

# Culture 2000 programme for the period 2000-2004

1998/0169(COD) - 29/04/2008 - Follow-up document

The purpose of this report is to make a final evaluation of the Culture 200 programme. The conclusions drawn and recommendations made are based on an extensive survey of the Culture 2000 programme, which was undertaken by external evaluators.

To recall, the key aims of the Culture 2000 programme were to promote a cultural area common to Europe's people. This was to be achieved by supporting activities such as cultural dialogue; promoting creativity; highlighting cultural diversity etc. The main findings of the evaluation are as follows:

## **External coherence:**

“External coherence” refers to how the Culture 2000 programme fits into the broader context of cultural policy and programmes. The evaluators found that other Community programmes such as the structural funds and the Media and Active Citizenship programmes also prioritise culture as well as sharing similar objectives, target groups, outputs and results. Some concerns were raised regarding the small financial envelope of the Culture 2000 programme.

## **Effectiveness:**

The programme was successful in achieving its objectives – up to a certain point. According to the external evaluators, certain barriers existed preventing cultural actors from participating in the programme. The overall visibility of Culture 2000 amongst those working in the field of culture was felt to be good.

## **Efficiency:**

The external evaluators found that there was a mismatch between staff resources and the volume of work – particularly at peak times. The Cultural Contact Points, established in the Member States, used their grants effectively and managed to provide an efficient service to cultural operators. For their part, participants were satisfied with the application process and equally positive about the kind of information provided. Where there was criticism it related to the inappropriate timing of the calls for proposals and the length of the process itself. At the same time, however, the evaluators acknowledged that Parliamentary scrutiny under the Management Committee procedure lengthened the process. Similarly the evaluators found that the programme dissemination activities could be substantially improved and that the final project reports were of variable quality and usefulness.

## **Utility:**

The report finds that the Culture 2000 programme gave cultural operators in Europe the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive programme of transnational cooperation covering over 30 countries. The possibility to work on cross-border cultural projects is not offered elsewhere. Thus, according to the report, cultural operators have become more outward-looking and more open to transnational intercultural cooperation.

## **Sustainability:**

Those surveyed found that, through the programme, they have managed to establish, strengthen and extend transnational networks across Europe. This process has also led to the generation of new intercultural projects. Further, in certain cases, projects started under the programme managed to continue even after funding ceased. On a final point, the programme had a clear impact on cultural policies in some of the participating countries. It inspired the establishment of new co-financing arrangements in many countries resulting in an overall increase in the amount of funding being made available to intercultural activities.

Following the overall assessment of the programme, the external evaluators set out a number of recommendations relating to:

- **Programme management systems:** for example, examining staff resources with the volume of work during the life of the programme; the scheduling of an annual visit programme by the Management Authorities to projects in order to provide support and guidance on technical issues.
- **Programme communication system:** for example, the appointment of a Publications and Communications officer responsible for editorial content and quality control of the Culture webpage and publications; the publication of an annual compendium of projects to made available on the culture webpage of DG EAC.
- **Programme dissemination activities:** for example, the publication of thematic reports in order to assess the programmes achievements and lessons learnt from good practice; and running a programme of events in order to showcase projects.

To conclude, the Commission shares the evaluator's overall assessment that the programme has provided a stimulus to cross-border cultural cooperation and that it has contributed to a more outward looking approach to cultural activities. More than 1 500 grants were awarded to cultural operators under the programme's actions between 2000 and 2006 with grants exceeding EUR 190 million. Although there is room for improvement, the participants have nevertheless expressed satisfactions with the programme and recognise its overall European added value.