working on developing an ‘other’ take on epistemology. He has chosen to call his epistemic stance doxological in order to emphasize that all knowledge is doxic knowledge, thus turning the seminal Platonic distinction between doxa (beliefs, opinions) and episteme (objective, eternal knowledge) upside down.

Workshop:



**Workshop- NUROPE/ Gothenburg
“Arts & Business- Culture as Growth factor”**

Participants

Bengt Kristensson Uggla

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux

Kristina Berg

Bert Mulder

In this workshop NUROPE (Nomadic University for Art, Philosophy and Enterprise in Europe) was introduced. Its goal is to contribute to the cultivation of the complex formation of identities in a changing transnational Europe where art and culture function as resources both for growth and for identity constructions in open communities. It offers both post graduate students, researchers and leaders within culture and economy a platform to develop and reflect on questions concerning the synergies between art and economy from a global European perspective.

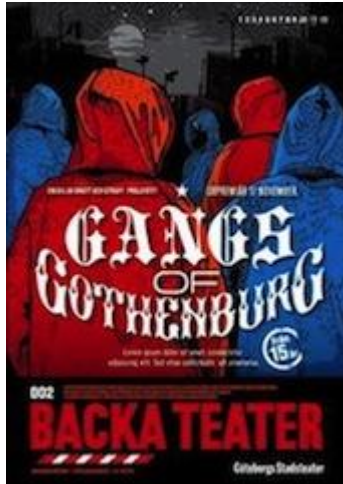
Also a multidisciplinary academic course for European postgraduate students is offered. This is guaranteed by documenting every oasis by a series of research reports, publications and media productions for comparative and cumulative learning and research initiation on European leadership.

Through sharing experiences and developing creative models for education and research in social and cultural as well as economic entrepreneurship the transfer of NUROPE's goal into action can be ensured.

In this discussion the following point was highlighted and discussed:

Cultural identity is used as a convenience tool to increase tourism and boost economical strength. The positive aspect of culture becomes a negative burden through its misuse and a "Trojan Horse" which will eventually destroy the roots of culture.

Theater performance:



“Gangs of Gothenburg”, Theater Performance, followed by reception and discussion with ECP Member Mattias Andersson, Stage Director, and the actors.

Backa Theater is a part of Göteborg City Theatre. The group was formed in 1978 with Eva Bergman, director, and Ulf Dohlsten, actor, as artistic directors. Alexander Öberg, director, was the artistic leader for Backa Theatre 2000-2006. The playwright and director Mattias Andersson is the artistic director for the theater today.

The performances at Backa Theater prove that theater for children and young people can be renewing, daring, vital and creative. And therefore attractive for all ages. In 1997 Backa Theater was the first theater promoted to the National stage for children’s theater for three years by the Swedish government. The group has also been invited to several festivals all over the world.

ECP and Friends



Institute for Cultural Diplomacy Mark Donfried, Berlin:

Cultural diplomacy is about access. We focus on academic exchange programs that allow students to study abroad.

The ICD Academy for Cultural Diplomacy is a department within the ICD that focuses on the research and promotion of cultural diplomacy. Academy programs are generally internationally focused and are open to individuals of all ages and backgrounds. The Academy organizes two different types of program – Academy Sessions and international conferences.

Academy Sessions are weeklong programs that take place in Berlin throughout the year and offer individuals of all backgrounds and levels of experience the opportunity to learn more about the field of cultural diplomacy, take part in structured group discussions with speakers and other participants, and build up their personal networks.

The ICD organizes international conferences throughout the year, developed according to particular themes, which bring together larger groups of participants for lectures and seminars lead by renowned figures from politics and international relations.



A Soul for Europe ECP Member Susana Marques, Guimaraes & ECP Senator Steve Austen, Amsterdam

A Europe of the Europeans

There is a need to clarify the relationship between European institutions and the citizens. We believe that it is possible to create a Europe of the Europeans, rather than just a Europe of institutions and regulations. It is our responsibility to take a hand in Europe's political mechanisms. We need new communication paths and innovative cooperation models between civil society and the European institutions, national governments and other authorities.

Culture holds Europe together

Building Europe means integrating national histories, value systems, world views and fostering intercultural dialogue. We believe that the power of culture must be harnessed for European integration more efficiently. All fields of policy beyond the cultural sector, from social to foreign affairs, must develop a cultural component. We do not lobby for the financial support of the cultural sector, but rather we see culture as essential for the full development of Europe's potential. This process should be a bottom-up rather than a top-down process driven by civil society from all sectors.



Felix Meritis Foundation Linda Bouws, Amsterdam

Felix Meritis is an independent European center for art, culture and science and a national and international meeting place in Amsterdam.

We believe in (the need for) cultural diversity in Europe as an engine of progress and social cohesion. That is why we conduct a public European cultural dialogue with individuals in Amsterdam, the Netherlands and further afield and take part in National and International cultural networks.

Through deeper understanding and dialogue with different groups in the Netherlands and abroad, we strengthen the insight into and understanding of the European process of cultural unification among citizens of Amsterdam and the Netherlands.

The motto of Felix Meritis is "Connecting Cultures".



Tranzit Yulia Bardoun, (Kalingrad)

Deputy Director of the Kaliningrad branch of the National Center for Contemporary Art and Director of an NGO Agency in Support of Cultural Initiatives and Leadership called 'Tranzit'.

"I work as a social interpreter in a NGO with no governmental funding starting ten years ago as an individual person. What made it possible for me to reach a level of cultural policy making? I realized it's all about networking and staying connected with people like we do here at the ECP. It's all about learning and sharing, asking ourselves who we are and eventually about reflecting."



Institute of Ideas Claire Fox, London:

In the Institute of Ideas we treat people seriously. Our aim was to encourage people to ask difficult questions on politics. Over the last 15 years, the arts have been asked to justify themselves to the public – what does art do to justify the financing? As it is now, the arts are unable to stand on their own two feet.

The Institute of Ideas' mission is to expand the boundaries of public debate by organizing conferences, discussions and salons, and publishing written conversations and exchanges. Since 2000, the Institute of Ideas has created a forum for intelligent and lively public debate of complex social issues. The Ioi grew out of three years of highly successful events organized by LM (formerly Living Marxism) magazine. These events were commended for daring to ask difficult questions, and for inviting panelists to speak outside of their professional roles. Their success proved a widespread thirst for lively debate. Freed from the constraints of demands for practical policy, participants became creative thinkers. In this spirit, we realized that it was time to take the initiative and to set up a more permanent space for debate, a new academy of ideas.



The Festival Berlin Florian B. Mueck, Germany

Inspired by his time as an Erasmus student, Florian Mueck wants to give Europe an identity and bring it together as a whole. "Why is it that so many people out there aren't passionate about Europe? It's like soccer; we all play on the same field and we wear the Euro currency as the same dress. So why can't different nations pass the ball to each other? The answer is, they don't know each other."

Through the Festival Berlin in 2011, he plans on bringing people from all over Europe and the world together, make them known and share the same joy of European culture.



“Youth ECP” Jenny Garcia, London, Sofie Roehrig ,Berlin:

“Youth ECP” should be an ECP for young people in the ages between 20 and 30 years with an active role in the culture sector. We wish to provide a platform for young people and encourage open exchange through think tanks. The background of “Youth ECP” is the thought that every young citizen should be enabled with the knowledge to deal with a more open and complex society but also to benefit from the many advantages such a society gives us. This project idea will be further developed during 2010.



Oxford European Research Project Lyudmila Nurse, Oxford

Being passionate about Europe is the red thread of this project: to use sources of new ideas to give global change in the 21st century sense and support a European identity in the making.

Oxford XXI is a UK-based NGO (non-governmental organization) with a multidisciplinary global network of research associates.

The founders of Oxford XXI have backgrounds in academic research and technical assistance and sector restructuring consultancy projects in Europe, South America, The Middle East, Africa, Central and East Asia. Continued cooperation with the ECP was foreseen in 2010.



“Quality of Life” – Culture and Health Gunilla von Bahr, Milos Pekny (Sweden):

- Gunilla von Bahr: “Use music for a better life, love and understanding – just play, just come close to the human beings around you and bond across borders. Music is more than just music. Music is Life! Music is healthy!” “Quality of Life” is situated in the National Center for Culture and Health in Gothenburg.

Milos Pekny stands behind “The Culture and Brain Health Initiative” and uses music in stroke rehabilitation.



Athens – ECP’s Host City 2010

ECP Host City 2010! September 16-19

Athens – a presentation



Rodolfo Maslias (Greece)

“Athens was in 1985 the first capital of culture of Europe and today Nikitas Kaklamanis is the 50th Mayor of Greece. Consider it to be an eternal capital of culture. There are more than 80 theaters in Athens and an intense cultural activity of the 140 communities. A special event on the birth and history of Greece will be held for the ECP.

We will meet at the Greek Parliament and the Technopolis Cultural Center.

The city of Athens invites the ECP to visit the new Acropolis Museum and the monuments of Greek history and culture. The Society for Tourism and Economic Development of the City of Athens ensured the organization of the stay. Athens is waiting for you in 2010. Thank you for coming!”

The 9th ECP session in Athens will take place between the 17th and 19th of September.

Concluding discussion

On Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media



Jasenko Selimovic (Sweden)

There are four groups that decide about the Quality in art: Audience, employees, artists and the critics. Dependently on what group gets to decide you get a different sort of quality.

We have also talked about:

- Audience defined quality – how many are using this art product? This is the most democratic set up and it doesn't need to be bad.
- Product defined quality – it has to be good – it doesn't matter if anyone wants or uses it. But we cannot do it without time.
- Transcendental quality; (Plato): high standard of excellence that only can be recognised in the light of long practice.
- Branded quality – who is making something good? It is all about building trust.

In private theaters no one is interested in the artists, and no one cares about reviews and the critics. That leaves the quality decision-making to the audience.

We need time and resources. Quality is often defined by how big the number of the audience is – this is the most democratic notion of quality.

Then there is the form of transcendental quality. Quality should be objective. Quality is a high standard of excellence and can only be recognised in the light of long practice. The importance of quality must be pointed out but quality is not a goal in itself.

It's an instrument of doing something else. It's an instrument for improving democracy. It's important for social and political awareness of the EU. The EU is currently in an enlarging process, creating a Europe of Europeans. It is promoting a European identity, transparency, efficiency and trust in democracy.

Comments from the audience after the summary:

My concern is that we shouldn't sound like we think quality is something of the past. The Internet as an example should not be seen as a fret. Recognition of quality is important and this takes time to learn. – **Alexis Kouros**

We must also be aware of the difference between the passive way of emotion versus the active way of feeling. – **Miha Pogacnik**

... and invite polarities rather than softening them. We need polarities to energize our work.
– **Paolo Naldini**

Yes, I don't like third ways! I like intellectual battle and I'm all for a social elitist – for those arguing the quality of art. But don't avoid disagreement! Even here, within the ECP, we are not really prepared to fight among ourselves. – **Claire Fox**

Final Conclusion:

Karl-Erik Norrman

The new global situation creates crises in the media. We have reason to be worried and to stand up in defense of quality, both in culture and in media. If we are striving for a democratic world we should encourage the 7 billion world population to be quality conscious. This year we therefore dedicated the theme of our session to quality – “Quality and Reflection in Culture and Media – Prerequisites for European Democracy”

Quality is not a goal in itself; it's an instrument of improving democracy.

WE INSIST ON QUALITY!

Conference Papers
