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and

MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

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INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION PROJECT

DECLARATION ON INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

adopted by the European Ministers
responsible for Cultural Affairs
Opatija (Croatia), 22 October 2003

Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport
Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage
Cultural Policy and Action Department

Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia

Introduction

The general objective of this text is to specify, within its scope, the roles and responsibilities of the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, by defining a European co-operation framework which creates conditions enabling the promotion and construction of a society based on intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity and fostering the prevention of violent conflicts, conflict management and control and post-conflict reconciliation. This should be achieved through the implementation of cultural action programmes involving all generations, the aim of which is to bring cultures closer, through constructive dialogue and through cultural exchanges involving all tangible and intangible elements of culture, e.g. archaeological, architectural, artistic, economic, ethnic, historical, linguistic, religious and social.

The present text builds on a number of texts adopted by the Council of Europe or by other international organisations, including:

- the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (particularly Articles 9, 10, 11 and 14) (Rome, 4 November 1950), hereafter referred to as the European Convention on Human Rights,
- the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention (Paris, 19 December 1954),
- the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Strasbourg, 5 November 1992),
- the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Strasbourg, 1 February 1995),
- the European Social Charter (Turin, 18 October 1961, revised 3 May 1996),
- the Council of Europe Declaration on Cultural Diversity (adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2000),

- the Final Declaration of the 3rd Ministerial Conference on the culture of *francophonie* (Cotonou, 15 June 2001),
- the Olympia Charter, adopted at the international symposium "Re-thinking Culture" at the opening ceremony of the Cultural Olympiad (Athens, 23 September 2001),
- the Unesco Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (Paris, 2 November 2001).

To familiarise readers with the ideas underlying the Declaration, the meaning of the terms "conflict", "intercultural dialogue" and "cultural diversity", as used in the text, is defined in an appendix. The principles and approaches which underlie the concepts of "cultural diversity", "intercultural dialogue", "good governance in cultural policy" and "inter-sectoral co-operation and exemplary conflict prevention practices" are also explained.

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Declaration

The Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs of the member states of the Council of Europe,

Aware of the vital importance of culture as a prime means of conveying meaning and a tool for understanding, as an agent of democracy and an instrument for individual and collective human development, and as an area for rapprochement and dialogue between all men and women;

Concerned that new forms of conflict, increasing the difficulties of dialogue between cultures, may be used by certain groups with the avowed or unstated aim of fuelling hatred, xenophobia and confrontation between different communities;

Emphasising that nobody should be harassed on account of his or her legitimate opinions, and that every individual therefore enjoys an inalienable right to define and choose his or her cultural and/or religious affiliation and identity;

Aware that cultural "impoverishment" and marginalisation, on the one hand, and prejudice and ignorance, on the other, are among the prime causes of the increase in violence and of the stereotyping of others, thus altering the nature of the peaceful and constructive relations between different cultural communities;

Taking the view that it should be ensured that rapprochement between cultures, as well as intercultural dialogue, become instruments for conflict prevention at every level, in all contexts and through every component;

In line with the European Convention on Human Rights, and in accordance with the principles of cultural diversity and freedom of expression;

Sharing a single body of cultural values as a result of their state's accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and to the European Cultural Convention, and united in their agreement with all the ideals and principles which are the Council of Europe's common heritage;

Bearing in mind that there can be no exceptions to the human rights principles upheld by the Council of Europe, given that human rights are not a constraint, but constitute the primary source of the principles and action of both the Council of Europe and the states that have ratified the Organisation's European Cultural Convention;

Taking into account the fact that the Council of Europe is engaged in initiatives intended to create co-operation networks between regions and cities and formulate action plans relating to the intercultural dimension in the arts, culture, training and inter-institutional co-operation (between museums, libraries and archives) extending to European countries and beyond,

Considering that public authorities may draw on existing examples of good practice conducive to intercultural dialogue, as appropriate, when devising democratic cultural policies in the national context or in the framework of inter-state co-operation;

Aware that the present declaration is based not only on the conventions, recommendations, resolutions and declarations adopted by the Council of Europe within the framework of cultural co-operation activities, but also on other international instruments and numerous countries' domestic legislation,

Have agreed to base their action on the principles and shared values listed below:

- i. affirmation of the concept of cultural democracy and cultural citizenship, which implies rights and obligations;
- ii. respect for cultural identities and practices, and the expression of the corresponding forms of heritage, provided that these comply with the principles upheld by the Council of Europe;
- iii. the safeguarding and protection of both tangible and intangible heritage;
- iv. fair treatment for all cultures and all beliefs or faiths which respect the principles of the Council of Europe;
- v. mutual respect through the recognition of diversity in every aspect of cultural education;
- vi. guaranteed equal access, participation and creativity for every sector of society, so that the cultural dimension as a whole is taken into account and cultural diversity is promoted in a spirit of cultural democracy;

Are determined to pursue, in their fields of responsibility, respecting the rules of subsidiarity and national priorities where necessary, co-operation intended to fulfil the objectives of the present text, namely the promotion of respect for diversity, intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention;

In so doing do not intend to override, but to co-operate with, the authorities at all levels (local, regional and national) responsible for other sectors of government policy, as well as with civil society;

Express their willingness to work in a co-ordinated manner in the following fields:

Diversity and dialogue

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs intend to preserve the required balance between the safeguarding of cultural diversity and the necessary social cohesion within the various states. The aim is to create and maintain harmonious relations between all groups in society, in the interest of all of its members, irrespective of their culture, way of life and cultural practices. Respect for

cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and equality of opportunity are vital elements of conflict prevention within the framework of a democratic cultural policy.

Aware of the rich cultural diversity in Europe, both within each member state and in the member states collectively, the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs intend to focus on encouraging dialogue as one of the bases for conflict prevention. Accordingly, they agree to seek inspiration in the values upheld by the Council of Europe, which offer scope for a range of converging measures capable of generating strong synergies.

1. Cultural diversity¹

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, while respecting the rules of subsidiarity and national priorities, and encouraging their ministerial colleagues with responsibilities for other areas to develop intercultural dialogue when exercising those responsibilities, express their commitment to:

- 1.1. ensuring the free expression of different forms of artistic, cultural, social, religious and philosophical practice adopted by individuals or specific cultural groups, provided that these individuals or groups abide by the fundamental principles upheld by the Council of Europe, in accordance with the introduction to the present declaration;
- 1.2. supporting cultural and intercultural policies and practices which allow cultural identities to flourish and reach out to other communities;
- 1.3. protecting, within the means at their disposal, all the elements of tangible and intangible heritage;
- 1.4. condemning all forms of violent and forced assimilation and encouraging in all states the creation of the necessary conditions for the development of societies that are open to cultural diversity.

2. Intercultural dialogue¹

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, while respecting the rules of subsidiarity and national priorities, and encouraging their ministerial colleagues with responsibilities for other areas to develop intercultural dialogue when exercising those responsibilities, agree to:

¹ Definitions, principles and methods are appended.

- 2.1. foster, while fully respecting human rights, and with a particular focus on the local and regional level, the creation or development of tolerant and equitable relations between states and between all the culturally diverse groups settled in the territory of each State;
- 2.2. endeavour to set up or develop, in their States, activities conducive to intercultural dialogue;
- 2.3. encourage, at local and regional level, participation in intercultural dialogue in the spirit of cultural citizenship and with a view to cultural democracy;
- 2.4. create a public space for dialogue and cultural citizenship in which it is possible to express disagreement, which is not only part of the democratic process but also its guarantor.

Governance and intersectoral co-operation

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs consider it necessary to promote the cultural dimension of democratic citizenship and to foster good governance in cultural policy, in association with all the players concerned, relying on intersectoral co-operation and on the dissemination of exemplary conflict-prevention practice.

3. Good governance in cultural policy¹

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, while respecting the rules of subsidiarity and national priorities, and encouraging their ministerial colleagues with responsibilities for other areas to develop intercultural dialogue when exercising those responsibilities, are united in their common aim of::

- 3.1 regarding cultural diversity as beneficial to human capital, both individual and collective, with a view to sustainable development;
- 3.2 considering the scope for enhancing the intercultural dimension of societies through co-operation involving governmental institutions, the private sector and civil society, with a view to discussions with an interactive dimension;
- 3.3 acknowledging the importance, where the cultural governance of diversity is concerned, of the principle of subsidiarity in fostering the empowerment of members of civil society;

4. Intersectoral co-operation and exemplary conflict-prevention practices¹

The European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs, while respecting the rules of subsidiarity and national priorities, and encouraging their ministerial colleagues with responsibilities for other areas to develop intercultural dialogue when exercising those responsibilities, express their determination to::

- 4.1. promote, with their ministerial colleagues responsible for other public policies, the setting-up of intersectoral policies which foster intercultural dialogue;
- 4.2. consider the development of knowledge of history, cultures, arts and religions from school age onwards to be of central importance;
- 4.3. encourage, through co-operation with the ministerial authorities specifically responsible for education in the different states, the inclusion in school curricula of lessons illustrating both the historical and the contemporary influence of cultures and civilisations on each other, as well as cultural cross-fertilisation, involving, where possible, appropriate collaboration with representatives of the different components of cultural diversity, including religious diversity;
- 4.4. contribute to the development of intercultural dialogue by encouraging, whenever possible, action intended to bring together the different cultural groups through intercultural events and practices, aimed at all age groups and all socio-cultural groups, within programmes implemented by cultural institutions responsible for the fine arts, theatre, literature, etc.

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In conclusion, the European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs agree to share their experience in relation to policies and programmes promoting intercultural dialogue or conflict prevention, particularly through the exchange of good practices.

Appendix: DEFINITIONS, PRINCIPLES AND METHODS

For the purposes of the present declaration, the following definitions are applicable:

- conflict: for the purposes of this text, this term covers forms of disagreement –whether evident or concealed – giving rise to resentment and violent behaviour, or even injustice, which may culminate, in extreme circumstances, in destructive and uncontrolled violence. Conflict may stem from discrimination resulting from a failure to accept cultural diversity and democratic openness. Conflicts arise for numerous and complex reasons and their cultural dimension may be attributable to political, economic and social causes, among others. The text proposes action to promote the management and control of conflicts within European societies characterised by cultural diversity (in all the elements mentioned in the introduction to the declaration), as well as post-conflict reconciliation;

- intercultural dialogue: this term covers the tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities, whether individual or collective, in changes and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible element of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or have a political, economic, social, philosophical or religious dimension. In this context, for instance, interfaith and interreligious dialogue must be viewed in terms of its cultural and social implications vis-à-vis the public sphere;

- cultural diversity: “cultural diversity is expressed in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products”², hence the need to pay attention to differences between and within cultural groups. Cultural diversity should go beyond the “majority/minority” dichotomy, extending to the complementarity of the “universal” and the “singular”, so that intercultural dialogue is experienced in a flexible, dynamic and open way. In all its dimensions, cultural diversity brings enrichment to individuals and groups, and gives rise to not only new forms of social relationships, fostered by migration and strengthened by processes of exchange, but also new forms of multicultural identity. Cultural differences should therefore not result in a retreat into identity or community, nor justify a policy of forced assimilation stemming from a desire for domination, as both processes may lead to conflicts. On the contrary, cultural diversity can bring about a strengthening of peace, through knowledge, recognition and development of all cultures, whether they originate and still exist in Europe or originate from geographical areas outside Europe.

²This definition comes from the Council of Europe Declaration on Cultural Diversity, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 7 December 2000.

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To familiarise readers with the thinking behind the declaration, the principles and methods on which the concepts are based are explained below:

1. Cultural diversity

Principle: It is necessary to distinguish two dimensions of cultural diversity: the intra-state dimension of respect for cultural rights, tolerance, political and cultural pluralism and the ability to accept the differences of others, and the inter-state dimension of diversity, which relates to the principle of equivalence between cultures. The intercultural society model is based on the principle of equality between cultures, the value of cultural heterogeneity and the constructive dimension of dialogue and of peace. Differences and divisions must not therefore be viewed as harmful and obstructive to the devising of a collective project which requires differences to be taken into account and otherness to be respected. Cultural diversity is synonymous with exchange and enables autarky, which leads to isolation and xenophobia, to be combated

Method: this principle cannot be applied exclusively in terms of “majority” or “minority”, which would single out minority cultures and communities and categorise and stigmatise them, leading to the association of certain types of social behaviour and cultural stereotypes with specific groups. On the contrary, efforts should be made to seek multiple ways of expressing diversity and to increase citizens’ awareness of the richness of that diversity, especially given that the globalisation of exchanges is only conceivable if due respect is shown for diversity.

2. Intercultural dialogue

Principle: intercultural dialogue must be encouraged and fostered. It of course comes within the framework of the principles of freedom of thought, of conscience, of religion, of expression, of assembly and of association defined in Articles 9, 10, 11 and 14 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, and contributes to the fundamental objective of achieving social cohesion.

Method: the application of this principle cannot be limited to dialogue about convergence, but should extend to dialogue about what separates cultures and populations. The two aspects of “similarities” and “differences” must not be regarded as alternatives, but more as the two sides of a single coin which should be explored in order to start a true dialogue and to identify solutions that transcend apparent or real antagonisms. Communication, the provision of information and the work of the media must foster intercultural dialogue and mutual respect. .

3. Good governance in cultural policy

Principle: while public policy on culture is essential to the development of democracy in Europe, it must also create close links with the private sector and with civil society (associations, NGOs, etc.), both of which are involved in and also produce culture. Cultural governance must also be based on the fact that the political, economic and social spheres have a cultural dimension which must never be ignored or neglected. It is one of the roles of the Ministers of Cultural Affairs to strike a balance between the public sector, private sector and civil society in the cultural sphere. In this field co-operation at European level is highly advisable.

Method: this principle must be applied in order to include culture as a factor of good governance, enabling intercultural conflicts to be prevented and cultural diversity to be promoted.

4. Intersectoral co-operation and exemplary conflict-prevention practices

Principle: the more cultural diversity is promoted by European government officials, participants in community life, non-governmental organisations and religious communities supporting intercultural dialogue – in addition to what has been achieved by the Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs – the more effective intersectoral co-operation on conflict prevention will be.

Method: this principle should be applied in order to encourage the numerous players to commit themselves to interministerial and intersectoral activities and to collect examples of “good practice” capable of being reproduced in multicultural places and regions.