

Europe, Culture and Digital Environment: Prospects for a 2014-2019 Strategy

1. The meeting of the Culture and European Affairs Minister, to take place during the Chaillot Forum – "The Future of Culture, the Future of Europe" in Paris on 4 April, marks a new stage in the incorporation of culture by European decision-makers. It will open up dialogue between elected representatives, artists, creators, professionals and citizens, including the youngest of them, to as last treat culture sectors as a key factor of Europe's future.

Culture has a singular place in Europe, for it is central to the European societal model, its nations and its territories. Europe's identity is closely tied to the wealth of its cultural heritage and the vitality of its creation, which is the foundation of its global outreach.

The attractiveness of Europe's culture and the outreach of its creators and cultural industries are also engines for the continent's economy. Representing up to 4.5% of EU GDP and over 8 million jobs across Europe, the cultural and creative sector is an essential asset for the continent, in a global economy based on innovation and creation. This is why the European Union needs to strive to develop a genuine "industrial policy" to foster cultural and creative industries.

2. It is time for Europe to fully account for the importance of culture in every dimension. The role of the Member States in promoting culture is naturally fundamental. The EU's responsibility is to allow it to thrive fully in order to ensure the cultural diversity, vitality and outreach of Europe. The EU has implemented remarkable initiatives including the European Agenda for Culture, Creative Europe, European Capitals of Culture, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive and the creation of a solid European copyright framework.

Yet the EU's action needs rethinking at the dawn of the digital revolution. It is urgent to adapt European policies or, where appropriate, the terms of their implementation, in order to guarantee the quality and diversity of creation in this new environment while fostering the accessibility of works. The cultural sectors are experiencing a historic transition which is crucial for their future and therefore that of access to culture and European cultural creation. The promotion of creativity, knowledge and heritage is becoming an essential resource for Europe's future. Yet the digital strategy implemented since 2010 focuses on infrastructure and technologies and has not truly set a horizon concerning the cultural services and content.

3. This is why it is crucial for the European Union to draw up an ambitious new strategy for culture. Firstly, the mainstreaming of culture must be pursued with renewed vigour. This new strategy needs to aim to continue ensuring that cultural stakes are fully taken into account in all relevant European policies (internal market, digital, taxation, competition, State aids, trade policy, development policy, mobilization of funding, etc.), building on the achievements of the European Agenda for Culture and the successive Council Work Plans that have implemented it. **For this, the new strategy needs to endow the EU with the specific actions and instruments adapted to its goal of promoting cultural creation and diversity under the new circumstances of the digital transition. This strategy needs therefore to be fully integrated** into the Commission's work programme, the mid-term review of the Europe 2020 strategy, and the Council's work

programme for culture, which will be drawn up in 2014. In this context, it would be very useful if Commissioners-designate for portfolios directly concerned by cultural issues were to present how they intend to contribute to an ambitious policy in this field, during their hearings before the European Parliament. In its organization, the next Commission will need to enable the implementation of this cultural strategy by effectively taking into account cultural issues in all policies and developing specific instruments and measures for the cultural field.

This cultural strategy for Europe in the digital age should cover these following priorities in particular.

1 - Fully take into account cultural issues in competition and taxation policies and, if necessary, define specific rules: it is vital to implement European competition and taxation rules that foster cultural creation and diversity, particularly in the face of the major digital players. The challenge is to create a level playing field between players, both European and international, thanks to a resolute fight against anti-competitive practices and an effective tax framework, combating tax optimization practices that can undermine cultural diversity.

2 - Encourage the development of the digital offer through a tax framework based on the principle of technological neutrality: with a view to supporting the digital transition of trade in cultural products, it is essential to ensure that identical VAT rates apply between conventional and online cultural goods and services. The European framework needs to be reviewed quickly for this purpose.

3 - Affirm the central role of copyright in cultural creation: reflections on modernization of copyright for the digital era need to be guided by the aim of strengthening the creative economy and the compensation of creators. In particular, this means better ensuring the implementation of these rights and combating intellectual property violations, including piracy. In this respect, all digital and creative ecosystem players need to be involved and the coherence of all applicable legislation should be sought.

4 - Promote cultural content in the digital environment: the EU needs to support all cultural content providers in their digital transition, by stimulating the creation of attractive content and the development of innovative services, while ensuring fair sharing of revenue. The publishing, cinema, music, and audiovisual sectors need to receive particular attention, bolstering the policies of Member States to strengthen cultural diversity, including in the areas of ebooks and video games. Harmonization of metadata and facilitated identification of works, interoperability requirements, encouragement to the issuing of licences and digitization of heritage are opportunities for the future which need to be part of the work programme of the European institutions. A heightened ambition for the development of cultural services needs to be drawn up for the European digital library, Europeana, whose long-term funding needs to be guaranteed.

5 - Mobilize resources for the financing of creation: the European Union and its Member States need more than ever to work to ensure that cultural and creative industries have access to finance. In particular the cultural and creative sector must make the best use of opportunities offered by European programmes (Creative Europe, Horizon 2020, COSME, Cohesion Policy, CEF). Moreover, the European State aids framework for culture needs to permit the implementation of cultural sector support policies. All players participating in the distribution and dissemination of works should also be encouraged to participate in the funding of creation and production. Lastly, innovative forms of financing need to be encouraged, such as crowdfunding.

6 - Draw up relevant regulations to guarantee an abundant offer of cultural goods and ensure the existence of a fabric of diversified services: public access to works and cultural diversity needs to be facilitated, and innovative economic models contributing to the same goals need to be helped to thrive. The cultural diversity goal which inspired European legislation on audiovisual media services therefore needs to remain central to concerns in the new digital environment, including all stakeholders in the distribution of works and fostering exposure and promotion of European works on new services. Artist mobility needs to be further encouraged.

7 - Make access to culture and artistic and cultural education a shared goal: access to culture and artistic practices should be a shared goal. The EU can be a catalyst for innovative experiments and reflections carried out by States, as well as by territorial stakeholders and associations.

8 - Recognize and promote the place of heritage and linguistic diversity as European assets: Europe has a great diversity of heritage that it needs to strive to promote. Heritage conservation needs to be encouraged through suitable funding policies, including in the framework of the Cohesion Policy, and through fully taking into account the issues of remembrance and archives in European policies. The movement of works and ideas needs to be fostered by incentives for translation.

9 - Fully take into account cultural issues as far as the common trade policy is concerned and in the EU's external action generally : on the global stage, the EU needs to be proactive to strengthen cultural diversity, as in the role it played in support of the 2005 UNESCO Convention. This notably involves excluding audiovisual services from the scope of trade liberalization. The capacity of public authorities to support cultural sectors should be preserved in this framework, both in the digital environment and in the conventional environment, as well as the capacity to regulate them. International cooperation also needs to be strengthened in the fight against piracy. Lastly, the EU will need to ensure that cultural issues are included in the post-2015 sustainable development goals.