

Opening Conference for the 50th Anniversary of the European Cultural Convention

Wrocław, Poland

9-10 December 2004

Declaration

(Preamble)

We, **MINISTERS** responsible for culture, education, youth and sport from the states parties to the European Cultural Convention, assembled in Wrocław, on 9-10 December 2004 :

We **CELEBRATE** the 50th anniversary of the opening to signature of the Convention in Paris on 19 December 1954 ;

We **AFFIRM** that the values and principles of the Convention that has brought our countries together in peaceful cooperation under the Council of Europe for 50 years remain as valid as ever, and represent a precious resource for an undivided, democratic Europe in the 21st Century ;

We **ADOPT** this Declaration and commend it to the Council of Europe and its member states for their future action.

I. Achievements of 50 years of the European Cultural Convention

Less than 10 years after the end of World War II, the adoption of the European Cultural Convention within the framework of the Council of Europe reflected the hope of future unity and a belief in the power of the humanistic spirit of education and culture to heal old and new divisions, prevent conflicts, and cement the democratic order.

The key achievements of our predecessors and ourselves¹ must be judged by the principles of the Convention itself and of its later developments in **European cultural cooperation**. The three *original political objectives* of the Convention were:

• The recognition by Europeans of their common cultural heritage

Our governments undertook in the Convention to treat our national heritages of civilisation as a common patrimony and trust. We have developed a broad range of measures to safeguard the heritage, tangible or intangible, broadened the scope of the concept, and illustrated its sharing imaginatively.

• Mobility and exchange for mutual understanding

Our governments undertook in the Convention to promote mobility of persons as well as of cultural objects for the mutual learning of our peoples about each other's culture and heritage. We have mainly targeted our action for mobility on students and other young people, and our governments have also encouraged it by bilateral and multilateral programmes and general measures for freedom of movement.

• A broad current of pan-European cultural cooperation

Our governments undertook in the Convention to join in an open and holistic process of cultural cooperation. We have striven, with the active support of the Parliamentary Assembly, to maintain the Convention's unified vision in its flexible and dynamic implementation. We have built up a broad programme of cooperation at both political and professional levels, and extended it from culture, heritage and education to youth and sport.

We have realised the importance of the contribution which the Convention can make to the basic values defended by the Council of Europe and accordingly we have re-shaped the cooperation carried out under the Convention.

The original commitments were thus joined by three *major new objectives*:

• Creating conditions for full participation in democratic life

Whilst seeking effective implementation of the Council of Europe's core values in European societies, we have

worked for the promotion of a model of a democratic culture underpinning law and institutions. In particular, we defined the guidelines for cultural democracy, lifelong learning and sport for all; set up a youth programme as a laboratory for participation; made universities and non-governmental youth and sports organisations full partners in the relevant programmes; and placed education for democratic citizenship and equal opportunity at the heart of our idea of educational quality.

In this context, we are looking forward to celebrating 2005 as the European Year of Citizenship through Education and we are convinced that it will be a major event in the implementation of our policies for education for democracy.

• **A European dimension in standards, policy and practice**

We recognised the need to implement the Convention's broad principles more effectively on the ground. We complemented the sharing of good practice through networks with the intergovernmental setting and monitoring of numerous standards in all the major fields. This policy has strengthened ties to and between national policymakers in each sector, but calls for vigilance to maintain the common vision. We have also acted on our recognition that successful action also relies on partnerships with other international institutions and organisations, in particular the European Union and UNESCO.

• **Promoting cultural diversity and building up shared values**

We understood that the Convention's goal of the peaceful harmony of diverse cultures is a key to democratic stability. Accordingly, we have developed policies to ensure that the diversity of our heritages and artistic creations is not only accepted but actively promoted, as well as ways of fostering dialogue and preventing conflicts both by knowledge and understanding of difference, and by common values.

We have also been active in seeking the same international recognition for cultural rights as for civil, political, economic and social rights, and acknowledgement of cultural rights as integral to the core fundamental rights codified in the Council of Europe's legal instruments. In that connection, we welcome the fact that many cultural rights or rights with a cultural dimension are included in the European Convention on Human Rights, the Revised Social Charter, the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Impressive progress has been made since 1954. However, major challenges still lie ahead. We therefore call on the Council of Europe to further develop its action based on principles, in the same way as 50 years ago the Council and the Convention brought to the forefront values overshadowed by extremism and conflict.

II. Challenges facing European cultural cooperation in today's Europe

The European Cultural Convention enters its second half-century in a Europe transformed by history. These transformations are political as well as economic and technological. The quality of life must be judged by the higher test of the values of the Council of Europe. A lot has been achieved, but similarly a lot remains to be done:

- wider access to education and cultural rights, but too often continued exclusion of minorities and the poor;
- considerable progress in equality between women and men, but important efforts still needed to consolidate recent evolutions and anchor them in people's minds;
- wider personal freedom, but much social disconnection;
- greater protection of the heritage and the environment but their targeting in the course of conflicts, and a realisation of how far our economies are from sustainability;
- access to a flood of information, but scarcely greater wisdom; the end of the tyranny of ideology, but the revival of racism, antisemitism, extreme nationalism, xenophobia, intolerance, exclusion, terrorism, extremism and even warfare.

In the coming years, the Council of Europe will encounter many new challenges for its cultural cooperation. We have begun a debate to identify these to guide our strategy. This debate should be continued throughout the

celebrations of the Convention's 50th anniversary, with contributions from our partners.

At this stage, we therefore formulate our provisional conclusions as **hypotheses** for further consideration in the coming months:

• **European identity and democratic citizenship²**

We should deepen a sense of our *shared history and common future* among the peoples of our 48 states, within their diversity, so as to avoid the emergence of a sense of division within greater Europe. We should therefore encourage a balanced vision of the identities which make up "Greater Europe". We should also encourage and preserve links and dialogue with European diasporas throughout the world.

This would call for measures to combat trends towards stratification and a retreat into closed community identities encouraging a balanced concept of multiple identities; to support the emergence of a common European memory based on recognition both of achievements and of the common heritage of suffering; and to ensure greater mobility of young people, students, artists, creators and professionals throughout the continent within the framework of existing legislation.

• **Cultural diversity and cohesion of society**

We should ensure *cultural freedom* and promote cultural diversity so that each person can develop from his or her own heritage and that of others in respect of common values. In this respect, current initiatives aimed at defending and recognising the specificity of cultural assets and the right of states to carry out national public policies in cultural fields, in particular the draft convention drawn up by UNESCO, deserve our support.

This would call for measures to manage diversity in all its manifestations; to deepen common civic values as the basis for social cohesion; and to foster the dialogue in and between our peoples.

We should build *intercultural dialogue* – including its inter-religious dimension – into European policy in full respect of the principles on which our societies are founded.

This would call for measures to develop this dialogue as an instrument for the prevention of conflicts and for reconciliation. To reinforce our openness towards neighbouring regions – in particular the southern shore of the Mediterranean – and towards the rest of the world, we should seek for the fuller use of existing instruments and the creation of new ones as appropriate.

A Europe of knowledge and information

We should affirm *European democratic values and identity* in the transition to a global information society shaped by knowledge, cultural expression and communication.

This would call for measures of educational, cultural, youth and sports policy to ensure further development of cultural industries, access and participation by all, overcoming digital divides and exclusion; creative, discerning and responsible use of information technologies expanding the intellectual horizons of individuals; ensure the active presence of European cultures, in global cultural exchanges, while using our cultural and natural heritage for sustainable socio-economic development.

• **Changing actors and partners**

Our cooperation should build on a "network Europe" of multiple organisations and on a vibrant civil society, in the framework of *partnerships* based on the Convention's goals. These partnerships would be based on projects in the field and the development of flexible and efficient ways of working with civil society, broadening and adapting our unique practice which we have established in the areas of youth and sport and in our relations with universities.

We should track the emergence of major new patterns in European societies focusing on the *role of the public authorities* in the fields of culture, education, heritage, youth and sport in ensuring individual rights and maintaining democratic values.

Such prospect would call in particular for reinforced cooperation with the European Union and UNESCO. This

would also enable us to reaffirm the importance of national cultural and educational policies in a multilateral context.

III. Lines of action for a Europe without dividing lines

We propose the following strategic guidelines for the further development by the Council of Europe of its work of cultural cooperation. They apply equally to all its sectors, school, out-of-school and higher education, culture, natural and cultural heritage, youth and sport, and build on their achievements and on-going programmes. The Council of Europe should continue to play an essential role in Europe as a forum for the drawing up of standards and cultural policies.

The general focus should be on responding to the needs and aspirations of the peoples of all the States parties to the Convention and, in particular, young people as regards their vision of Europe³ and on promoting dialogue and harmony between Europe and its global environment. The Council of Europe and our governments should take action in the following areas:

European identity and democratic citizenship

In order to empower individuals to act as responsible citizens in their daily lives both individually and collectively, the Council of Europe should strengthen its role as a centre of excellence for policies to equip people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes for life in democratic societies fully respecting human rights and to combat structural obstacles to democratic participation. To this end, consideration should be given to the setting of European standards by means of appropriate conventional mechanisms as well as the expansion of European opportunities for the training of educators through the creation of a centre of excellence for the training of teacher trainers.

Cultural diversity and cohesion of society

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, based on the primacy of common values, should be organized and systematically encouraged as a means of promoting awareness and understanding of each other, preventing conflicts, promoting reconciliation and ensuring the cohesion of society. This should be done in particular through formal and non-formal education, the dimensions of remembrance and common heritage, cultural action and participation in the community. To this end, the Council of Europe should continue to develop strategic policy frameworks for the management of cultural diversity and models of good practice based on its fundamental values.

Cultural diversity manifests itself today especially through the exchange and consumption of culturally different goods and services. The Council of Europe should, therefore, continue to implement its measures in favour of cultural industries, in particular Eurimages and the Convention on Cinematographic Co-productions, and assess the need for any other appropriate measures.

Intercultural and inter-religious dialogue

Going beyond the action carried out to develop intercultural dialogue in European societies, the Council of Europe should promote an intercultural and inter-religious dialogue between Europe and the neighbouring regions, in particular the southern shore of the Mediterranean, with a view to ensuring stability and cohesion and to enhancing mutual understanding and respect.

In addition to the fuller use of existing instruments for dialogue with Europe's neighbours, the Council of Europe should actively consider the possibility of adopting an instrument which could serve such a purpose.

Participation in the knowledge and information society

Respect for and access to cultural rights - and in particular the right to education - should be promoted to fight exclusion and to build equitable societies, with particular attention being paid to vulnerable groups. A policy for inclusion should be developed for young people to facilitate access to cultural freedom and education. Efforts should also be made to promote knowledge by the Europeans of their respective cultural works, for example literature, with the aim of promoting cultural diversity.

The Council of Europe, as a pan-European organisation dealing with human rights and the democratic dimension of communication, should emphasise the role and responsibility of the independent media as well as the right of

freedom of expression in the knowledge and information society – especially in times of crisis.

Mobility

The Council of Europe should build on its work on youth participation and mobility, language learning, recognition of qualifications, and the European Higher Education Area as possible models for creating policy frameworks in other areas in particular mobility across borders. The possibility of launching a major programme for secondary school-based educational and intercultural exchanges should be pursued both within Europe and with neighbouring countries. Attention should also be paid to developing mobility for artists, cultural professionals and works of art. All these measures should take account of existing legislation.

Sustainable development

In order to respond to the aspirations of citizens for a higher quality of life, now and for the future, the Council of Europe is committed to developing integrated policies for intergenerational equity in access to economic, social, cultural and natural resources under the principle of sustainable development. Policies for the sensitive management of these resources would enhance their contribution to wider economic opportunity, to personal and community development and to the expression of cultural identity and diversity. The Council of Europe should, therefore, develop programmes of activities which demonstrate and emphasise:

- the need for an integrated policies approach and strategy;
- the links between conservation and sustainability of the heritage and of natural and cultural aspects of landscapes and the environment;
- the role of risk prevention and management of natural or technological disasters in sustainable development policies;
- the essential role of formal and non-formal education for sustainable development;
- cultural diversity as a basis of sustainable development.

Partnerships

In the context of the European Union's enlargement and with a view to its new Constitution, the Council of Europe should seek for full and complementary cooperation with the Union, creating the conditions of real partnership.

The level and content of cooperation with UNESCO should also be reinforced in all areas of cultural cooperation.

Cooperation with other international organisations and with organisations from the private sector in furthering cultural cooperation should be reinforced.

The Council of Europe should continue to focus on the contribution of non-governmental organisations and voluntary activities in cultural life and society and should pursue its action in building cultural networks.

In conclusion,

We therefore **SUBMIT** this Declaration to the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. We ask that the Declaration be further considered by all relevant Council of Europe bodies and submitted to the other events to be organised within the framework of the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the European Cultural Convention.

We also **INVITE** the Committee of Ministers to transmit the Declaration to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe's member States (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005), stressing the vital importance of cultural cooperation in promoting the core values of our Organisation.

Appendix

Key achievements of 50 years of the European Cultural Convention

The original political objectives of the Convention:

1. The recognition by Europeans of their common cultural heritage (Articles 1 and 5 of the Convention)

- The illustration of the interdependence of European art by the cooperative organisation of 27 major art

exhibitions and 12 cultural routes.

- The development of the concept and standards of integrated conservation of the architectural and archaeological heritage⁴.
- The widening of the protection of the heritage to the audiovisual and landscape domains⁵, to archives, and to the intellectual heritage of European universities.
- Revised textbooks and curricula in history education to remove bias and promote empathy between groups (cf Recommendation Rec(2001)15 on History Teaching in 21st Century Europe of the Committee of Ministers); and the inauguration of a Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and for the prevention of crimes against humanity.
- Research-based models for safeguarding the European linguistic heritage through the language industries.
- Concepts and practice for intercultural education in formal and non-formal settings.

2. Mobility and exchange for mutual understanding

(Articles 2 and 4 of the Convention)

- Standards of fair mutual recognition of qualifications⁶ to enable the mobility of students; contributions to pioneering the model of inter-university cooperation, and to the coordination of policy and standards for the establishment of a European Higher Education Area by 2010.
- Over 300,000 young people enabled to come together for their international activities through the European Youth Centres, European Youth Foundation and Solidarity Fund, and development of wider policies for youth mobility including the Partial Agreement on the Youth Card⁷.
- Over 10,000 in-service training places shared with teachers from other countries, and a pilot for intercultural school-based exchanges.
- European language learning standards for effective communication (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the Language Portfolio).

3. A broad current of pan-European cultural cooperation

(Articles 3 and 6 of the Convention)

- The inclusion of all European states in the Convention, one by one, for 29 of them as a doorway to the Council of Europe.
- The complementary concepts of cultural democracy and life-long education as strategic guidelines for all the Convention's areas of concern.
- The inclusion of youth and sport as major sectors of cultural cooperation and vectors of its values.
- Pioneer methods of networking for innovatory projects with practitioners and regional and local authorities as well as governments, and a legacy of networks created.
- A unique level of participation by universities, youth organisations, and sports federations in decisions on policies and projects concerning them.
- Wide-ranging practical assistance through thousands of missions to help new member states and conflict regions come up to European standards in our sectors.
- Substantial impacts on policy agendas and measures both nationally and in the European Union achieved with limited resources.

The major new objectives:

4. Creating conditions for full participation in democratic life

- A shift in the guiding notion of state cultural policy from the democratisation of an élite culture to cultural democracy and the right of all to cultural expression; and the embodiment of these principles in standards for public participation in heritage and landscape policies.
- The youth programme in the two European Youth Centres and the Youth Foundation established as a practical model, not only of non-formal learning, but also of youth participation in public life, providing an effective platform for a contribution by youth to issues of European concern.
- The principles and content of a policy of sport for all.
- The concept of permanent (later lifelong) education and learner empowerment, and the working out of its

implications for access for all to good education in different contexts.

- Contributions to transversal projects for affirmative action to secure the rights of women, and people belonging to minorities and vulnerable groups.
- The principles and content of a policy of education for democratic citizenship as a key aspect of educational quality, in schools and for young people.

5. A European dimension in standards, policy and practice

- The promulgation of standards of good practice in 19 conventions⁸ and numerous recommendations to governments adopted by the Council's Committee of Ministers, and their application through convention monitoring, intergovernmental committees, and technical cooperation and assistance.
- The exposure of many national policies to international comparison and benchmarking, through national policy reviews in culture, youth, sport, and languages; and information networks for mutual reference and policy research such as the Compendium of cultural policies and the European Heritage Network (HEREIN).
- A stronger European dimension in national practice, based on our common standards and goals, through work on school and higher education policies and curricula, and training programmes for teachers, trainers, youth leaders and other key multipliers.
- Partnership through joint projects with the European Union, including the European years of music and languages, the European Heritage Days, the European Cultural Routes and agreements on youth training and research; with UNESCO, such as the Lisbon recognition convention; and with other international structures including the Bologna process and the World Anti-Doping Agency.

6. Respecting cultural diversity and building up shared values

- The launch of the forthcoming instrument on the value of cultural heritage for society, which will complement at pan-European level UNESCO's efforts on cultural diversity.
- Support to diversity in European film-making through the *Eurimages* fund.
- A policy framework for multilingualism, based on the relevant Council of Europe conventions; and work with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe on cultural action in regions and communities.
- Theoretical and practical development of inter-cultural education, both in school and out-of-school contexts.
- A practical scheme of education on human rights as part of citizenship, and joint action against intolerance in cooperation with young people and ECRI, in particular through the "All different, all equal" campaign.
- Instruments to protect the values of sport against abuses, through standards against violence and doping⁹ and to develop the positive contribution of sport to healthy, integrated democratic societies.
- The first results of a commitment of all four sectors - culture, education, youth and sport - to help our societies meet the challenge of conflict prevention, reconciliation and dialogue: framework texts for cultural policy for intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention (Opatija Declaration) and for intercultural education (Athens Declaration), youth activities for a culture of peace, and the "*ballons rouges*" project to bring sport to refugee children.

¹ summarised in the appendix

² Democratic citizenship implies that all citizens should have full enjoyment of human rights and feel protected by democratic society. It also implies that everyone needs to participate in matters in society and act as active and responsible citizens respectful of the rights of others.

³ As expressed in particular at the Youth Summit to be held in parallel to the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government (Warsaw, May 2005)

⁴ CETS conventions 121, 143. Full titles are given in the Secretary General's report.

⁵ CETS 66, 143, 176, 183, 184

⁶ CETS 15, 32, 49, subsumed in the Lisbon Convention 165

⁷ CETS 37 and 175

⁸ The full list of conventions and a selection of recommendations are given in the Secretary General's report.

⁹ CETS 120, 135, 188