

Culture 2000 programme for the period 2000-2004

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PURPOSE : to present the report from the Commission on the implementation of the "Culture 2000" Programme in the years 2000 and 2001. **CONTENTS** : this report presents a summary of the main findings and recommendations of the mid-term evaluation of the Culture 2000 Programme, which was carried out by the Danish consultancy PLS Ramboll Management, as well as the main reactions and conclusions of the Commission to these recommendations. - Concerning the programming : Culture 2000 followed a comprehensive and coherent logic, aimed at fostering cultural co-operation in Europe. The Programme was complementary to other Community actions and the cultural policies of the Member States. The requirement introduced in 2001 of 5% financial participation by all co-organisers was a good instrument to ascertain the active participation of all cultural operators in the projects, although it may have dissuaded the creation of partnerships with no prior history of co-operation and impede some cultural operators in the associated countries from participating in the Programme. The Commission carried out a number of important activities to disseminate knowledge about the Programme. - As regards the projects : in 2000 and 2001, more than 1 600 applications were submitted to the Programme, of which approximately one quarter received funding. The main beneficiaries were operators from those countries, which also presented the majority of applications. Most selected projects targeted more than one of the specific objectives of the Programme. The number of applications to the Programme declined significantly in 2001. At the same time the number of projects rejected as failing to meet eligibility criteria rose considerably. - With regard to the partnerships : most of the cultural operators receiving funding were relatively small in terms of organisational capacity (budget and staff). The funded projects were managed by a wide variety of organisations (NGOs, national cultural institutions, private enterprises, etc.). The partnerships were mainly formed on the basis of previous co-operation, normally with similar organisations in other countries. - As regards the results : the Programme created cultural added value by creating new forms of cultural expression, attracting greater audiences than planned, and encouraging the movement of artists and cultural operators. Operators completed their projects with the level of quality required. The Programme also succeeded in creating European added value in terms of creating new transnational co-operation and new partnerships that appear to be sustainable. The socio-economic impact seemed to be more restricted. Moreover, the report states that efficiency and effectiveness were reached at project level, at the Cultural Contact Points level, at the Programme management level and, therefore, at the overall Programme level. - Recommendations : the consultancy in charge of the evaluation has presented the following recommendations. The reactions from the Commission are also presented: 1) Improving dissemination and information about the Programme : the Commission already has a clear dissemination strategy (Cultural Contact Points, e-Newsletter, website, etc.), and does not consider it appropriate to target specific beneficiaries, since all operators have the same rights and the Commission has a duty not to treat them in a discriminatory manner. The Commission already gives information about the number of applications as well as the number of pre-selected and selected projects in its website and in its monthly e-newsletter. 2) Improving management of the Programme : a public consultation was launched in the frame of the preparation of the Programme that will succeed Culture 2000. The Forum 2001 also shed light on the needs of the operators. CCPs should not be overloaded with more work than contractually required, otherwise they will not be able to target their activities properly. The Commission will launch in 2004 the new "SYMMETRY" management system, which will address this and other problems. It belongs to the contractual functions of the CCPs to provide technical assistance to applicants. The Commission will inform them of the need to increase further this activity. The Commission also wonders whether the ability to read a call for proposals and fill the applications correctly is not a sign of competence and credibility of the operator that should not be neglected. The cash-flow problems of the operators will be settled, as from 2004 on the payment ratio will be 70/30. 3) Improving the selection procedure : the selection procedure should be reconsidered, in order to make it shorter than 6 months

(through a reduction of the delays given to the European Parliament and the Management Committee). In 2002, the Commission launched a free e-Newsletter, which provides precise information on the progress of applications. 4) Reconsidering the objectives of the Programme : the Programme's current objectives are too broad, especially taking into account the funds available. The choice of objectives is a political one, and the Commission will address this issue at the appropriate moment, namely in the context of the preparation of the cultural Programme that will eventually succeed Culture 2000. In the light of the evaluation and its conclusions and recommendations, the Commission does not consider it necessary to present a proposal for a modification of the Programme for the period remaining to be implemented. Moreover, partly for reasons of overall financial planning and partly in order to have the time to present and have considered, through due process, a proposal for a new Culture programme, the Commission has put forward a proposal extending Culture 2000 by two years, to 31/12/2006.