Cultural industries in Europe

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The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own initiative report by Guy **BONO** (PES, FR) on cultural industries in Europe.

MEPs welcome the desire shown by the Commission and the Council to recognise the central role played by culture and creativity as important factors in promoting European citizenship, bringing the cultures of citizens closer together and achieving the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy in terms of growth and employment. They call on the Council and the Commission to clarify what constitutes a European view of culture, creativity and innovation and to develop structured policies to promote the real development of European creative industries and to incorporate them in a proper European strategy for culture.

The report emphasises that culture and the cultural sector must be taken into consideration in all other EU policies, particularly those concerning the internal market, competition, trade, business and research and development. The Commission is called upon to put in place a structure aimed at improving the coordination of policies and activities that have an impact on the cultural and creative sector, as well as to set up a **task force for culture and the creative economy**, so as to propose, in cooperation with the European Parliament, concrete measures in the context of the Community policies.

According to the MEPs, **adequate funding for the cultural and creative industries**, as well as for creative communities is essential. They recommend mixed methods of funding and financial guarantee? as well as the promotion of a regulatory and fiscal framework that favours the cultural industries, specifically tax credits and reduced rates of VAT for all cultural products, including on-line works. Structural funds, programmes aimed at SMEs as well as the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development (2007-2013) should place particular emphasis on the development and sufficient funding of cultural and creative industries. MEPs also call on the Commission to look into the possibility of setting up a programme similar to the MEDIA Programme, of carrying through procedures with a view to implementing the European Digital Library initiative and to promote and support the music, theatre and publishing sectors, in order to facilitate the transnational distribution of pieces of work. They also invite the Commission and Member States to increase the amount of aid for translation.

The report also welcomes the idea of increasing the mobility of persons, goods and services in the creativity industry and highlights the need for better statistics in order to enable different countries to develop targeted policies. In this respect, MEPs reiterate the requests made in the Parliament Resolution on the social security status of artists. It is also necessary to improve qualification, apprenticeship and training systems, particularly by offering students in cultural and artistic disciplines, at all levels of education, training to prepare them for professional life, as well as by stimulating better synergies between businesses in the sector and schools.

MEPs also call for well-organised, collective cross-border management of **copyrights and neighbouring rights** and call on the Commission and Member States to implement the necessary measures to ensure the respect for and promotion of intellectual property. They call on all the industry stakeholders, particularly telecommunications operators and Internet Service Providers, to search together for fair solutions, in the interest of a balance between the opportunities for access to cultural events and content and intellectual property, so as to ensure proper and appropriate remuneration for all those holding certain categories of rights, real choice for consumers and cultural diversity. On this issue, MEPs draw attention to the fact that criminalising consumers not seeking to make a profit is not the right solution to combating digital piracy. Instead they suggest empowering consumers and all relevant actors in the **fight against piracy** and establishing awareness and education campaigns.

The parliamentary committee proposes that culture be better integrated into external policies of the EU. It invites the Commission and Member States to continue, within the framework of WTO and GATS negotiations, to neither offer the liberalisation of audiovisual services nor request the repeal of the Most Favoured Nation clause.

Finally, MEPs welcome the creation, in 2007, of the annual European Parliament Prize for cinema – the "Prix LUX".