
2010 – Athens

The 9th Session of the ECP was held in Athens 16-19 September 2010. Theme of the session was Europe and its Greek Legacy.

Discussion and debate on the future of Europe in a philosophical, historic, democratic and artistic perspective. In addition four workshops were arranged.

Programme

Place: Technopolis Auditorium Athens, Greece

Dates: 18-19 September 2021

Theme: “Europe and its Greek Legacy”

Discussion and debate on the future of Europe in a philosophical, historic, democratic and artistic perspective. In addition four workshops will be arranged. The Exhibition “25 years of European Capital of Culture” will be on show during the session.

Programme

Thursday 16 September:

12.00	Press Conference in Athens City Hall
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Afternoon	Arrival of participants
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Afternoon	Check in at Hotels Imperial + King George, Athens
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ECP Session Report 16-19 September 2010 in Athens

18.30

Transfer by bus to “Technopolis” City of Athens,
100 Pireos str, Gazi

19.00

Check-in/Registration

19.30-19.45

Official opening of the Session by the President of the
Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Filippos Petsalnikos.

19.45-20.00

Welcome address by the Mayor of the City of Athens, Mr.
Nikitas Kaklamanis.

20.00-20.15

Keynote speech by Mr. Mikis Theodorakis (Athens).

20.15-20.30

Keynote speech by Mrs. Erna Hennicot- Schoepges
(Luxemburg).

20.30-20.45

Introductory Session, Introduction to the 9th Session by
Karl-Erik Norrman (Stockholm/ Berlin). Presentation of
new ECP-Members.

20.45

Reception

22.30

Transfer to hotels

Friday 17 October:

08.00	ECP-Senate meeting in Hotel King George
09.30	Transfer by bus to “Technopolis” City of Athens, 100 Pireos str, Gazi
10.00- 13.00	Plenary session led by Pär Stenbäck, Helsinki, on “European ideas and their Greek Legacy”: Evangelos Chrysos, Athens, Emeritus Professor, University of Athens. Panel discussion: Krzysztof Czyzewski, Sejny, Claire Fox, London, Amparo Serrano de Haro, Madrid, Stelios Virvidakis, Athens, Mats Rosengren, Gothenburg, followed by general debate.
13.00-15.00	Visit to the Acropolis Museum
15.00-17.00	Lunch near “Technopolis” City of Athens
17.00-17.15	Walk to “Technopolis” City of Athens
17.15-17.30	Presentation of new ECP-Members

ECP Session Report 16-19 September 2010 in Athens

17.30

Plenary Session in Technopolis, moderated by Joe Friggieri, Valetta: Marie-Louise von Plessen on “Europe and the Bull”, St. Firmin sur Loire. Panel Discussion: *European Arts and their Greek Legacy*: Guy Coolen, Antwerp, Peter Hanke, Copenhagen, Iara Boubnova, Sofia, Andreas Richter, Berlin and Erzen Shkolloli, Peje, followed by general debate.

20.10 (approx)

Helle Juul, Copenhagen: “Learning from Athens – Ecclesia and non-representational space- concepts and the challenges of urbanism in an intercultural society”.

20.20

Rodolfo Maslias, Athens: Introduction to the anniversary project “Athens, birthplace of the European Capitals of Culture”.

20.30

Bus to hotels, dinner at hotels

Saturday 18 September:

10.00

Transfer from hotel Imperial to the Hellenic Parliament (Hotel King George is beside the Parliament)

10.30

Welcome by Mr. Evangelos Chrysos, Secretary General of the Hellenic Parliament Foundation for Parliamentarism and Democracy

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10.45

Guided visit to the Hellenic Parliament and its Exhibitions: “The Building of the Parliament” and “The Battle of Marathon: History and Legend”.

12.00-12.45

Welcome coffee

13.00

Transfer to Melina Merkouri Center, City of Athens, venue for the workshops

13.30

Light buffet

14.30-18.00

Four Workshops:

- 1) 25 years European Capital of Culture, Moderator Rodolfo Maslias, Athens
- 2) Culture and the Financial Crisis, Moderator Brigita Stroda, Riga
- 3) Culture and New Technologies, Moderator Bert Mulder, The Hague
- 4) First Session of “Youth ECP”, Moderator Sabine Froschmaier, Berlin

18.00

Transfer by bus to “Technopolis” City of Athens, 100 Pireos str., Gazi

18.30

Plenary Session moderated by Ove Joanson, Stockholm. Panel discussion *Europe and its Greek Legacy*: Peter Stephan Jungk, Vienna/Paris, David Lordkipanidze, Tbilisi, Magda Carneci, Bucharest, Mary Miller, Stavanger, Dino Mustafic, Sarajevo, followed by general debate.

20.30

Transfer to
hotels -
dinner at
hotels

Sunday 19 September:

09.00

Transfer by bus to “Technopolis” City of Athens,
100 Pireos str, Gazi

09.30

Final plenary session

11.00

Transfer by bus to Pnyka

11.30-12.00

Closing ceremony at the ancient site of
“Pnyka” - reading of a solemn declaration of
the ECP in Athens

12.00

Transfer to hotels

The 9th Session was supported by:

The Hellenic Parliament

The City of Athens

Athens Tourism and Economic Development Co. (ATEDCO)

Europe and its Greek Legacy

Europe is a continent with somewhat unclear borders and with a historic tendency to decompose itself into various National, ethnic or religious elements. The present situation, with a European Union of 27 states and a Council of Europe with 47 member states is unique in history. We are all aware that this splendid idea of a Europe in peace and cooperation and with far-going ambitions of integration was born out of the ruins of World War II. The European idea was conceived by the shock of the most disastrous war in history. The positive vision was born out of a nightmare.

The recent – or still ongoing – financial crisis has revived several old tendencies and gut reactions of Nationalism in the financial markets, in the labor market, in the car industry and in several other fields, including “the man in the street”. The latest Eurobarometer indicates clearly that European citizens have less confidence in the EU than a few years ago. We have all been reminded of the fragility of the “European House”.

The reason for this fragility is of course that **Europe is an Idea** rather than a strong physical reality. This idea was also not very distinctly formulated by our Greek ancestors and their mythology. As you all know, “Europe” first was a Phoenician princess who was kidnapped by Zeus in the disguise of a bull. But “Europe” for the ancient Greeks also became all countries to the West and to the North of Greece, just like all countries to the East were named “Asia”. So, whatever geopolitical developments the continent has gone through in the last 2500 years, Europe owes its very name to the Greeks. That is already an important reason to celebrate our Greek legacy. But more important is that so much of what we would today call European Civilisation, European Culture and European Heritage has its roots in ancient Greece.

The concept “Europe” has been hijacked during many periods of history – for a very long time by the Catholic Church (“Europe” = Christianity with Rome at the center), later even by persons like Napoleon and Hitler. But Europe as an Idea of Democracy and Human Rights was revived in the Enlightenment and now, after the terrors of World Wars and the fall of 20th Century dictatorships, represents the ideological basis for the European Union. To many citizens it may not be very attractive to have a bureaucracy in Brussels as the carrier

of these strong and noble values but if we wish Democracy, we will have to accept a certain amount of bureaucratic structures implementing democratic decisions.

Although ancient Greek Democracy 2500 years ago did not last long – only about one generation – and although women and slaves were not included in the democratic procedures, this experiment remains a strong and relevant model. The great philosophers had diverse opinions. For instance Aristoteles was an advocate of a Democracy as opposed to Monarchy, whereas Plato was more skeptical towards the experiment which had been tried in various cities just before his lifetime. But their comments on these events, on governance and on Society have guided us until today.

The philosophers and mathematicians, the architects, the artists and sculptors, the authors and playwrights, the actors and singers are all immortal and have presented us with inexhaustible sources of wisdom and creativity. This enormous cultural heritage – material as well as non-material – is what ancient Greece gave Europe and the rest of the world. It is worth noting that, particularly through the long Byzantine period, Greek law, Greek music and arts and the Greek language survived millenniums of political turbulence and foreign rule and that Greek culture today is a continuation of classical Greece. In a historic perspective the **values** and the cultural heritage is what remains, not the political intrigues and economic calculations. This is probably still true for Europe today.

The European Cultural Parliament, ECP, gives priority to ethical and aesthetic values as the essence of European society. It was important for members last year to discuss **quality** in arts and media in a period when many politicians tend to see culture as an instrument rather than the heart of society. The ECP always tries to look forward. Our members (everybody representing only himself/herself) are inspiring each other and people back home in their “constituencies” or in their International networks to “**think European**” in their creative work. We are aware that the ECP is promoting two different European visions:

- The European Union as a strong global “Soft Power”, defending not only political cooperation and economic and ecologic development, but above all human rights, democracy and free movement of people and ideas,
- Europe (with the 47 member countries of the Council of Europe) has not only a geographical concept but also a common cultural heritage and a common market for

creativity. Culture cannot stop at the border of the EU. For Europe in this broader sense Culture may be the strongest comparative advantage.

Both these European visions are important for the ECP members. Our Greek legacy is not only a reminder of a glorious past but should also inspire us to discuss the future of Europe in a deeper philosophical, democratic, artistic and human perspective. The importance of Culture is increasing in European life. Even the EU Commission has realized that and produced relevant statistics to this effect. When we gather at Pnyka (“the hill of the nymphs”) for our concluding declaration on Sunday 19 September, we will stand in the place which was the principal assembly of Democracy in ancient Athens.

In these postmodern times there is no harm in reminding ourselves and reminding young scholars that perhaps there was a European debate, a European discussion, a European discourse even before Michel Foucault. But the question remains: “Is Europe just a museum?” Are we jeopardizing dynamics, innovation and creativity in Europe through paying exaggerated attention to our cultural heritage? Is Europe lagging behind or are we in the forefront? The classical environment offered by Athens should inspire participants to reflect seriously on such issues.

“Europe and its Greek Legacy” will be the theme for five plenary debates during the 9th Session. It will be discussed both in the perspective of “European ideas” and in the perspective of “European arts”. There will be key-note speeches, panels and general debate. Members are encouraged to take an active part and contribute to the debate. On Sunday 19 September, after a final plenary session, the ECP might wish to make a declaration on the findings of the debates and the four workshops.

Athens declaration of the ECP

Athens declaration of the European Cultural Parliament Pnyka, September 2010

The 9th assembly of the European Cultural Parliament, that was inaugurated on the 16th of September 2010 by the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, Philippos Petsalnikos, and the Mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamanis, declares that:

Culture and the arts potentially constitute a bridge within and between European countries inside and outside the European Union. In Europe's creative diversity of peoples they inspire a basis of common values.

In a period of crisis of finances and values, culture and the arts actively shape new thinking that contributes to new solutions. They should inspire new futures built on the basis of Greek and European historic legacy.

The strength of its culture and arts may distinguish Europe from other important actors in the world.

Given the importance of young people for Europe's future, culture and the arts should be given stronger emphasis in education and in cultural projects and networks for the young. European capitals of culture (ECoC) must be appreciated for their creation of cultural richness and the networking of cultural actors.

The European Cultural Parliament offers its expertise for the improvement of ECoC, one of the most effective cultural projects of the European Union, born in Athens 25 years ago.

The creative sector and the arts are a strong economic factor, create inspiration in education and contribute quality of life to society. Therefore culture and the arts should be protected especially in times of financial hardship.

We thus appeal to the decision makers in Europe to assign equal importance to the cultural agenda as to other political agendas like the environment and sustainable development.

Resolution

Resolution of the European Cultural Parliament

Athens, September 2010

The European Cultural Parliament would like to express deep concern about the case of Russian artist Oleg Mavromatti, who lives in Bulgaria.

In the year 2000, as the result of his artistic action he was accused of inciting religious hatred. Since that time he legally resides in Bulgaria with his family and has applied for political asylum which has been rejected.

This year the Consulate of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in Sofia has refused to renew his expired Russian passport. This automatically led to invalidity of his Bulgarian permission of permanent residency. Russian Authorities insist that he should return to his native country to stand trial in front of the Court of Justice.

The Bulgarian Refugee Agency (BRA), to which the artist again applied for political asylum, had not responded yet.

We would like to appeal to the Bulgarian Migration Authorities to recognize Oleg Mavromatti's status as "a foreigner without documents" and to speed up his application based on the respect for The Charter of Human Rights.

Press Release

European artists gathered in Athens appealed for Culture as a Sustainable Value in Europe.

100 artists and cultural actors from 40 European countries, gathered in Athens, emphasize the importance of the **Greek legacy** for modern Europe – its democracy, its arts and its humanistic values.

The artists, members of the European Cultural Parliament, ECP, emphasize the importance of continuously funding culture, particularly in times of financial hardship. **Culture and arts**, being the core of a modern society, **have a sustainable value**, just like our environment. Culture and arts, funded by, but independent from, public budgets are probably Europe's comparative advantage in a global competition.

New Technologies constitute a fascinating challenge for cultural actors. "Digital natives" in the IT world are promoting artistic creativity through their transparent and non-hierarchical nature and reach and engage more people. At the same time the quality of arts has to be promoted and the copyrights of authors, musicians and other artists have to be properly protected.

The ECP, which held its 9th session in Athens upon the invitation of the Hellenic Parliament and the City of Athens, is the only Pan-European forum – an Agora – for outstanding cultural personalities from all sectors of arts and letters. The ECP is now also opening its doors to a number of young artists who will challenge the established artists and bring new dimensions of communication and debate, through blogs and other Internet forums.

The Athens session celebrated and discussed **25 years of European Capitals of Culture**, ECoC, an idea of the late Greek actress and minister of culture, **Melina Merkouri**. The ECP emphasized that the arts and the European dimension, not local politics, must guide planning and implementation of future ECoCs. The ECP offered its considerable expertise in future selection procedures and in designing of ECoCs.

A declaration with an appeal to decision makers in Europe to assign equal importance to the cultural agenda as to other agendas like environment for the future of Europe was adopted on the most classical ground for democratic declaration – **Pnyka**, near Akropolis. See annex.

The ECP also adopted a resolution, defending the right of artistic expression of the Russian artist Oleg Mavromatti who lives in Bulgaria and is threatened by a trial in Russia. See annex.

The guest of honor of this ECP session was the legendary Greek composer **Mikis Theodorakis** who addressed members at the opening session.

The members of the ECP were personally welcomed by the Speaker of the Hellenic Parliament, Philippos Petsalnikos and the Mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamanis who were the hosts of the session.

For more information: Secretary General Karl-Erik Norrman, 0049-170-1644950.

The 9th Session was supported by
The Hellenic Parliament
The City of Athens
Athens Tourism and Economic Development Co. (ATEDCO)

Mission Statement

... of the European Cultural Parliament

Our Premise:

Ethical and aesthetic values must be the essence of a new European Society.
Culture is the core of society. Creativity is the source of human existence.

Our Goals:

- The voices of independent artists must be heard in order to balance the growing influence of technocracy.

The ECP will amplify these voices.

- Europe needs intensified dialogue between artists and other creative individuals from the whole continent.

The ECP will be the forum for this continuing dialogue, remaining independent of political and administrative structures.

- Creative interaction between artistic and civic systems is needed.

The ECP will establish this new relationship.

- The process of globalization needs a human dimension.

The ECP sees culture as a means to achieve this.

The European Cultural Parliament consists of about 160 members, all from different cultural sectors and coming from 43 countries. It is an independent organization, having no political affiliation, but is open to dialogue with all relevant institutions.

Opening of the session

Official opening of the Session by the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr Philippos Petsalnikos

The President of the Hellenic Parliament, Mr. Philippos Petsalnikos, officially opened the 9th ECP-session. Mr. Petsalnikos stated how essential the connections between European culture and Greek culture are: "We in Greece have the luck to live in the birthplace of democracy and therefore also the birthplace of the western civilization". The President emphasized the importance of true democracy, where the Freedom of Speech is established and of an environment where the Arts enhance democratic values.

Mr. Petsalnikos also gave the present members of the ECP a short recapture of the history of the Greek legacy. It has influenced the modern civilization of Western Europe in various ways, shaping the notions of justice, commonwealth and philosophical ideas.

He stressed the importance of always trying to strengthen the values of justice and that discussions about democracy, quality and social cohesion are meaningful links between different cultures:

"I strongly believe that culture has to play a central role to establish peace worldwide. And of course culture can help us to smooth differences and become very useful for communication. The Hellenic Parliament is a place where democracy is cultivated and we have to contribute to the international discussion about democracy and culture. This is why we publish books, organize exhibitions and promote international dialogues."

Democracy was born in Greece 2500 years ago and Mr. Petsalnikos expressed his hopes about the future of this Mediterranean country: *"We hope that Greece will be very strong and that it can cultivate the quality of democracy. Furthermore it is important to respect our differences and work together for a united EU. With these words it is a great pleasure to open the 9th session of the ECP."*

**Welcome address by the Mayor of City of Athens, Mr Nikitas Kaklamanis**

The Mayor of the City of Athens, Mr. Nikitas Kaklamanis, expressed his happiness to be able to welcome the members of the ECP.

Kaklamanis spoke about the 25th anniversary of the European Cultural Capital, and how no one could have foreseen the success of this initiative that was founded 1985 in Greece by a former minister of culture – Melina Merkouri.

"Now, 25 years later, we are once again formulating the thought that culture is keeping us open and is helping us to go through this difficult financial crisis."

The Mayor also said that culture needs to be shared with the world and that it becomes valuable when it is part of the wealth. Culture should be in the center of social and economical endeavors. The European Cultural Capital has become more and more important; all cities of the EU now want to be nominated because they want to show their contemporary cultural heritage:

"The greater the cultural heritage, the richer is the European continent. The cultural EU is in fact the essence of its society."

He also took the opportunity to thank the ECP for its continuance of its cultural work and stated that the presence of the European Cultural Parliament was very symbolic since it doesn't only express an universal culture but also the globalism of the effort that is needed in order to overcome this crisis.

"Culture is for everyday people. Thank you."



Keynote speech by Mr Mikis Theodorakis (Athens)

Excerpts:

The miracle of life, deriving from the Universe and reaching Planet Earth is a constant conflict of Antithesis, the finest expression of which is the one between Harmony and Chaos. Human history is definitely not an exception to this rule as it proves the perpetual sequence from Harmony to Chaos, Peace to War, happiness to unhappiness, Civilization to Barbarity of all peoples at all times.

Today Europe holds a key position which enables it to reverse the negative trend and guide Humanity as a whole along the road of Harmony, Peace and Prosperity. But it must first cut the umbilical cord tying Europe to the U.S.

The fact that the banking and financial system has turned into such a powerful force, stands as an obstacle to the process that would mutate Europe into a single entity carrying its own seal and its own strategy, based on the creative contribution of all its Peoples that would stand upon their rich traditions in order to commonly create the true face and content of a new Europe. A Europe that would serve the values of Independence, Freedom, Peace, Democracy, Isonomy, Human Rights, development, prosperity and cultural rebirth.

Greece will be a part of this effort that will prove to be redeeming and regenerative for humanity.

It is finally time we grow up and mature, not only for the sake of humankind but also of planet Earth that is so generously hosting us. Because according to the logic of Time that is counted in centuries, our behavior towards the essential existence of life has so far been childish. We must fully understand that Man is One and that the gift of life is the same for all of us and that we are meant to experience through every pore of our body, our spirit and soul, the complete blessedness that peaceful co-existence with others and nature may give us, that will enable us to fully develop our creative powers. In both the material and spiritual world.

I am certain that, if Europe chooses this path, it will succeed in turning today's Hell into Paradise. And I am happy that I am given today the opportunity to reveal this Great Vision of mine.

Full speech



Keynote speech by Mrs Erna Hennicot-Schoepges (Luxemburg)

„Culture can move, provoke and achieve a lot in people“

...Mrs. Erna Hennicot-Schoepges stated during her speech. She gave the audience a short historical recap of how the procedures behind the nomination of a European Capital of Culture have changed since 1985. The Capital of Culture gave Europe visibility. The basic

concept was to enforce the development of culture, and the label should help the cities in doing so.

In the meantime however programs are filled up with a long list of major events. The decision-making process has changed since the procedures changed and became a sort of beauty contest between candidate cities. However culture must be more than merely events. Culture has the power to influence decisions, cultural dialogue should be at the forefront of political action in the EU. Up to now there is no real awareness of the importance of the cultural background in peoples' lives. So many conflicts are bound to cultural differences. Cultural history should make comprehensible why things are like they are, how misunderstanding culture leads to never-ending disputes and clashes.

“Sustainability is what we have to fight for if we want the European Capital of Culture to make a real change for culture.”



Introduction to the 9th Session by Mr Karl-Erik Norrman (Stockholm/Berlin)

The introduction to the 9th ECP-session was made by Secretary General Karl-Erik Norrman. He started by thanking the President of the Hellenic Parliament, Filippos Petsalnikos, Mayor Nikitas Kaklamanis, the City of Athens and the Athens tourism and Economic Development Co.

Mr. Norrman said he thought that many members of the ECP might feel like Odysseus coming back home after traveling to eight different cities in Europe:

“We are back where it all began, where our democracy was born, where European culture and civilization was born and also where the idea of a European Capital of Culture was born.”

He claimed that the present crisis is not only a financial crisis, but also a European crisis where one can hear too many nationalistic statements and it has become a challenge for culture to defend the European idea. He then quoted Paul Valéry:

“Will Europe become what it is in reality – that is, a little promontory on the continent of Asia? Or will it remain what it seems – that is, the elect portion of the terrestrial globe, the pearl of the universe, the brain of a vast body?”

A quote as relevant today as in 1919, according to Mr. Norrman.

The theme of this year’s session will open for a rather complex session, including four separate workshops. He stated that it is a challenge to see the bridge between our classical heritage and the future of European Culture and European identity. The ECP is a lobby for a stronger EU and is also promoting common values between the EU and its European neighbors. Mr. Norrman then presented the moderators of plenary sessions and workshops. He finished his speech by encouraging all members of the ECP to bring back the messages from this session to their countries.

European Ideas and their Greek legacy

Plenary session 1 moderated by Minister Pär Stenbäck, Chairman of the ECP Senate.
Introduction by Evangelos Chrysos (Athens), professor emeritus, University of Athens.

Panel discussion followed by general debate:

- Krystof Czyzewski, Sejny
- Claire Fox, London

- Amparo Serrano de Haro, Madrid
- Stelios Virvidakis, Athens
- Mats Rosengren, Gothenburg

The opening speech presented by **Pär Stenbäck** set the tone of the plenary session. Mr Stenbäck spoke of how Greece's legacy can be seen as a complex duality, both at once being appealing to the world and yet such a history can be a great burden for a country to bear. The great myth of Athens as the vision of democracy was assessed with the knowledge of its short-lived reality, only lasting a few generations. Victorious democracy, therefore, Stenbäck summarized, is not always so evident as we like to believe.

Five days previous to this year's ECP gathering in Athens the city had celebrated its 2500 year anniversary of the Battle of Marathon, known today as the attraction of the marathon run. **Evangelos Chrysos**, Athens, Emeritus Professor, University of Athens, posited that we should use this event from 490BC, as an appeal to European citizens to discuss democracy.

Mats Rosengren, on terms and concepts that carry legacy. As the Greek French philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis repeatedly stressed – we humans are autonomous – that is we are in a strong sense creating the laws in and for our world – but we are not always aware of this; or even we do not want to be aware of this. To be autonomous in the strongest sense means to be aware of and engage in the political task of creating an autonomous society. We are, as Castoriadis would have it, always already downstream in the river of history, but we have – if we realize and practice our autonomy – every possibility; yes even the responsibility, of directing its stream in a sustainable way. We humans have to a large part constructed the world and the conditions we live in – so it is up to us to fix what has gone wrong.

Stelios Virvidakis, Athens, began by discussing the formation, the development and the awareness of Greek cultural identity since Ancient times. Contemporary Greek intellectuals often feel that they are confronted by the puzzle of a complex identity emerging out of a long history, which involves Classical Greece, the Christian Byzantine era and the modern period, as it is perceived and interpreted by themselves and by foreigners. They have to carry the burden of a glorious past and don't seem to be able to meet the high expectations of their classical heritage. Moreover, they must try to achieve a harmonious synthesis of

heterogeneous elements. The sense of a continuous identity may be illusory, and becomes an ideological issue. In any case, we should avoid the hypostatization and idealization of 'Greekness'.

Claire Fox from the Institute of Ideas, London asked for a return to Greek democracy. It was Claire Fox's argument that the ideas of Ancient Greece were worth defending. It was proposed that the 'few' have hollowed out the idea of democracy. It should be the case that the 'masses' participate more. However, in today's reality democracy can be seen as purely a box ticking experience, an act which often is only appreciated when the masses agree to pre-ordained decisions made by the few.

Krzysztof Czyzewski, Sejny, brought the relevance of tradition and ideas from the Greek civilization into question, suggesting it is time to rethink Greek legacy's role in today's Europe and asked what questions from ancient times are relevant today. The Argonauts expedition was thus put forward for the tale's reference to crossing borders and experiencing other cultures. Since September 11th the relevance of this particular myth was said to have become more significant; a myth with messages which concern us all. Increasingly we live in a world familiar with fear and culture clashes, which can seem unsystematic, wild and impossible to corrupt by our systems. Therefore, it is essential that we find common ground to live together and bridge cultures. There would be no European identity without the otherness as part of our world. New limits must be designed. This is the challenge and situation of today.

We dream of Classicism when we think of Greek art. **Amparo Serrano de Haro**, Madrid, suggested the high status which we place upon ancient Greece is a burden and that we should not use so many extreme dichotomies, referring to classicism as the light which we compare with darkness, or nightmare of Modernism. By continuously placing it so highly it is likely for modern Greece to buckle under the pressure of its heritage. However, if we view these now broken statues as new works, from the fragmentation a different work emerges, perfect because of that fragmentation, fragmentation becomes key to understanding modernism. Modernism is thus presented as a kind of classicism, not an opposing element. Modernism is a metaphor for classicism.

Views expressed in the general debate:

“The speakers are too polite to their hosts. Do not forget the Romans. The Greeks were careless with their legacy. Plato even burnt it. Would it, therefore, help to recognize our Greek legacy if we look to Rome?”

Audience comment:

We are the result of different and various legacies, eg. the Persians and Venetians who brought their alphabet to the Greek language.”

“The weight of the statues is a weight on us all, the whole of Europe, because the Greek legacy is a European construction. Greek identity and Greek legacy are two different things.”

“Pull the notion of Greek democracy from its pedestal, the legacy of Greek democracy has been looked at to inspire great progression, a source of great inspiration to forward thinkers. The notion that the weight of the statue is too much is due to our own dissolution of democracy. We are the guides of the few, not the other way round. With social unrest now in Greece, instead of just praising the achievements of the past lets convert it to be useful for the future. Now more than ever modern Greece, as well as Europe as a whole, needs a positive future outlook.”

“We need to look at the outside perception of Europe, to look out through an African mask to see the world differently.”

“What would the Greek legacy look like if seen through an African mask? Western is the most advanced that civilization has come up with, African thinkers look to the West. The best schools of philosophy are in the West and inspire those elsewhere. It is not us versus them but a matter of us being able to influence in a positive way. It is a matter of self-loathing that is the problem here.

European Arts and their Greek Legacy

Panel discussion followed by general debate:

- Guy Coolen, Antwerp,
- Peter Hanke, Copenhagen,
- Iara Boubnova, Sofia,
- Andreas Richter, Berlin

Eugene Asse (Moscow school of Architecture).

What is so important about Greek legacy for architecture? It's not only about tradition of orders, it's not only about classicism – I would like to remind of a simple motto formulated 2500 years ago by Protagoras;

“Man is the measure of all things”.

We are not talking about man as a measuring instrument. We are talking about Man as the center of Greek Culture, man is the universal value of this culture.

There was a direct connection of man to God – gods were made under the human face. Let's remember about the golden measure, the universal measure of proportions – all the buildings and artwork of ancient Greeks were connected visually to be properly perceived by the human eye. This is the humanistic idea of European civilization for the next centuries. Now we have a dangerous understanding that money is the measure of all things. I strongly believe that the solution to the crisis of our civilization is to keep man as a measure.

Marie-Louise von Plessen presented an extract of a section on “Europe and the Bull” from her exhibition on the history of the Idea of Europe.

Guy Coolen, Artistic director of the opera music theater festival in Rotterdam. Also GM of Music theater Transparent in Antwerp.

In the archeological museum in Athens, first room, there is a sculpture of a human playing a liar (harp), even though the sculpture is broken, one can see he's playing music. What

amazes me most is that here we have an artist represented in the act of making music – a representation of art, not hunting or agriculture.

The heritage of most Greek arts is material (sculpture) – but what about music? Plato describes music: in an ideal state, he is against ecstatic and melancholic music. He thinks that simple instruments should do. Plato warns us that harmony is needed in order to appreciate music. Music already played such an important part in society, and so it developed into a genre.

Theater – Greek tragedies are left, but we don't really know how or where they were executed.

The Renaissance tried to re-establish this drama and created opera. Theater as we know started as a gift to Dionysus – Greek citizens were listening to the actors and to what they had to say in society. Greek art is emotions frozen into art and that is why it remains an inspiration for all of us. Future projects that I am working on: a new version of Medea and a staged version of Xenakis' Oresteia. Both projects are talking about the birth of Europe and in our projects about Europe now. Greek legacy as a start for a new art form!

Andreas Richter, GM of Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Berlin.

What can we learn from old Greeks about making and managing music – Orpheus – music can convince the dead. We still can learn from old myths and ancient traditions. The democracy principle is used in the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Every musician in an orchestra is very important for the end-show. The orchestra has the power to decide – e.g. choosing a conductor. The orchestra is owned by the members. Orchestra life is changing – people will choose to have their own orchestra and not work as a regular employee. Artistic freedom – democracy – strong relationships.

Iara Boubnova, Curator at the Contemporary Art Museum, Sofia. She presented an exhibition in Istanbul: Project "Beyond credit – contemporary art and mutual trust".

Peter Hanke, Bramstrup Estate in Denmark, Centre for Art and Leadership, Copenhagen Business School.

It seems that everything has been done already. But we need to do stuff, action is needed. Interpretation is the key for e.g. Greek legacy. Orchestras are recreating the same patterns – interpreting the Greek legacy in a different way – we must go much deeper in the root and make it contemporary, skipping Renaissance. The opportunities of digital natives are that they have different understandings where no pessimism is needed. We need to be digital migrants, use younger children as mentors to unfold things and change institutions.

Mr Hanke just wrote a book on how institutions are arrogant and presented a new interpretation of the agora: a barn that was reconstructed as a musical performance space and equally suited for conferences. Here he wishes to create a city of art and leadership around the house and among many other things now organizing a master class – go philosophical in music making.

Views expressed in the general debate

“Art demands to step back in order to analyze it and appreciate it – you have to have the luxury of space and time to appreciate art and beauty. Greece had the luxury of producing but also appreciating art after time. Another lesson was the conflict between politics and art & philosophy. If we appreciate art for beauty can we also make judgments about their goodness? Do we need to separate politics and aesthetics, beauty and morality? Art for art’s sake or functional art?”

“How can a digital polis be like since our world now is much bigger than the Greek agora?”

“Intellectuals are not reacting anymore. We are on a shifting border that is just about to emerge and will bring us in a difficult position. Democracy is difficult to build today. Democracy is dependent on civic participation. People are lost and full of anxiety.

- We should make the School of Athens alive again.”

“The example of the Young ECP demonstrates that the nation is not relevant anymore.”

“Both pessimistic and optimistic views are correct – we should create a practical vision statement to whom governments should turn to and younger generations be inspired from.

“We mustn’t ask art to do too much.”

Workshops

The 25 Years of the European Capitals of Culture – Workshop

Summary and conclusions

Moderator Rodolfo Maslias, official of the European Parliament, international advisor to the Mayor of Athens and a former Secretary General of the Network of European Capitals of Culture, introduced the workshop participants and made a presentation – an overview of the 25 years of the European Capital of Culture starting from the first ECC in Athens.

An overview was a symbolic tour into one of the greatest European projects and the impact it has made on European history. The overview included examples of successful and less successful projects, and analysis of their objectives, achievements and shortcomings. The workshop panelists included Spyros Merkouris, a brother of Melina Merkouri and a Programme director of the ECC Athens in 1985, Steven Austin, Amsterdam (1987), Karoly Mehes, Pecs (2010), Christos Roilos and Alexis Alatsis, Patras (2006).

After presentations on the successful and less successful sides in organization of artistic programs and management of ECC sites the floor was given to the other participants who either directed or participated in the past, current and forthcoming ECCs (Tallinn, Warsaw) and also representatives of cities which are aspiring to participation such as Tbilisi.

Most of the debate was concerned about the following issues:

- Balance of power between political and artistic cultural interests in the ECC. Many discussants were referring to the fact that this significant event for the European cultural development initiative in some countries was completely seized by the political authorities – i.e. political rather than cultural and artistic interests are pursued in some ECCs.
- Sustainability of the ECC – only short-term impacts were thoroughly researched, but more attention should be paid to the long term impacts of the ECC on the region.

- Diminishing role of the independent artistic and cultural organizations in the ECC.
- Promotion of local or European international artists, with an example from Patras. Whether there is reason to concentrate on promotion of local artists to the local population or to attract more recognised international names was discussed. Difference in opinions was expressed.
- Ambiguity of the cities selection procedures.
- Balance between the capital cities and other cities, dynamics of those two and competition which bring out national debate to the European level. Cities hierarchy.
- Research perspectives of the ECC as a European project, and the necessity to bring an accumulated knowledge and experience of the former and current ECC organizers into new perspective by the possibility of establishing an advisory agency to the EC.

Summarized by Dr Lyudmila Nurse

Additional

summary by Rodolfo Maslias

Speech by Spyros Mercouris

Culture and the Financial Crisis – Workshop

Moderator Brigita Stroda, Riga

Summary

In the perspective of the current global economic crisis, the cultural sector is proud to affirm that by its very nature, creativity, inspiration and artistry are limitless resources. Having proved that it has risen to the challenges imposed both by various social and political measures of outcomes, as well as critical excellence; the ECP workshop asserts that this sector is systemically “too important to fail”. Therefore, members insist that public funding of culture be increased rather than cut and continue to be allocated at classic “arms length” distance to ensure the freedom and independence of arts. Furthermore, cultural actors offer a vibrant cultural and creative sector to deal successfully with the social and economic challenges in this new age of austerity in re-balancing the economy and designing solutions for the future.

For instance, the impact of arts on tourism has proved to be considerable. Specifically, the ECP will endeavor to formulate an update to its study on the Lisbon Agenda – the strategic use of culture documents, with the considerable intellectual and creative resources at the disposal of its members.

On its own terms, culture is not in crisis – neither institutions, nor the artists themselves – considering that in Europe today more people have more access to more high quality culture than ever before. The arts institutions themselves are in a good shape but will certainly be suffering in the countries where drastic budget cuts are carried out. Good leadership at the institutions is particularly important in times of financial restraint.

Whilst the arts can be controversial for artistic reasons, arts organizations and artists themselves tend not to suffer from ethical scandals to the degree that bankers, politicians and sports organizations have to date. Furthermore, artists and arts organizations have an impressive track record of clever financial management of meager resources.

The “creative sector” is growing in importance, irrespective of public funding. And the importance of an attractive cultural scene for tourism is now being appreciated by most communities, both local and national. This is promising. Creative individuals have a contribution to make, both to production – through innovation – and to Society – through reflection. Cultural actors should avoid playing the role of suffering victims. Culture is not only a balm for the soul but also possibly a way of solving problems in the post-industrial society. People of the arts should not hesitate to go outside the institutions in order to meet and influence other sectors of society. As the heart of a knowledge-based economy, culture has very much to offer. But **in order to use art as a resource, you have to have the source that creates art to begin with.**

Having said this, some members of the workshop emphasized that culture and arts should not be measured by its usefulness. “If things are to be immortal they have to be strictly useless”. Appreciating the beauty and fascination of the arts takes time and distance. Artists doing art should not necessarily have to repack their products in order to satisfy the demands of the market. Quality and excellence can only survive if supported “on arm-length-distance” without demands for specific contents or specific target groups. The freedom of arts was considered very important. Based on this principle public support to

culture should be increased rather than cut. The consumers of “high culture” may be a minority, an elite, but through education and through good use of various media this minority could be growing to encompass a larger proportion of the population.

The workshop preferred the European model of public funding of culture and arts, but found the American model of tax incentives and rebates for sponsorship and grants useful for European governments to consider as a means of encouraging complementary support to the arts.

Seeing as how “artists in residence” is a valuable and successful concept, the workshop suggested that “politicians and bankers in residence” at arts organizations should be considered.

Finally the workshop considered that the ECP should try to update the excellent and important study (2006) on the implementation of the Lisbon strategy – “*Culture – the heart of a knowledge-based economy*” The ECP should defend its role as an excellent think-tank in issues related to *The Strategic Role of Culture*.

Culture and New Technologies – Workshop

Moderator Bert Mulder, The Hague

This workshop facilitated 7 presentations where many ECP members are professionally active in new media. Below follows collective minutes of what was being shared during a lively workshop.

We talked about five subjects specified below. Industry is driving new development. The funding has shifted as well. Some people think we shouldn’t talk so much about technology because these are only tools but we can see they are very complex and complicated. Artistic professionals should be more involved in technology.

We have also talked about copyright. There is a situation that is developing. We couldn’t decide if we were in favor or against but for sure the situation is developing. We have to

open up on technology; you have to be prepared to use it. We were against free cultural products on the internet. The society is quicker than policy makers. It's a wide subject.

In spite of democratization in new media and technology there is still imperialism in the western world. There still exists some kind of curtain that should be turned down.

The themes discussed were:

on transformation

- digital tools shape our world and mind
- they change medium, product and process
- digital tools may stifle creativity and quality
- artistic professionals
- should be more involved in development

The digital era changes many of our perceptions, for good and bad. There are so many worlds as there are perceptions – in digital space and time. The digital culture confronts tradition in a new ever changing world where we may be digit today and already offstage tomorrow. The digital consumer is an interactive participant, our relationship to knowledge is changing and our social life is being reconstructed. The Internet means interconnectivity. However, is there anything specifically European in our current work? In Europe there is national pride for social messages, providing money for cultural projects. The European approach is diverse with varied structure and bridges between art / science from country to country. In Russia science always gets more, there is no cultural policy, only occasional attempts. That's why culture there is dealt by enthusiasts, sometimes lucky to have some money but usually at personal cost. In the USA, Canada and Japan there are strong policies, they seem more focused.

Policy

- policy makers are slow and get behind
- they should be more aware
- digital development should be supported

The field is moving faster than the policymakers who constantly are left behind the new technology. More connectivity creates more networks and surveys mapped out shows that cultural networks also on policy making reach a variety of cultural consumers. Can digital culture provide future cultural policy making even on an institutional level, bottom up? How do we inspire new structures?

On digital tools

- 'new media are just tools'
- don't focus on technology
- focus on cultural and artistic practice

All technical inventions are a form of art. Digital imaging, processing sounds etc. It is therefore important to bring art into technological universities. Media art is an ever changing thing, creating in new media always has opened further creative possibilities; finally we might end up creating.

Most valuable of our institutions is its content but they must each increasingly develop new digital concepts of communicating this. Unrestricted space provides a powerful tool where one of the greatest assets is multinational participation.

Nowadays for the first time artists deal with matters that they do not understand or grasp. Programmers provide our grammar and the platform of our work. We become users of civilization but we do not know the makers that laid the ground. This is a nightmare in architecture where ready models are more made by programmers. If artistic people were involved in creating the grammar then perhaps there would be less limitations.

On the other hand, artists who want to do something should be given a technical chance to realize their idea. Equally one can sometimes sense a fear of losing quality of the art. Acropolis makes a good example – digital reconstructions or the ruins – what do we prefer?

Research and development

- developments come from industry
- arts/culture no longer conceptual leaders
- artistic professionals implement
- quality of reflection is suffering

- arts/culture should focus on creating
- more meaningful applications

Previously artists were driving the development now technology has taken over and is being used by the arts. Arts in research are no longer an issue. In Athens we are rather trying new artistic ideas using and researching new technology. We try to get cities promoting their region using the tool of digital art.

We should use technology and find out how we can best express ourselves. The language is the most important prior to the best technology. Content, content, content...

Copyright

- copyright | copyleft | creative commons
- digital rights evolve differently in different domains
- new business models developing
- there is no escape
- be open, adaptive and knowledgeable

Copyright requires cultural policy but cultural policy is not likely to solve the problem. New products come all the time and with that new business models start to appear. Copyright is a young invention created during the 19th century. Other agreements are appearing in the jungle. Share rights, anti-rights... Also this jungle has an evolutionary development. It's a matter of surviving. If we understand the rules of the jungle we have a better chance to survive. It's a matter of education. Battista is one good example who managed to conquer the jungle of the internet. Also worth mentioning is the open source. Why shouldn't we participate to improve? The whole debate of the expert versus the amateur is a dangerous issue but we won't have the time to go into that.

Concluding questions and remarks?

Are we moving fast enough?

Do we want to affect development?

Do the artistic realms get better by quicker adaptation of new technology?

Do we now have a completely new perception of the world?

When most of us were young there was a lively discussion about choosing

A couple of decades ago TV was a time issue; TV or not, friends versus TV. Today there is no option – we cannot avoid life on the Internet.

“Youth ECP” – Workshop

Moderator Sabine Froschmaier, Berlin

Summary of the Workshop on “Youth-ECP” Athens, 18th of September 2010

Youth-ECP participants recognise that within the ECP there is an enormous potential of knowledge, ideas and a wide variety of informed approaches to the issues debated. The ECP is a strong framework and potentially a tool for achieving something that we cannot do on our own.

The younger participants missed more debates fuelled by the original broad range of approaches to a theme and possibly a clearer focus on specific issues.

We also felt that it was a pity not to reach a wider audience – and obviously we were not the only ones. We feel that the thoughts voiced at the conference should be spread, the knowledge preserved. There is a lot of power in ideas and we ought to use it!

Therefore Youth-ECP decided to start an Internet Platform for continuous exchanges with the technical support of Peter Hanke – thank you very much, Peter! The workshop participants agreed to give it relevant time at least once a week over a period of three months, so that it can develop and grow. All ECP members are more than welcome to join in and use it. The platform will be visible to everyone who might be interested, and readers can leave comments, so that we can open up the debate to a broader public without losing control of the site and its themes.

In those three months we hope to develop something like a think tank, a set of themes that will be of relevance to several of us, a sort of common agenda that we hope will contribute to the preparation of the next ECP Conference.

We will start by posting blogs using the themes we are currently working on or questions that are moving us. Thus we are hoping to generate debates in order to discover common grounds, clear points of disagreements or questions that need more thought, research or input from others. We would also like to share information on relevant articles, conferences, other networks or projects and thus start building a field of ideas, references, sources...

Some themes did already emerge during the discussion but the list is open to any proposal and to the further development of the online discussions:

- art form innovations
- art as means of communication within our societies, outreach, social inclusion
- education, integration through the arts
- What is art /culture? And if so, what is quality? Add value to culture!
- testing ground for project ideas, marketplace for finding cooperation partners
- quality check, discussion of best practice examples and network building
- culture and politics
- European identity within change, diversity and movement
- common network of artists and arts managers
- How to survive the culture business?

We would also like to propose that we podcast and publish the next ECP Conference, possibly live-stream the debates. We believe that through our social media we can spread information on ECP Conferences and debates in a more targeted way and generate more visibility for the ECP than it is possible through the traditional media.

We greatly welcome the offer of some EPC members to serve as mentors to younger participants, their projects or their thinking. A group of us has tried to give the idea some shape and we are handing it over to Peter Hanke, who will tell you all about it.

We all feel very privileged to be here – thank you! We hope to contribute our share in the future.

Youth ECP added doc on Blog and mentoring:

BLOGS

Project

Presentations

ECP-development

Art-form innovations

Social

Projects

Politics

Cross Disciplinary

Art & Culture Debates

- Min. 15 committed bloggers
- Engage minimum once a week over 3 months
- Youth-ECP members begin and teach ECP-members how to do

MENTORING (private area)

Billboard

Matchmaking

- Simple principles of engagement between Mentor and Mentee
- Mentor is approached by Mentee
- Negotiate how often you meet/talk and the relevant objectives
- Mentee decides the level of engagement and takes the first steps
- Physical meetings are preferable but not the only way

Presentation of new ECP-Members

Lillian Birnbaum, Paris – develops and produces movie projects of social and human relevance. She is also an acclaimed and published photographer who exhibits and publishes her work internationally.

Peter De Caluwe – Director General of the Royal Opera House of Brussels, La Monnaie. Combines management with artistic direction. “Europe has a role to play in the worldwide community. When the Belgian project doesn’t work, neither will the European one. Let’s try to find things that bring us together rather than things that break us apart” – this is also a motto

Francois Carbon, coordinator espace cultures, University of Luxembourg, creating a cultural agency in 3 steps:

- (1) Reunites the members of our university in culture and lead them to cultural institutions.
- (2) Bringing back that impression to the University in order to promote and improve the quality of life inside the institution.
- (3) Have an official cultural program, be of help to other cultural institutions and engage their ensembles in the cultural life of Luxembourg, to contribute to an exchange of ideas aimed at developing culture in Europe and the concept of European citizenship and boosting cross-cultural dialogue.

Evangelos Chrysos – academic career in Byzantine history.

Worked in Germany, Austria and USA and at the University of Athens.

Secretary general of the Hellenic Parliament Foundation – cultural branch of Greek Parliament. Founding member of a network of Parliament Foundations: in Europe dealing with the history and function of parliamentarism - www.youparl.net. They also plan a pan-European exhibition on Parliament buildings.

Claire Fox – Institute of Ideas – its objective is to stir up intellectual life in the UK. They believe that ideas can change the world and they must be contested and never taken for granted. Battle of ideas in the UK every year where UK people can gain from listening and debating European ideas. ECP members are invited and encouraged to participate in London. Wishes to make Battle of Ideas pan-European.

Rodolfo Maslias – working at the European Parliament as head of the terminology service in the linguistics department. Dealing with culture for a lot of years – managed the international relation and events for Thessaloniki. ECoC 1997 then head of Cabinet of the Greek Minister for Culture, elected coordinator of the network of capitals of culture ECCM until 3 years ago. In the past 3 years advisor to the Mayor of Athens for international cultural events (e.g. Documentation Center of European Capitals of Culture).

Mary Miller – started as a concert violinist in London. Became chief music critic of Scotland's national newspaper, and then directed a Northern festival in the UK; worked for the BBC and English National Opera, went to the USA to the International Festival of Arts & Ideas in Connecticut. CEO and artistic director of the Stavanger ECoC 2008. Wrote the Spanish city Burgos' bid to be ECoC in 2016. Currently director of Den Nye Opera, Bergen. "Capitals of Culture are very helpful in establishing relationships."

Zoran Pantelici – background in Fine Arts, working on residency programs. He has his own organization that deals with contemporary art and politics. Since 2007 running the youth center in Novisad focusing on bringing in new audiences.

Guido Wevers – worked 30 years as a theater director and now back in Maastricht as Artistic Director (Maastricht possible ECoC 2018). Presenting the Euregio Maas – Rijn (Holland/Belgium/Germany) – a lab of Europe.

Keynote speech by Mikis Theodorakis

The miracle of life, deriving from the Universe and reaching Planet Earth is a constant conflict of Antithesis, the finest expression of which is the one between Harmony and Chaos. Human history is definitely not an exception to this rule as it proves the perpetual sequence from Harmony to Chaos, Peace to War, happiness to unhappiness, Civilization to Barbarity of all peoples at all times. In Europe there were alterations from Renaissance to Medieval Ages, Wars to Peace, Dark Ages to the Age of Enlightenment, Democracy to Fascism, prosperity and distraction, development and crisis.

Today, it is patently clear that the powers of Chaos, more powerful and deceitful than ever before, have beat the state, plunging our peoples into a deep, multi-faceted crisis. Both an economic crisis and a crisis of values. A Cultural Crisis. Today you are in Athens. In the center of the city lies the Holy Rock of Acropolis where Moira preserves the Parthenon, the Symbol of Perfect Proportions and Beauty, a cradle of spiritual, mental and ethical essence of the True and Integral Man; the Parthenon that was offered two priceless Gifts, the Gift of Life and the Gift of Harmony.

But the question is who succeeded in deeply understanding and expressing the essence of the unified charismatic Man, namely of this Unique Entity living on Planet Earth, of the one that exclusively inherits and preserves Harmony, initially in his relationship with himself and then with Others, Nature and Life. It must be all those that left behind them the legacy of great spiritual works and offered us ideas, thoughts, visions and all kinds of works contributing to Logic, scientific thought, fantasy and enriching the *ars bene loquendi* and fine taste. Works that unify people instead of separating them. Works inspiring beauty, kindness and truth. Works that resent barbarosity and hate.

These benefactors of Humanity wouldn't distinguish a white man from a yellow or a black, a rich from a poor, an educated from an ignorant. To them, Man was a single Entity beyond any physical or technical differentiations. Men may differ from one another only in the way that trees within a wood may differ from one another. Because although they all live from the same ground, sun and air they still have separate roots, trunks, leaves, flowers and fruits.

But despite these differences they realize identically the magical processes of transforming carbon dioxide into nourishing oxygen and are equally exposed to the dangers of storms, droughts, fires and insensitive human attacks.

In the core of things, a tree is always a tree and a man is always a man. Namely a valuable victory of life. Nations, races and human societies have a common denominator in the unified, similar and pure human, the chosen one of Life and Harmony. For this reason, from ancient times up until today the powers of Chaos have basically used the weapons of Antithesis, division, rivalry, enmity and hate between humans, societies and peoples to strike out at Life and Harmony. The means they use are violence, oppression and exploitation of one another, the happiness of one at the expense of another and, finally, mutually destructive annihilation and warfare.

Up until today, we have reached the peak of the deceitful powers of Chaos with the creation of an international Directorate based on 4-5 international centers of power whose core-cell is the U.S., with an unprecedented destructive military power as well as enormous economic means of suppression and imposition. Using the Army and the Banks as executor, they forcefully and systematically impose the New Order of Globalization aiming in radically altering the world map by demolishing nations, using the weapon of erosion to annihilate their unique characteristics; namely nationality, culture, togetherness and at the final end, the right of Nations, Peoples and persons to collectively and independently decide in freedom for their own lives and countries.

They aim in the destruction of the primary system of each tree that belongs to this wood of humans and peoples that has survived up to now from so many disasters. They want to transform it into a material of cutting forestry in order to include it into this monstrous world system of governance that some sick brains, befuddled by the enormous power they possess, are preparing. They want to make us all 'individuals', lonely people cut off from any form of collectivism, scared, vulnerable subjects that will obey the orders of the masters of planet Earth.

This is what I believe to be the essence of today's crisis which is tormenting our peoples who, for the moment, do not know how to react because it is truly an unprecedented and satanic attack which has proven relentless.

At the same time, however, I believe that the powers of Chaos by this extreme operation have reached their limits. Let's remember the previous great threat to Humanity, the representative of Chaos known as Adolf Hitler. Following his triumphs in Europe, wasn't there a palpable fear that things had come to their end? Likewise, today's Führers, wearing their suits and ties, intoxicated by their success, have taken their power to its absolute limit. That is, to a new Stalingrad. And that is what the Peoples of Europe have to be!

Europe has offered many precious gifts to humanity, especially in the fields of Science, Philosophy, Sociology and Art. At the same time it has caused tremendous problems to the peoples of Europe, Africa, South America and Asia because of the Colonization and the two World Wars.

Today Europe holds a key position which enables it to reverse the negative trend and guide Humanity as a whole along the road of Harmony, Peace and Prosperity. But it must first cut the umbilical cord tying Europe to the U.S. and turning it into an obedient organ of catastrophe imposed by the military and economic forces that prevail in this great country; a country that is so rich in traditions and has made such a great contribution to progress and civilization. This country has turned into an operational base of violence and destruction. And, secondly, it must evaluate once more, its philosophy and methods used up until today in terms of promoting development and prosperity for its peoples. The fact that the banking and financial system has turned into such a powerful force, stands as an obstacle to the process that would mutate Europe into a single entity carrying its own seal and its own strategy, based on the creative contribution of all its Peoples that would stand upon their rich traditions in order to commonly create the true face and content of a new Europe. A Europe that would serve the values of Independence, Freedom, Peace, Democracy, Isonomy, Human Rights, development, prosperity and cultural rebirth.

Greece will be a part of this effort that will prove to be redeeming and regenerative for humanity. The longitudinal Greece of the Perfect Proportions, of Truth, Beauty and of the Human, will help us reach the source of Harmony which is the Antitheses of Chaos that prevails our lives today. Beforehand we have to realize that the present attack we are all facing unifies us into one great Entity going beyond any kind of religious, racial, national, social, societal and cultural difference. And it forces to choose between two paths; the one of Chaos or the one of Harmony.

It is finally time we grow up and mature, not only for the sake of humankind but also of planet Earth that is so generously hosting us. Because according to the logic of Time that is counted in centuries, our behavior towards the essential existence of life has so far been childish. We must fully understand that Man is One and that the gift of life is the same for all of us and that we are meant to experience through every pore of our body, our spirit and soul, the complete blessedness that peaceful co-existence with others and nature may give us, that will enable us to fully develop our creative powers. In both the material and spiritual world.

I am certain that, if Europe chooses this path, it will succeed in turning today's Hell into Paradise. And I am happy that I am given today the opportunity to reveal this Great Vision of mine.

Speech by Magda Carneci

Magda Carneci (Bucharest, Romania)

Seferis and the Greek myth of regeneration through poetry It is strange to notice that many important poets of modern Greece were born abroad, outside Greek frontiers, sometimes in incredible places: Kavafis in Alexandria (Egypt), Andoniu in Mozambique, Varnalis in Burgas (Bulgaria), Melahrinos and Embirikos in Braila (Romania), Uranis and Sarantaris in Istanbul (and Elytis in Crete). Being born in Smyrne/ Izmir, Seferis confirms this unusual situation, that fits the topos of Greeks as restless wanderers and colonists of the known and unknown world, as well as the topos of poets as 'outsiders' of a given, established order and visionary foreseers of some new-born, emerging cosmoses.

But Seferis looks to me, rather, as a sort of strange archeologist, involved in the unearthing of an old world, an ancient harmonious cosmos, dead long time ago and nevertheless still alive in the gulfs and islands of Greece, as an illusion more effective than any strict rationing. An ancient mythical cosmos, I would say – preserved in a special imaginary realm of the 'between-the-worlds' reality – which keeps going on even today, contrary to our modern presumptions. This realm keeps existing as a state of mind and of soul inducing a strange,

melted, fluid way of being into reality, as a peculiar, genuine life-style, more persuasive than any materialistic approach. This is, I believe, what all the great neo-Hellenic poets of the 20th century have strived to transmit in a way or in another, as a sacred heritage, to our more and more oblivious cultural mentality – be they Kavafis, Sikelianos, Elytis, Seferis, and many others.

Giorgyos Seferis is for me the haunted archeologist of impalpable, evanescent traces of a parallel and silent, yet insidious, reality. A reality made out of beams of light, immemorial shadows, fragments of melodies, beautiful names, mythological ghosts, painful memories that populate our common perceptions when attuned to the frequency of the moment, the instant, the present, in its magic and nostalgic force, its detached yet exalting clearness. His is a vision of being-in-the-world as a sort of floating, undecided 'commuting' between past and present, between presence and absence, a kind of haze, a phantasmagoric mirage between fullness and emptiness, silence and sound. All this, on the background of a melancholic remembrance of a lost unity of the being, a being containing the dead and the living, and the half-dead and the half-living, and so on. A 'distant, far-off plenitude' as the French poet and theorist Yves Bonnefoy would say. But while in the case of T.S.Eliot, Seferis' friend, to whom he resembles a lot, there is a 'pressure of the past over the present', in Seferis' case it is not so obvious whether the past invades the present, or vice versa, for his concern is neither the past nor the present, but a detachment from both and from the hypnosis of reality. His sonorous, evanescent archeology has to do with a certain mode of existence, a special way of not identifying with palpable forms and various creatures, while still enjoying them in a delicate way: a modality of existence between and above the reigns of reality, be they mineral, vegetal, animal, or human, be they natural, mythological, historic, or artificial (modern).

This is the poetic reign, I would say, which has to do with being present to yourself, to your whole/real Self, within the fiction of this world, in a special, indefinable way. Seferis has the innate techné of capturing this vague, blurred and silent state of mind by the strange counter-point-like musicality of his words, coming out of a discrete inner alchemy. This inner alchemy appears to be catalyzed by a peculiar emotionality, sad as much as serene, pessimistic as much as accepting. But this poetic reign does not exist naturally, it has to be invented and planted, introduced into our present-day mentality as a sort of graft, capable of provoking a mutation in our habitual, opaque usage of reality and of ourselves.

In Seferis' case, ancient mythology and the Greek heritage seem to play an important, catalytic role in this alchemical process of separating the coarse from the refined, that is, the immediate, materialistic sensations from finer, higher perceptions. As a majestic background, a reference memory kept alive by chance or by cultural destiny, this Greek heritage can provide the necessary, rare graft on our continually forgetting manner of taking reality for granted. This graft is possible because it has become, since a long way of being, the way of living the 'real life' of a certain place, ancient Greece, Ellada, an idealized space haunting for centuries the emotional and cultural memory of Europeans. And it was precisely this splendid heritage that modern Greek poets have felt compelled to transmit to the rest of the non-Greek, post-mythological, and even post-Christian, world of present-day Europeans. This sort of cultural genes, so to say, continuing to nourish in a modern key the profound roots of our European identity, was at the basis of the eminent position Greek poetry (and prose, in a certain amount) has since long occupied, and still occupies, in European literature.

In the Romanian milieu, for example, there have been during the last four or five decades, several successive moments of great interest in Kavafis, Seferis, Ritsos, Elytis, even Kazantzakis, that provoked special issues of the most important cultural publications, as well as debates and poetic performances dedicated to their writing. In the 1980s, for example, when Seferis' poetry seemed to be overshadowed, it is interesting to notice that not only in the young Romanian poetry (to which I belonged at that time) but all over international poetry of the moment, another sort of poetry seemed to arrive on top. It was a much more narrative poetry, even prose-like, focused on banal daily life and poor urban environment, on common sense and ordinary existence, using street jargons and mass-media clichés – a poetry influenced as it were by the American beat generation (Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, Ashberry a.s.o.) and refusing almost any kind of transcendence, be it religious or mythological. If Seferis was called a 'classic modernist' one – like T.S.Eliot, Pound, Yeats, etc. -, this new poetry of the 1980s, and 1990s in fact, can be called, and has been called postmodernist. In the three last decades it has become obvious that European poetry, like the American one, has furthered away from any sort of spiritual symbolism, refusing to turn to the old Greek, Jewish, Christian sources of its imaginary, through which, even if in a tortuous way, its profound imaginal need was to be satisfied, to be kept alive. At present, at least for a while, the access to this essential level of our being seems to have been suspended in favor of a more contiguous, homogenized and neutralized perception and expression of reality, attuned

as it is to the age of planetary integration, pragmatic mentality, economic globalism, and cosmopolitan multiculturalism.

Now, having the opportunity to 'revisit' Seferis' poems, after almost 20 years of absence, I must confess I was anxious. I had a sort of restlessness in regards to my expectations. I suddenly remembered the magic of Seferis' verses in my adolescence and first youth, the curious archaic and at the same time very modern musicality they would induce in my ears. I remembered the way the rhythm of his lines, formed of such simple words, would change, would slow down, the rhythm of my heartbeat and my respiration. I remembered how much I was fascinated by rare, exotic words such as asphodels, daffodils, lemon trees, laurels, kihli, black pine trees, how haunted I was by famous names such as Gorgon, Medusa, Adonis, Mycenae, Argonauts, the 'lost king of Asini', how hypnotized I also was by simple plain words such as green sea, old islands, beams of daylight, drop of blood, desert stones, etc. They would build a poeticity without metaphors, without even 'striking images', but nevertheless so effective, so mesmerizing. I remembered the line 'Wherever I go, Greece hurts me' that made me envious of not being born a Greek. Actually, after my own poetic experience, I was afraid of being disappointed, after so many years, by a 'youth love' that could prove to have been a mere illusion. After reading again his Mythistorima, his Stratis the Sailor, his Exercise Notebook, his Kihli, his Board Journals 1, 2, and 3, I feel confirmed again in my previous taste and much more comforted with my own past. For now I understand better – that is, through my personal experience – what 'poetic alchemy' or 'poetic initiation' might mean. I understand now why the 'mythical realm' surviving as a 'poetic realm' in our cultural memory and 'emotional body', so to say, is vital for our inner survival and spiritual resurrection. Because through its 'charming' and 'magic' intermediary we can still have a certain indirect experience of what transcendence might mean – that is, the higher levels of our innate but still unknown inner reality. This 'mythical/poetic' realm fills up properly the insidious gap between the external and internal worlds, between our individual and cosmic dimensions, between 'heaven and earth'. A gap, that two thousand years of Christianity have not succeeded to bridge satisfactorily hitherto.

Mythological archetypes and poetic images can still help us, in spite of our blindness and materialistic stupidity, to raise, to ascend up on the long scale of our still mysterious being, designed as it was to become 'god-like', 'divine', by its infinite potentialities, yet still creeping in its lower parts, in its basements.

Thanks to Greek poetry I also feel more optimistic. As if, reading Seferis' poems, I would revisit some faraway legendary island where a 'natural reservation' has been preserved alive: a genuine realm with archaic vegetation, pure, intense light, perfumed air, some rare birds and animals, special invisible creatures, strange musical echoes, floating fragments of memories, inexplicable majestic images haunting our imagination. Now I know, this island will continue to exist, in spite of any oblivion, any denial, in our cultural memory. And whenever I will feel the desire to reenter the poetic reign opening towards my higher levels of being, this 'seferic/seraphic' island will always be there.

And I assume that it will be there for the whole of Europeans – after this intermediary period of post-transcendental, post-spiritual, and neo-pragmatic mentality – as a precious source wherefrom to restart, to 'reactivate' a more complete, more harmonious being-in-the-world, in spite of any economic crises, any political chaos, any absurd nihilism.

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Summary of the Workshop 25 Years of European Capitals of Culture

Technopolis 18th of September 2010 – Moderator Rodolfo Maslias

The workshop started with a power point presentation prepared by the moderator to give an overview of the importance of this project and some examples to stress its evolution and the different approach by each city.

The introduction to the workshop was made by Spyros Merkouris, Director of Athens '85, the first ECOC. He spoke on the origin of an idea by Melina Merkouri that was to give to European unification a cultural aspect beside the economic and social ones. He stressed the need to preserve the values that have constituted the milestones of the project against the increasing pressure to convert the ECOCs in a commercial and marketing event. After describing the aims and the program of Athens '85 that brought to Athens important events

from all over Europe in all fields of art and culture, he stressed the importance of networking among the ECOCs to ensure the know-how transfer. Spyros Merkouris spoke about the history of the Network of ECCM, its achievements and the difficulties that led to its abolition last year, leaving a gap that has to be filled by the Documentation Center of the City of Athens created this year and providing a networking facility, but also by the ECP that could play an active role and by the Services of the European Commission.

Steve Austen, Director of Amsterdam '87 spoke on the evolution of the project since the first years and on the different structure of each organization that explains the difficulties of creating a formal network of ECOCs. He stated that there has always been an informal cooperation between especially the first Capitals of Culture and that the pioneers of the project are always available to offer their expertise to the new candidates and ECOCs.

The moderator made a conclusion of these two interventions suggesting that ECP undertakes an initiative by making concrete proposals to the decision makers for the improvement of the procedures and the overall project on the basis of the results of the workshop with as first step the request that the European Commission assumes at the forthcoming revision of the procedure the task to create and finance a permanent system of networking and know-how transfer that will also affect the evaluation criteria. The ECP could submit this proposal using the exact wording of the amendment that the Member of its Senate Erna Hennicot-Schoepges had tabled at the European Parliament a few years ago.

The next topic of the workshop was the difficulties encountered by each city in organizing the cultural year due to the political interventions in setting the objectives and in the practical and cultural aspects. The discussion was based on the example of the last Greek Capital of Culture, Patras 2006, highlighted from two different aspects, the one of the management by the managing director, Christos Roilos, and the one of the artistic program by the Artistic Director, Alexis Alatsis, and Member of the ECP. Both agreed that the biggest source of problems is the conflict of interests. Several public entities, City, Region, local organizations participate in the project and each one has its own goals. They also both agreed that Patras was probably not a right choice to be a Capital of Culture (it was appointed by the State without internal competition just as the third biggest city after Athens and Thessaloniki, which had already earned the title).

Christos Roilos enumerated the main goals set by the Board, described the grade of success and explained the reasons some of them have partly or not achieved at all. Most of them were linked to political conflicts among the two big parties governing the different entities participating in the Board. He also described the failure of the sustainability attempt and described in detail the situation of the infrastructures, none of which is used today for cultural purposes. Alexis Alatsis who assumed the role of the resigned Artistic Director ex Minister of Culture Thanos Mikroutsikos one week after the start of the cultural year, enumerated a series of problems for designing the program of an ECOC, like the usually exaggerated expectancies created by the politicians, the question of right orienting the communication according to its addressees, the pressures for implication of a large range of local cultural actors, the very usual competition of the ECOC towards the capital of the country, the lack of interest of the media for what is happening outside the capital (Greece is an extreme case in this aspect).

The same political problems occurred in one of this year's ECOCs, Pecs, as Karoly Méhes described taking the floor after the two speakers for Patras.

All participants from former of candidate ECOCs intervened (Graz 2003, Stavanger 2008, Burgos 2016, Turku, 2011, Warsaw 2015, Maastricht 2018 a.o.) Several questions and proposals have been discussed, a list of which will be compiled upon their submission in written to the secretariat.

Finally Lyudmila Nurse (Oxford XXI) and Tuuli Lähdesmäki (University of Jyväskylä) presented their studies on the ECOCs from a scientific point of view and spoke about the important elements that this project offers to the scientific research in the field of culture. In this context, also the role of the Network of Universities dealing with ECOCs was stressed by the moderator.

The two researchers distributed a questionnaire to all the participants to the workshop and also to the other members of ECP not able to attend it. The results will be elaborated and presented together with the list of the concrete proposals in the next few days. The survey will be also available on-line in the ECP website.

The present summary, drafted by the moderator, will be completed on the basis of the recording of the session and quoted participants are invited to ask for corrections or ads.

Speech by Spyros Mercouris

Concept & Spirit of the 25 years of European Capitals of Culture The European Capitals of Culture began as a vision, developed into a big cultural event and became an institution of the European Union.

On November 23, 1983 at the Zappeion Megaron in Athens, the then Minister of Culture Melina Mercouri gathered all the Community Culture Ministers together in order to submit to them the following question: "How is it possible for a Community which is deprived of its cultural dimension to grow?" and continued: "our role as Ministers of Culture is clear. Our responsibility is a must. Culture is the soul of Society. Therefore, our foremost duty is to look at the foundations and nature of this Community. This does not mean that we should impose our ideas. On the contrary, we must recognize the diversity and the differences amongst the people of Europe.

The determining factor of a European identity lies precisely in respecting this diversity with the aim of creating a dialogue between the cultures of Europe. It is time for our voice to be heard as loud as that of the technocrats. Culture, art and creativity are not less important than technology, commerce and the economy.

Cultural diversity is the basic heritage of thousands of years of history. It is the collective product of mankind.

The European community, a commercial and economic community up to that point, had not given special attention to its cultural dimension and Cultural Ministers met informally.

When Melina proposed to the Ministers of Culture to designate each year a European city as a European Capital of Culture, she did so in the belief that a real contribution would be made which would enhance the reinvigoration of both the individual citizen and of the peoples of Europe.

Also, it was certain that through efforts to achieve a higher quality of life the event of the Cultural Capital would expand to cities of European countries outside the Community according to the principles of Democracy, pluralism and rule of law.

The proposal was unanimously accepted and the institution of European Cultural Capital was created with Athens being chosen as the first European Capital of Culture for the year 1985. Thus, I had the honor of being its first director and coordinator. Athens was a big success. Two Presidents were present for the opening ceremony on the 21st of June 1985 at the Acropolis; the President of France, Francois Mitterand, and of Greece, Hristos Sartzetakis. The Prime Minister of Greece, Andreas Papandreou, the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Belgium and Ireland, and all the Ministers of Culture of the European Community with their presence gave their support to this event. With the success of Athens and the cities that followed, the institution of Cultural Capitals was assured.

Although she was first on the list, Athens had from the beginning a wide vision of this cultural event and its prospects.

The institution of the European Capital of Culture was created, so as to show the character of each city which had been nominated. This included its history, traditions and its contemporary creativity.

We especially wanted the event of Cultural Capitals, NOT to be a Festival, but a meeting place for discussion, exchange of ideas and communication, where artists, intellectuals and scientists would bring their work and efforts together towards the promotion of European thought.

To be a tool which would allow the citizens of Europe to be more than mere spectators, to participate, to understand, to feel, to define and shape new ideas and relationships in the process for a politically unified Europe.

In 1990, another decision was taken by the Ministers of Culture of the European Union. Every year and for one month, one city of Europe, but outside the Community would organize cultural events and have direct contact and dialogue with the nominated Cultural Capital for that year. So, Cultural Month was created. During that same year a meeting of the up to then coordinators and organizers of Cultural Capitals took place, to benefit and interchange from their experiences. As a result the ECCM Network (European Cultural Capitals & Months) was formed to link former, current and future European Capitals of Culture. Its aim was to serve the institution of European Capitals of Culture and thereby

deepen the understanding of Europe's cultural diversity. From what we have said up to now, it is clear that the event is not only what a Cultural Capital offers and does on its own, but the contribution of all the European Cultural Capitals offer together as a whole.

To enhance cultural co-operation and the promotion of culture on a European wide basis the ECCM network undertook to share information and pass on experiences made during that year. This was another way of interpreting and promoting European Cultural projects. For that reason the ECCM has organized European programs.

As examples: projects such as solidarity with Sarajevo meant collecting money in support for the rebuilding after the Yugoslavian War, the library of Sarajevo. The waves of the Black Sea and the Art Gender Biennale brought together 14 cities around the Black Sea to show works of young artists. Also the Aegean Archipelago Symposium focused on the Aegean world in order to protect its environment. Then the EU-Japan festival produced numerous projects during Antwerp '93, Lisbon '94, Luxembourg '95, Thessaloniki '97 and Stockholm '98.

Milestones of the ECCM network are:

- Declaration of Delphi, 3rd of July 1999 when representatives from 22 cities stated that it is not enough to pursue solely economic and technocratic goals, but a much greater emphasis needs to be made on cultural dimension.
- The initiation of a day of culture in Europe on the 5th of May underlined by a first Symposium held in Athens in 2000 called "Freedom of Expression & Dialogue".
- To strengthen the link between European cultures and the very concept of European civilization, the network started discussions around the theme "Diversity versus Uniformity". As part of the 5th of May 2002 activity, an essay competition was created for school children on the theme "Europe's cultural diversity: a threat or a chance?" 20 cities participated and three awards were given.
- The Athens Symposium with the title "20 Years European Capitals of Culture" in the year 2005 culminated with the Pnyka Declaration which was read out at the former seat of the ancient Athenian assembly. It stressed the importance of culture, dialogue, freedom of expression and respect for the opinion of the other.

- The Athens Symposium 2007 with the title “Productivity of Culture” focused on cultural policy, the role of culture and the relationship between culture and the economy. Many other and similar institutions have been started world wide, in the form of the European Capitals of Culture. The symposium had the idea of networking further and to create a Network of Networks.

- The travel exhibition “A Journey through Europe: European Capitals of Culture – 20 years” gave the opportunity to create an archive from what 25 cities had done, and which laid the foundation of the Documentation Center of Athens for European Capitals of Culture.

Rodolfo Maslias, ex General Secretary of the Network of Cultural Capitals of Europe, suggested in 2007, to the present Mayor of Athens, Nikitas Kaklamanis, the establishing in Athens of a Documentation Center which would include all the programs and activities of all the Cultural Capitals of Europe. This has now been achieved.

The Documentation Center is a panorama of cultural activities of all the Cultural Capitals of Europe up to now. It shows the huge amount of cultural events, infrastructures, editions, experience, know-how etc. that has been produced during the past 25 years. A unique Cultural Reference Center.

Up to the year 2000, the whole spirit from the cultural cities and their directors was enthusiasm, inspiration and imagination. I want to thank Ingo Weber, Berlin 1988; Bob Palmer, Glasgow 1990; Eric Antonis, Antwerp 1993; Max Aufischer, Graz Cultural Month 1993; Ivonne Fehlman, Lisbon 1994; Guy Dockendorf, Claude Frissoni and Simone Beck, Luxembourg 1995; Simone Beck, also served as General Secretary of the Network, Thanassis Papadopoulos, Thessaloniki 1997; and Carin Fisher, Stockholm 1998, for the close collaboration which created a deep understanding of the tasks ahead and a tremendous friendship over the years. Unfortunately this way of networking, as above, had to face a new situation. The European Commission in the year 2000, the new millennium, had designated nine cities for this year to become European Capitals of Culture, and naturally they formed their own communication so as to be in contact with each other.

Many directors and coordinators of past cities that participated in the ECCM ceased being connected with the cultural capital cities they had worked for. Thus it became an issue

whether any network connecting European Capitals of Culture should be official and formal or informal. By the time the ECCM held its General Assembly in Patras 2006, a schism prevailed. On the one hand, the ECCM faced demands to live up to its formal character, while the newly designated cities tended towards the creation of just an informal network. But once there were so many cities, such an idea to continue networking at an informal level was deeply flawed. The ECCM network struggled to exist but it became, after Patras, very clear that it was impossible to continue in the same way.

Undoubtedly the Network of European Capitals of Culture is a success story. For the members of the network involved were people who had the abilities to think, to innovate, to create, to develop, to communicate, to understand, to exchange ideas, to create a constructive dialogue between cultures and above all to respect the opinion of others and the diversity of cultures which makes up Europe.

I strongly believe that a new network of ECOC is much needed to link the future ECOC to form a communication with the Documentation Center and the past ECOC and to create European Programs.

In 2007 the European Commission published a study which confirmed that culture is of central and growing importance to the European economy. The study speaks about no less than 5.8 million people who are employed in the cultural sector. While elsewhere unemployment increased, the cultural sector had started to employ more and more of Europe's best educated and most flexible workers, namely artists, film makers, designers, writers etc. The facts speak for themselves.

The study merits a welcome. But those of us who are involved and concerned about the future of European culture, the study carries with it, a certain risk. It comes at a time when progress is too often defined in purely commercial and material terms, and the study may reinforce this tendency to look upon cultural activity as being merely another form of economic activity. This would be a mistake. In the long run of history culture has never been a mere or even primarily an economic activity.

Here we must be careful. Culture is much deeper and wider. The Productivity of culture is generated by culture's own power to renew itself and to create out of itself a momentum to go forward. This is culture's perennial strength.

We must never forget that culture is horizontal. Culture is at the center of our social, economic and political life. It goes straight to the human being for the betterment of the quality of life.

Despite this productive role of culture the newer European Capitals of Culture have narrowed the goal of ECOC. Especially, Liverpool 2008 and Essen 2010, concentrated on strengthening the economic impact. Of course, this had considerable success, but it is only one factor of the philosophy of the European Capitals of Culture.

Today, developed countries of the world form a global village. Never in the history of mankind has there ever existed such easy contact. Each country and each continent is in constant communication. But it is doubtful if such communication promotes a straightforward and constructive dialogue between peoples and civilizations.

We live in a time that is dominated by cynicism, mistrust, insecurity and fear. The pursuit of profit corrupts and changes the characters of people. We must understand that when there is an increase in material goods, which is not followed with a parallel development of ideas and values, then the lifestyle created flattens every cultural creation and is doomed to wither and decline.

Unfortunately, with the political, economic and social relations of today –and especially because of the economic crisis– the transnational capital, controls and checks the world economy, and thus is ostracizing culture from the decision making process.

We have to react.

We have to believe in the power and productivity of culture.

Civilization – culture absorbs from the past, shapes the present and perceives the future.

Throughout the ages, mankind has consistently sought progress and renewal.

In the long history of human civilization there has been a whole series of renaissances, each one making its contribution to moral and intellectual regeneration and to the betterment of the quality of life.

Man is the driving force.

If man wants to develop and progress he must not forget the eternal values that he himself has created. If he wants to dream again he must create new ideas and values.

And who knows? Perhaps the institution of European Capitals of Culture may assist the old Continent of Europe with new ideas and values so essential for nations, communities and especially man.

Spyros Mercouris

First Director & Coordinator of “Athens – Cultural Capital 1985”

Melina Mercouri Culture Center - “Europe and its Greek Legacy”

Athens, 18/09/2010