Culture: consideration of cultural aspects in the European Commnity action. Report

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OBJECTIVE: the report considers ways and means of performing the new tasks assigned to the Community by the TEU in the cultural sector, proposing a method for taking account of cultural aspects in defining and implementing Community policies with implications for the field of culture. SUBSTANCE: the report deals specifically with how cultural aspects can be taken into account (within the meaning of Article 128(4) of the TEU) in all Community policies (free movement of goods, taxation, competition policy, etc.), in the Community's internal policies (regional and social policy, advanced technology, environment, tourism, etc.), as well as in the field of foreign policy. In considering these various sectors, the report reaches two conclusions: - that the legislative acts and case law of the Court have in many cases had to reconcile the attainment of the objectives of the TEU with the objectives of cultural policy. In other cases, however, this process has proved difficult because of the economic and commercial nature of the cultural activities concerned, with the result that cultural aspects are given short shrift (e.g. taxation of certain cultural assets, etc.); - that the vast majority of Community policies and actions now have a cultural dimension, with this cultural 'investment' having taken place gradually in the field of economic and social cohesion, environment, research and technology and social policy. The first lessons to be drawn from these conclusions are that: - the cultural aspects of the various Community policies are increasingly important and that most of these policies interact in the cultural sector, mobilizing many operators and substantial resources; - if substantial resources are devoted to cultural activities, the operations concerned are rarely if ever the product of a Community cultural policy as such; - the objectives of European cultural policy must be clearly spelled out and included in the drawing up of genuine Community policies. Cultural policy must include promotional measures adopted under Article 128 but should also include legislative acts adopted with reference to other legal bases. There must be a distinction between the objectives and resources of a Community cultural policy and the Member States' policies in this field. The policy must have its own objectives and must be part of the European project, acting as a force for integration. It must therefore contribute to the consolidation and spread of the European model of society and encourage the preservation of Europe's cultural heritage. It must also give citizens a greater sense of belonging to a single community. The Commission proposes three lines of action to achieve these goals: - enhancement of the cultural roots and currents which are common to Europeans and which play a part in forming the cultural identities and realities of peoples of Europe; - a cultural action making it possible to promote the emergence of permanent networks between the cultural operators in the various countries; - definition of priorities by the Community to increase the convergence of support actions, ensuring greater consistency between cultural activities and avoiding the impression of piecemeal support currently prevalent. Finally, outside the European Union, cultural policy must promote an expansion in the cultural influence of European people and of the European model of society. For its part, the Commission intends to draw inspiration from what has been done in the environment sector, incorporate cultural policy objectives in the proposals for secondary legislation it submits to the Council and the European Parliament, and seek to implement policies with an impact on the cultural sector.