

Culture 2000 programme for the period 2000-2004

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The first framework programme for culture (2000-2004) ought to be more transparent and effective, and greater importance should be attached to small projects. These are two of the key ideas in the report by Mrs Nana MOUSKOURI (PPE, GR) on establishing a single financing and programming instrument for cultural cooperation (Culture 2000 programme), which was adopted by Parliament. In order to achieve this, Members substantially amended the Commission proposal, and proposed that the budget should be increased from EUR 167 m to EUR 250 m. In Parliament's view, the fundamental objective of the framework programme was to enshrine the cultural dimension as the heart and driving force of the process of European integration. In order to render the programme more effective, the European Parliament proposed a sectoral approach, taking account of the various needs of each field of culture. Six vertical measures were laid down, indicating the approximate share of the financial package to be allocated to each sector: performing arts (theatre and dance) (9%), music (16%), plastic, applied and visual arts (7%), cultural heritage (35%), literature (books, reading and translation) (9%), and other forms of artistic expression (4%). In parallel with this verticalisation of the promotion of culture, three horizontal measures were proposed, likewise with an indicative breakdown of funding: synergies (trans-sectoral activities) (5%), joint activities with other Community programmes (5%), activity in support of major projects and/or projects of symbolic importance (10%). Correcting the balance of the programme in this way would make it possible to impart greater Community added value to small projects and not just to large ones. Parliament also amended the provisions concerning the implementation of the programme. In particular it made provision for closer association of operators and organisations responsible for culture and defined more precisely the cooperation to be entered into with Member States. It altered the committology arrangements and bolstered the aspects of the programme concerning consistency and complementarity with other Community initiatives. It stressed external cultural cooperation under the programme. Parliament provided for the setting-up of 'European cultural contact points' to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the programme at national and regional level so as to promote small-scale actions directly involving citizens, to ensure constant interaction with the various national and Community institutions providing support and facilitate access to the programme. In order better to meet the needs for transparency and efficiency, the framework programme will be monitored and evaluated in a very detailed manner (interim and final evaluation reports are to be drawn up). As regards the annexes to 'Culture 2000', specifying details of the measures to implement the programme, Parliament completely altered the approach on the basis of its sectoral breakdown of the programme. The objectives of the various actions are to be attained by means of two types of measures. One is support for integrated projects covered by cultural cooperation agreements. These are major projects of symbolic importance (e.g. coproduction of cultural events) involving at least five of the States participating in the programme. This cooperation may be multiannual, in which case a summary of activities undertaken must be submitted annually. Community support must not exceed 60% of the budget for the cultural cooperation agreement, nor may it exceed ECU 200 000 per annum. The second type of measure is annual support for specific projects which must involve operators from at least three of the participating States. These may, for example, have the aim of improving access to culture and increasing participation in it by citizens in all their social and regional diversity, including disadvantaged sections of the population and the young. Parliament laid down details of the selection criteria for access to the programme, particularly stressing the viability of actions. Out of a concern to defend the arts as a whole, Parliament called for a study of fiscal aspects of culture and intellectual property.