

## Ruffolo Report on Cultural Cooperation in Europe

The European Parliament had assigned its Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport to outline the current situation of, along with useful recommendations on, cultural cooperation in Europe in January 2001. Rapporteur Giorgio Ruffolo had been charged with the preparation of the report which was published on 16 July 2001. The report consists of two parts:

- the motion explores antecedents expressed in a sophisticated manner ("having regard to..." and "whereas...") but also gives a detailed description of what to do and how to do it in order to enhance the aim of the study while
- the explanatory statement practically provides background information i.e. a summary of relevant issues in the cultural sector of the EU and the comparative analysis of European cultural policies.

### Summary of the REPORT ON CULTURAL COOPERATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

(Ruffolo report) The motion for a resolution that is the actual proposal to be discussed among others points out that:

- Europe is distinctively united in its diversity i.e. the rich variety of languages, traditions, artistic and cultural expressions should be deemed extremely valuable
- following the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty various initiatives (such as the Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael programmes then followed by Culture 2000, Media Plus, Connect, European Capital of Cultures and European Year of Languages) were launched
- in 2000 only 0.1 % of the Community budget was allocated to culture and the audio-visual sector
- the EU has an influence on national cultural policies regarding mostly legislation on copyright, resale rights etc.

therefore the following actions are highly recommended to be done:

- all EU "activities promoting the information society should give far greater weight to the cultural dimension"
- Member States should "allocate at least 1 % of total public funds to stimulate artistic creation"
- the Commission should "submit to the Council and the Parliament (EP) an annual report on the cultural policy of the Union and Member States"
- Member States should, with EC, "draw up and carry out a 3-year cultural cooperation plan" focusing on eg.
- strengthening telematic networks
- exchanging information on best practices
- "reinforcing the Eurostat working group on cultural statistics"
- seeking a stronger connection between culture and education
- "conducting research, particularly on techniques for conserving cultural heritage"
- "promoting a training scheme for cultural managers"
- analysing the role of the media (their importance in shaping cultural awareness)
- "developing relations for cooperation with the Council of Europe and UNESCO"
- the funding of cultural activities granted in the framework of Structural Funds should be reviewed
- a European agency should be set up "to monitor cultural cooperation, to ensure the exchange of information and coordination between cultural policies of Member States and Community cultural policy", to identify and promote sponsoring schemes
- the role of cultural contact points should be upgraded since they constitute an active and rather useful link between Member States (and candidate countries) and the Community in Culture 2000 cooperation
- a second Cultural Forum (the first took place in January 1998) should be convened to redefine values and objectives of cultural cooperation in Europe
- patronage for artistic creation and events should be encouraged
- Member States should grant tax benefits to patrons of the art
- certain principles connected to the tax treatment of works of art, VAT and the movement of artists within EU should be reviewed
- 0.1 to 0.5 % of any funding granted in the framework of Structural or Cohesion Funds (for transport, communications, environment etc. purposes) should cover the creation of a special work of art that would serve to decorate the original object.

The explanatory statement gives a detailed introduction in the culture sector of EU and national cultural policies

Europe should be considered more than a political-economic-monetary union: culture must not play a secondary role as always. Since 1974 the idea of a common cultural policy has been supported to evolve in the first programmes like Kaleidoscope, Raphael and Ariane incorporated lately into Culture 2000. Limited interest to this field, however, is obvious: in 2000 only 0.1 % of Community budget was allocated to cultural and audio-visual issues even though more weight (means more money) was given to culture in the framework of Structural Funds and other Community actions. Furthermore, the subsidiarity principle that is the strictly expressed demand of "non-intervention between Community and national levels" leads to an impossible phenomenon of needed but not admitted cooperation. In order to explore the above existing gap a survey was carried out with the following results.

Most countries agree with the sort of activities carried out under the definition of culture eg. visual arts, architecture etc. The only exception was the information sector (radio, TV and the press), the information policy since in some countries it seems to be the competence of an authority other than the cultural ministry.

The objectives of national cultural policies (safeguarding of pluralism, support for artistic creation etc.) also equal only the emphasis placed on them vary.

As for the institutional framework, the "predominant model appears to be the ministerial one" with numerous countries boasting of arm's length' agencies.

Regarding the levels of competence within the government the key elements turned to be a three-tier administrative system i.e. state-region-municipality and a "general trend towards devolution" of responsibilities.

Cultural funding is still not sufficient and the sectoral distribution is unbalanced, too. In southern Europe heritage is privileged while northern countries "give priority to visual arts, entertainment, cultural industry and libraries". In the majority of countries "cultural expenditure is borne prevalently by local authorities or regions". The role of the private sector is generally twofold: it funds the cultural sector and manages cultural institutions. The incessant development of the third sector shows the determination of citizens to be involved.

Government intervention prevails in four areas of cultural policy:

- ownership and direct management
- financial assistance (eg. tax relief)
- regulations
- granting of rights (copyright).

Tax policies differ substantially. Tax allowances are governed by different rules in each country, taxation on artists moving between countries are regulated bilaterally. VAT rates are of numerous kinds as well. Business sponsorship is widespread.

So much for differences. The "convergences in the priorities of the various cultural policies" are as follows:

- a devolution of powers over culture-related issues from central government to the lower levels;
- greater support for cultural demand;
- strong emphasis on training and artistic education;
- considerable support for contemporary art;
- the introduction of new forms of public/private partnership.

Some of the conclusions the report mentions:

- "the concept of 'unity in diversity' is proving to be a specific feature of European culture"
- "the following important parallels can be drawn: culture has shifted from the margins to the centre of the political and institutional stage in all countries; there is a trend towards devolution in terms of responsibility for and management of cultural policy; the relationship between the public sector and the private sector is being redefined, to the benefit of the latter; the third sector is taking on an increasingly important role in the organisation of culture; there is greater focus on relations between cultural activities and technological development; all countries feel the need to strengthen and skilfully manage the relationship between conservation and creation; expectations of educational and training systems are higher"
- "there is a clear need to harmonise the language and key concepts relating to cultural policy so as to enable a European cultural information system to be set up, building on the work already done by the Eurostat Leadership Group"
- "long-term cooperation needs to be developed, not only with regard to specific projects but also to strategic operations".

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