Implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations

2022/2047(INI) - 21/11/2022 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the own-initiative report by Salima YENBOU (Renew, FR) on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations.

In accordance with Article 167 TFEU, Member States are responsible for their own policies for the cultural sector, while the role of the European Commission is to help address common challenges, with due regard for the EU principles of subsidiarity and proportionality.

This report has the objective of assessing and evaluating the implementation of the 2018 New European Agenda for Culture (NEAC) and the 2016 Joint Communication of the European Commission towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (ICR) (the Joint Communication). The two documents outline the EU's political priorities in the cultural field, with regard to both the internal and the external dimension of cultural policies.

General

Members acknowledged the overall satisfactory implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and of the joint communication entitled 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations'. However, they noted that the assessment of the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture has highlighted shortcomings, mainly in terms of priorities. Their strategic framework needs to be updated to set out the overarching goals of the EU's cultural policy, as well as the practical tools to be used to implement them, including by clarifying how the Council Work Plan for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations contribute to making the updated New European Agenda for Culture operational.

The Council Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 represents an essential tool for steering Member States' strategies in addressing the issues that are relevant for the cultural and creative sectors and industries in Europe. In this regard, it should increase cultural policy collaboration and include frameworks of evaluation as an approach for monitoring implementation. Member States are called on to make full use of the potential offered by the EU funding, programmes and policies dedicated to culture and their synergies with appropriate programmes, notably Horizon Europe, Erasmus+, the New European Bauhaus and others.

Social dimension

The report invited the Member States to promote existing cultural and artistic activities and provide further opportunities for active participation, to increase the ability to reach new audiences.

The Commission and the Member States are asked to:

- ensure the inclusion of the most marginalised and under-represented groups in cultural activities and initiatives, not only as passive recipients but also as active creators of these activities, fostering a sense of common belonging and a shared future among all people;

- strengthen their efforts to provide quality information on mobility and exchange programmes for artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as material support to tackle all kinds of obstacles to mobility in the CCSI, including administrative, financial and linguistic obstacles, as well as obstacles linked to disability.

Economic dimension

Members considered that the workers in the cultural and creative sectors and industries, having been seriously hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, must benefit from a genuine and targeted European recovery. They called on the Member States to dedicate **2 % of their budgets to culture**, as Parliament has requested on many occasions.

Parliament has also repeated its call for a European Status of the Artist to be proposed, which would set out a common framework for adequate, fair and transparent working conditions and minimum standards common to all EU countries. Members call for the procedures to apply for EU funding, including those for the Creative Europe programme, to be simplified as they are often still too burdensome and create unnecessarily obstacles for all potential beneficiaries.

External dimension and international cultural relations

Highlighting the role of the EU in promoting a continuous dialogue on cultural policies between its Member States and third countries, Members called on the Member States to ensure adequate funding as a result, in order to strengthen the EU's international capacity in the field of culture and to enable European cultural and creative sectors and industries, including smaller organisations and artists, to become active internationally.

Regretting the lack of a clear and coherent EU strategy for international cultural relations, Members strongly encourage the Commission and the EEAS to regularly exchange practices and lessons learnt and to develop coherent strategies, including steps towards their implementation and tailor-made guidelines for cultural relations activities to be implemented by the EU delegations in third countries and Member States' diplomatic representations.

The resolution emphasised the potential of EU international cultural relations to counter disinformation in third countries and foreign interference towards the EU, and the hostile narratives against the EU in illiberal and authoritarian regimes.

Lastly, Parliament warned the Commission, the EEAS, the EU delegations in third countries and the Member States that the EU-funded restoration of war-torn cultural heritage sites in third countries should not benefit belligerents who are accused of human rights violations, legitimise authoritarian regimes, or normalise relations with them.