European agenda for culture in a globalising world

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The European Parliament adopted, by 542 votes to 62, with 12 abstentions, a resolution on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world in response to the Commission Communication on this subject. The own-initiative report was tabled by Vasco **GRAÇA MOURA** (EPP-ED, PT), on behalf of the Committee on Culture and Education. Parliament endorses the aims set out in the Communication and welcomes the fact that it has been well received in Council. However, it regrets that no reference to the role of the large number of partnerships between cities, local authorities and regions has been made in establishing a European agenda for culture in a globalising world.

Members state that they are concerned that the communication fails to clarify the ongoing problem concerning misunderstandings about culture in terms of contemporary and traditional arts, European heritage and the profit-driven and profitable "creative industries". Moreover, the objectives set out in the agenda generally represent culture as having important social, economic, political and more generally "instrumental" value but do not incorporate the issue of culture as a value in itself (culture qua culture). Members are also concerned that in the debate on intercultural and cultural dialogue and on what is meant by "culture", it is often understood that culture unites people together rather than being a moderator of differences. The Commission's objective to develop dialogue with civil society in the cultural sector is crucial to the development of a coherent European agenda for culture, and only through such structured dialogue could European policies genuinely reflect the demands of European artists and cultural operators.

At EU and legislative level: Parliament believes that if Article 151(4) of the Treaty is to be implemented completely and coherently, the specific features of the culture sector, not least its creative and innovative potential and its social significance have to be taken into account as cultural and economic goods so that culture can fully assume its rightful place within the Lisbon strategy. Existing Community programmes in the culture sector do not fully reflect the implications of Europeans' common cultural heritage. The Commission is asked to propose that specific programmes be drawn up in order to foster artistic creativity and preserve the links with the goods and values that constitute European cultural heritage and to enable those goods and values to interact according to the humanist conception of identities and differences and in present-day cultural works. Parliament makes certain proposal to reinforce the European agenda for culture:

-the implementation of a programme with a view to enhancing the prestige of the European classical heritage and the historic contributions of national cultures down through the centuries and complementing the "Culture framework programme for 2007 to 2013";

-the intensification of policies in support of literary translation provided for in the "Culture Programme (2007 to 2013)";

-the implementation of a programme aimed at developing the promotion of European languages and their role in creative artistic activity in other continents;

-the promotion of all-encompassing international cultural exchanges and of the acquisition of intercultural skills of EU citizens;

-the implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the protection of cultural diversity and, in this context, the protection of Digital Rights Management Systems by bearing in mind both the requirements of the internal market of the Community and the principles of the Convention;

-the implementation of a specific instrument for the publishing market in order to no longer only finance best-sellers, to the detriment of all other literary works that are deemed to be less profitable;

-the implementation of an instrument for musical creation, which is threatened by piracy and illegal downloads (MEPs suggest, in particular, the creation of collective rights management);

-the deployment of new measures to ensure the respect and protection of literary and artistic property rights, particularly in the digital sphere;

-the development of initiatives aimed at reinforcing cultural tourism. Parliament suggests the creation of a European list of "cultural places of pilgrimage" in all Member States and the creation of a European Heritage Label aimed at recognising the European dimension of cultural goods, monuments, memorial sites and pieces of European history and heritage;

-the creation of a "European patron of the arts" so as to enable the public and private sectors to enter into effective partnerships;

-the creation of prestigious European prizes, awarded on a regular basis, for every sphere of creative artistic activity.

To contribute to the promotion of European cultural values, MEPs call on the EU to support a European Year to celebrate a prominent figure, an artistic activity or a large-scale demonstration of European culture. The year 2010 should be declared "European Year to celebrate Frederic Chopin" and 2011 might be declared "European Year of Greek and Latin Classics".

Cultural mainstreaming: Parliament calls for the establishment of voluntary initiatives for cultural education in all Member States. A common history of the EU teaching programme should be established to promote European identity and culture in the context of globalisation. Furthermore, MEPs encourage the systematic integration of the cultural dimension and different components of culture in all external and development policies, projects and programmes.

At the same time, Parliament reminds the Commission that cultural heritage should be managed in a sustainable manner in view of its transitory nature. The management of cultural heritage should therefore be economically viable.

Budgetary level: MEPs request the revision of budgetary measures alleged to support actions envisaged in the European agenda for culture and regret that this agenda does not include any figures on the financing of the planned actions.

Local level: Parliament proposes several new measures to promote the rapid development of culture at regional level and of local groups, including by means of the Interreg IV C programme, and investments passing through European Structural Funds.

Commercial and multilateral level: Parliament urges the Commission and Council to guarantee that the rules governing commercial relations at both the bilateral and the multilateral level are transparent, fair, open, and market-access oriented. It insists that these rules must allow European cultural industries to develop all their potential, particularly in the audiovisual, musical and publishing sectors. The Commission is asked to: (i) review customs control mechanisms in order to prevent the illegal export and

import of protected works of art and cultural goods; (ii) instigate an in-depth revision of the protection of intellectual property rights in order to eradicate the principal causes of counterfeiting and piracy; (iii) ensure that all commercial partners apply the endorsed obligations in the framework of the WTO; (iv) identify the possible non-tariff barriers imposed by third countries during commercial exchanges for certain European cultural goods and services; (v) endorse the access of cultural products and services of developing countries to the European market and encourage the development of European cultural demonstrations in developing countries.