

The Warsaw Symposium

Symposium of experts on "Cultural Diversity in the light of globalization. The Future of the Cultural Industries in East and Central Europe" organised in collaboration with the Polish National Commission for UNESCO (Warsaw, 30 June - 1st July 2000).

The notion of cultural diversity is often used in the sense of promoting minority cultures and thus ensuring diversity of the culture in a country. Here it refers to the cultures of nations which are not dominating one or other segment of world cultural industries. (Realistically, in some cases it refers to all nations versus one.)

For details on the meeting go to http://www.unesco.org/culture/industries/html_eng/poland1.htm.

The aim of the symposium was to discuss the three following items:

- the definition of cultural diversity in the world of today ;
- the special aspects of the situation of cultural industries in Central and Eastern Europe ;
- the means of promoting cultural diversity.

The greater part of the meeting was spent on informing each other about the state of the various sectors of cultural industry in Eastern Europe: books, films, music and the audio-visual media. The contributors were required to dwell on measures of protecting national culture from excessive effects of globalisation; the main emphasis remained, however, on the pains of transition.

Relatively less time remained for the presentation of the problems in connection with world trade agreements. The composition of the meeting did not favour such analysis. The experts coming from the international organisations had the necessary knowledge, but the Eastern participants were little initiated in the niceties of world trade, no matter how qualified they were in their own cultural fields. No foreign trade expert was present from our region.

This symposium was an important step into the direction of raising awareness about the issue in Easter Europe.