REPORT ON THE
PROGRAMME
CULTURE 2000

Evaluation and
recommendations

Advocacy for Culture in Europe

EFAH - The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage
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Executive summary

This report responds to a call from the European Union to reflect constructively on how the European Parliament and European Commission (DG EAC) might make more effective use of culture in the design and implementation of European programmes. The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) fully supports DG EAC in its aspiration to help generate greater European cultural co-operation.

The cultural sector throughout Europe is disappointed at the EU’s general failure over more than a decade to take sufficient advantage of the wide-ranging competence it secured under Article 151 of the Treaty of Union. In particular, after more than a decade, important aspects of clause 151.4 still have yet to be addressed seriously and the Community has an unrealised role to play.

EFAH is in favour of maintaining a broad framework programme with concise and limited priorities, and matching the objectives to the budgetary constraints. The concept of European added value is one of the key criteria in Culture 2000 for the selection of cultural projects. This is widely supported.

In view of the growing importance of culture for European societies, and in order to achieve a better balance between the economic and cultural aspects of the Community, the existence of such a cultural funding programme as Culture 2000 is essential for cultural operations in a European context. Transnational projects are often very difficult to finance with national, regional or local funds. Culture 2000 is the only programme for trans-European artistic and cultural projects and networks. It plays a vital role in supporting a constructive interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity. However, in spite of its relevance and strengths, the programme has been criticised repeatedly for its derisory budget, its opaque objectives, inadequate management and lack of evaluation. The chronic under-funding may be seen as a reflection of the varying levels of interest from Member States. Culture 2000 may be seen as overly ambitious in the light of its objectives and the resources at its disposal.

The choice of annual themes does not take account of an interdisciplinary approach in contemporary cultural practice and unduly restricts the field of co-operation and activity for cultural operators. The financial requirements are not realistic for small cultural organizations, yet it is often in the smaller, innovative initiatives that new practice needing support is taking place. The flexibility of artistic projects is incompatible with the rigid financial regulations of the Community. Payment schedules do not recognise, let alone comprehend, the day-to-day realities of the sector.

The reports broad recommendations are:

The programme must ensure, as a priority, that it receives adequate funds and competent staffing to implement its actions.

There is a clear need to avoid delays in publication of calls for tender, in notification of selected projects and in prompt payment.

There is a need to reform the role and function of the board of experts charged with the selection of projects.

There is a need for improved dialogue and co-operation between the European institutions and cultural operators.

The role of cultural networks and platforms for cultural co-operation should be extended and strengthened.

A European Cultural Observatory should be set up to monitor co-operation, exchange information and co-ordinate policy between Member States and the Community.

Valuable lessons about the design, evaluation, methodology, management and transparency must be learned and absorbed if any new programme is to be user-friendly and effective.
Foreword

The European Union’s ‘Culture 2000’ programme which was due to expire after December 2004, has been extended for a further two years until the end of 2006 in the light of major developments such as Enlargement and the making of the European Constitution. The Commission’s Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) has, in the meantime, undertaken consultation and invited views on what should replace Culture 2000 as a framework programme from 2007 onwards. To meet this deadline, any new programme would need to be agreed by the end of 2005.

This timescale and ‘space’ open up a welcome opportunity both to devise an improved programme for the future, and – maybe more importantly – to reflect constructively on how this process might assist DG EAC and the European Parliament in offering greater support to, making more effective use of, culture across the board in the design and implementation of European Union programmes, not least with the imminent accession of ten new members.

The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) as an advocate of cultural co-operation and exchange at European level is closely networked into ‘citizens’ Europe’ and hopes to be in a constructive permanent dialogue with the Commission on cultural matters and the ‘value added’ which culture carries with it.

EFAH fully supports DG EAC in its aspiration to help generate greater European cultural co-operation (exchange, effective networks, mobility, East-West, Euro-Med and ‘third’ country dialogue, new initiatives etc.). EFAH’s members therefore wish to ensure that these concerns are given a realistic and practical framework following a new and more open attitude of DG EAC, readiness for a debate and exchange of views with representative bodies in the sector about possible future developments.

Cultural policy remains a rather marginal area within European politics. The cultural sector throughout Europe is disappointed at the EU’s general failure over more than a decade to take sufficient advantage of the wide-ranging competence it secured under Article 151.4 of the Treaty. It is hoped that a new and more confident approach by DG EAC, together with welcome developments the Convention may bring (such as QMV), will enable any recast cultural framework programme to be more influential within Community actions as a whole.

EFAH and the cultural sector generally are concerned that the key messages contributed through the welcome consultation process on Culture 2000 are properly reflected in any new policies and programmes. To enhance its credibility, and further improve relationships with the sector, it is hoped that DG EAC will demonstrate more transparency in its deliberations and design of the new framework programme.

Concerning the successor programme to Culture 2000 itself, EFAH is in favour of maintaining a broad framework programme with concise and limited priorities, and matching the objectives to the budgetary constraints. Cultural policy is transversal but the existing proliferation of small-scale sectoral programmes across different policy areas aggravates the lack of strategic coherence. However, EFAH also recognises that matching DG EAC’s ambitions and commendable objectives with budget levels is likely to be difficult. The Commission’s task since 1993 in running cultural programmes has not been easy. Beset by the demands of the sector and the Parliament on the one side, whilst hemmed in by member states and operating under an extremely restrictive interpretations of the subsidiarity principle on the other (contributing to low budget levels), the need to manage expectation has inevitably created a defensive mentality which the sector has sometimes misinterpreted as negativity.

Experience of working with the post-1993 programmes in culture produces a number of very clear conclusions about the need to improve the operation and management of such programme and the grants it provides. Whilst recognising the Commission’s legitimate concerns regarding fiscal accountability, the some rules and procedures have too often been at odds with the operational requirements and normal working methods of the cultural sector itself. This in turn has often tended to favour large-scale, narrowly sector-defined and institutional applicants over more flexible and innovative ideas, which are frequently closer to the real aspirations of the programmes. The basis of selection must become more open and accountable, allowing for the inter-disciplinary approach that is the increasing reality to be fully embraced.
Terms of the debate

Context and aim of the report

The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage, a platform for cultural policy development and cultural cooperation in Europe, seeks to increase recognition of the cultural dimension of Europe, through dialogue with European decision makers.

In its role as an advocate for culture, EFAH acts as a channel of communication to voice concerns arising from the cultural community and aims to create opportunities for advancing the case for culture in Europe.

In the actual context of consultation and discussion on the future of cultural cooperation in Europe, this paper aims to draw a picture of the current situation: the terms of the debate, the political agenda, and the evaluation of the programme's implementation and prospects on the basis of the various reports on the Culture 2000 [C2000] framework programme and cultural policy.

Much of the work to develop this paper has been seeking out all publicly available reports and evaluations of the existing and past programmes. This has been complemented by formal and informal interviews with cultural operators, EFAH Members, participants in the C2000 programme, CCPs and cultural policy experts.

Extension & evaluation of the Culture 2000 programme – expectations of cultural players & new programme by 2006

The C2000 programme will come to an end on 31 Dec. 2004, at a time of major changes for the EU. The enlargement process, the results of the Inter-Governmental Conference (IGC) based on the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe, as well as the election of the European Parliament and the appointment of a new Commission will have a profound effect on the shape of the Union’s future scope and capacity for action.

In this context, the European Commission has proposed extending the C2000 framework programme unchanged for 2005 and 2006, in order to ensure the continuity of the Community’s cultural activities. In addition, this extension is intended to provide the time necessary for what the Commission presents as an ‘in-depth discussion’, aimed at preparing proposals on the future of European cultural cooperation. These should be presented towards the end of 2003, or early during 2004.

While much experience of Community action on culture under C2000 has been positive, there is still considerable room for improvement. The actual debate on C2000, based on the evaluation of the current programme, is therefore essential in order to prepare a new programme for the subsequent period, and to determine more precisely the needs and expectations of cultural players.

With this in mind, the Commission (DG for Education and Culture), which is charged with developing a new approach for a future programme of cultural action and cooperation, published in April 2003 a consultation document, aimed at clarifying a number of aspects of the Community’s support mechanisms for cultural cooperation.

Despite the Commission’s declared intention to involve cultural operators in the debate on the achievements of the C2000 programme and its evaluation, many have serious doubts about the transparency of the consultation itself and the result of the process. The key concern is to know how the Commission will take into account the results of ongoing discussions between the European institutions and cultural operators and the public consultation on the future of cultural action in the EU.

Through those preparatory actions, the role of the Commission has been to explore possible Community actions in the cultural sphere: new ways of supporting cooperation projects between operators, increased cooperation both between member states and vis-à-vis third countries, and support for the creative industries…
The new programme for cultural cooperation that will succeed C2000 has to be adopted before the beginning of 2006 in order to start on 1 Jan. 2007.

**The EU and cultural policy:**

**Art. 151: a provision yet to be fully implemented**

With the inclusion in 1992 of article 151 (formerly Rome article 128) in the treaty on the European Union, culture was brought within the responsibility of the EU and has become a new area of Community competence. Article 151 EC treaties\(^v\) regulates cultural activities at Community level and provides a legal basis for initiatives of which the programme C2000 is a current example.

The main objective of cultural policy action pursued so far at European level is cooperation: article 151 clearly expresses the aim of encouraging such relations between the member states, and C2000, the single framework programme on culture, is based on the idea of collaboration and exchange, generating European ‘added value’.

Thus, the role of the EU in the cultural field is to coordinate cooperation between its member states and to complement their actions, ‘if necessary’, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity.

However, when considering the implications of article 151, which refers several times to the fact that the Community itself has responsibilities and obligations to act, it becomes clear that after more than a decade this provision still has to be seriously addressed in all its important aspects and that the Community has an unrealised role to play in this context.

In particular, it is argued\(^v\) that ‘the Community failed to clearly articulate its role and take on its responsibilities’ although ‘there is a great need for Community action on several cultural issues, where the old and the new member states alone, or even in the cooperation between them, cannot shape the conditions for the flourishing of the much desired cultural diversity’. Were Article 151.4 to be seriously implemented, this would not simply imply a greater ‘instrumentalisation’ of cultural action, useful though that can be in boosting social cohesion and economic development, but raise awareness of the key ways in which culture is linked to other spheres and policies.

Following the Convention, the new version of article 151 (see art. III-181 of the draft treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe) provides in particular for the extension of qualified majority voting (QMV), and according to the new terminology setting out competences, culture falls under those areas in which the Union may take supportive, coordinating or complementary action. The subsidiarity principle: negative vs. positive interpretations

As provided for by article 5(2) EC treaty: ‘*In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and insofar as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the member states and can therefore, by reason of scale and effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community*’.

In the field of cultural policy\(^v\), this provision suggests that the Community may only become involved in cultural actions when such actions are considered to be more effectively engaged in at European level, rather than simply by the member states themselves.

The Community can therefore only intervene in cultural projects that have a ‘European’ dimension, while any such actions have to respect national and regional diversity as well as promoting the common European cultural heritage.

However, a restrictive interpretation of the subsidiarity principle often prevents real debate about possible EU involvement in the field of cultural policies, and the principle as it is applied today acts as a brake on European cultural action. A knee-jerk narrow understanding ensures that EU cultural policy discussion remains restricted to very limited and ‘harmless’ topics such as protectionist agendas, co-operation and exchange, and misses out on the really important areas where culture can make a positive difference.
According to Karin Junker MEP, ‘the way the member states of the EU carefully guard their sovereignty on issues of national cultural policy does not have a place in the era of globalisation, which provides us with enormous cultural possibilities. Instead of neurotically worrying about the loss of competences, the member states should focus their energy on a form of cultural integration that respects the individuality of each country’.

Another consequence of the restrictive interpretation of the subsidiarity principle is a perpetuation of the existing void between programmes managed at EU level and national cultural policies, and a lack of cooperation (despite their frequent wish to do so) between the different levels of governance, particularly regional and local authorities.

The eipcp paper ‘Anticipating European Cultural Policies’ notes how the almost ritual resort to subsidiarity (implying a simplistic, but false, local and national agreement on the question) has blocked rational consideration of European cultural policy at a strategic level. It comments ‘However, not specifically discussing the question of division of responsibilities and competences among the local, regional, national, European and trans-European levels does not mean abandoning the principle of a division of competences. Instead, we urge that the concept of subsidiarity should not be used as an excuse for avoiding a critical discussion and concrete action concerning the responsibilities and opportunities of the EU’. Concrete ‘European’ cultural policies might in fact help promote diversity, and help guard against mistaken ‘national’ notions concerning ‘integration’ and ‘assimilation’. Social cohesion is not a question of uniformity, while culture is a positive means of celebrating differences within a single society.

The Ruffolo report, in many parts very critical in tone, states in particular that ‘the principle of subsidiarity must be construed in a positive, active sense in order to generate added value’.

The case for a positive and more appropriate interpretation of the subsidiarity principle, and hence for increased European cultural action, should be reasonably straightforward. Since there are areas where Community intervention is necessary - i.e. areas which cannot be adequately covered by member states’ actions - article 151, as interpreted through the protective filter of the subsidiarity principle, does in fact provide for decisive Community action.

A balanced interpretation of the subsidiarity principle could allow for more effective cultural policies to flourish in Europe, through the complementarity of:

- actions of local, regional and national authorities;
- cooperation between member states in the field of cultural policies;
- an active role for the Community in contributing to the flowering of the cultures of member states, as well as taking cultural aspects into account in its actions in order to respect and promote the diversity of its cultures.
**Culture 2000**

As provided for by the decision establishing the C2000 programme, it ‘shall contribute to the promotion of a cultural area common to the European peoples. In this context, it shall support cooperation between creative artists, cultural operators, private and public promoters, the activities of the cultural networks, and other partners as well as the cultural institutions of the Member States and of the other participant States (…)’.

Initiated to stimulate cultural cooperation in Europe and to assist moves towards a common cultural area, both physically and mentally, the C2000 programme supports artistic and cultural projects with a European dimension.

The concept of so-called ‘European added value’, which is crucial in the formulation of the objectives of C2000, remains relatively undefined however, although clearly inter-twined with that of subsidiarity. In all fields, action initiated by the Union is intended to complement that undertaken by member states, and added value necessarily calls for ‘a result greater than the sum of its parts’, as the Danish Presidency has put it.

Moreover, the concept of European added value is one of the core criteria of preference in C2000 on the basis of which cultural projects are selected for funding. The concept refers to practical aspects in the design of projects such as multilateral cooperation or the participation of a wide range of groups of citizens across Europe.

**Presentation of the programme – objectives and measures**

A first generation of programmes, initially through pilots and then on a sectoral basis, was put in place from 1993. In particular, three cultural programmes were implemented between 1996 and 1999:

- Kaleidoscope (1996-1999), which aimed to encourage artistic and cultural creation and cooperation with a European dimension;
- Ariane (1997-1999), which supported the field of books and reading, including translation;
- Raphaël (1997-1999), the aim of which was to complement policies of member states in respect of cultural heritage of European significance.

Finally, preparatory actions were undertaken in 1999 in order to launch Culture 2000.

**C2000: what it is, how it works - types of measures**

The Culture 2000 framework programme was approved by the European Parliament and the Council in Feb. 2000 for a 5-year period (2000-2004) to promote a common European cultural area with its cultural diversity and shared heritage. Legally based on the article 151, EC Treaty, the current programme for cross-cultural cooperation in Europe was established with a total budget of € 167 million, agreed after much dispute over the funding level.

In contrast to the financial instruments that preceded it, C2000 covers the financing of both annual and multiannual projects in a single programme, providing grants to cultural cooperation projects in all artistic and cultural fields (cultural heritage, the performing arts, the visual arts, and literature, books and reading).

The Commission implements the programme with the aid of a management committee, and selects projects on the basis of the opinions of independent panels of international experts. So far, participants from 30 European countries have taken part in the C2000 programme.

The C2000 programme is divided into three different actions:

- **Action 1**: innovative and / or experimental actions (specific annual activities)
- **Action 2**: multiannual activities forming the subjects of cooperation agreements
- **Action 3**: special cultural events (such as the European Capitals of Culture)
Specific annual measures:

The first strand of the programme provides support for specific innovative and/or experimental actions lasting in principle one year and involving operators from at least three countries. These projects aim mainly to encourage the emergence and spread of new forms of cultural expression, improve access to culture, in particular for young people and minorities, and promote the dissemination of live cultural events using the new technologies of the information society. Translation projects are also covered.

Community support may not exceed 50% of the eligible budget for a specific action. In most cases, it may not be less than 50 000 euro or more than 150 000 euro a year.

Multiannual measures:

The second strand of the programme supports multiannual cultural cooperation development projects designed and implemented by cultural operators from at least five countries participating in the programme. These projects can be supported for a maximum period of three years. These integrated actions are covered by structured, multiannual cultural cooperation agreements whose aim is to create actions helping to achieve an objective of cultural interest that has been set in advance. The cooperation agreements relate either to enhancing a cultural field or to integrating several cultural sectors.

The Community support may not exceed 60% of the cultural cooperation agreement's eligible budget. It may not be more than 300 000 euro a year.

Special cultural events:

The third strand of C2000 provides support for large-scale events which are supposed to strike a significant chord with the peoples of Europe and help to increase their sense of belonging to the same community, as well as making them aware of the cultural diversity of the member states and intercultural and international dialogue.

Culture 2000: objectives & strengths

While the overall aim of C2000 is to promote the development of a cultural area common to the peoples living in Europe, cooperation between cultural operators is supported with a view to achieving a wide range of objectives.  

The Culture 2000 programme seeks to promote/stimulate cultural and intercultural dialogue, knowledge of history and culture, creativity, transnational dissemination of culture and mobility, cultural diversity, cultural heritage.

In addition, C2000 also aims to use culture as a means of encouraging socio-economic development and social integration and to make culture accessible to everyone.

In view of the growing importance of culture for European societies and in order to achieve a better balance between the economic and cultural aspects of the Community, the existence of such a cultural funding programme is essential for cultural operators wishing to work in a European context.

Transnational projects are often very difficult to finance with national, regional or local funds alone and C2000, as the EU's only programme for trans-European artistic and cultural projects, plays a vital role in supporting a constructive interpretation of the principle of subsidiarity.

One of the most positive aspects of the programme is the fact that acceding countries, countries from the EEA and certain third countries may also benefit from those opportunities for cross border cultural cooperation.

As a consequence, the implementation of the programme, in addition to developing cultural expertise within the Commission itself, helped create the impetus for a forum for dialogue and exchange on culture across 30 countries, facilitated by the national CCPs, cultural networks and platforms.
However, in spite of its relevance and strengths, the programme has repeatedly, sometimes fiercely, been criticised for a number of reasons, ranging from its derisory budget, to its objectives, operation, management and lack of open evaluation.

C2000 under fire

Criticisms and limits:

Since the establishment of the programme, several reports have been produced, pointing to the weaknesses of the C2000 programme, highlighting the limits and poor functioning of the programme.

In particular, two key Parliamentary reports illustrate the contribution of the Committee on Culture: the Ruffolo report (Sept. 2001) presents a series of recommendations to further develop the role of the EU in the area of culture, including an explanatory statement as to the rationale for these recommendations; the Graça Moura report (Jan. 2002) also returns a very critical verdict on the implementation of the programme.

- **Funding of the programme:**

  The first limitation on C2000 is the paucity of its budget. While the programme certainly aims to contribute to the development of a European cultural area, it is obviously limited because of the mismatch between the variety of its objectives and its underfunding. The effective implementation of this original programme is then stymied by a lack of funds, and the discrepancy between such funds and the programme’s objectives does not help the European Commission to be regarded as a credible and serious player in the field of culture.

  The chronic under funding of cultural programmes may be seen as a reflection of the varying levels of interest from member states and concerns are even expressed that EU budgetary pressures in the context of enlargement could make C2000 an easy target for even further cuts in the next round of budget negotiations.

- **Programme overly ambitious:**

  Another criticism commonly levelled at the C2000 programme is that it is overly ambitious in the light of its objectives - and also as regards the resources at its disposal. The broad scope of the programme, too general and over-ambitious, is seen as hampering the efficient management of its activities. With narrowed punch, it could probably have more impact.

  However, one might consider the broad and transversal scope of the programme as a fundamental characteristic – in which case the resource endowment needs to be adapted to the pre-set goals of C2000 in line with what was originally envisaged.

- **Annual sectoral themes:**

  Reservations are also expressed by the cultural sector regarding the choice of annual sectoral themes for 2002-04, for not taking account of the interdisciplinary approach in contemporary innovative cultural practice, and for unduly restricting the field of cooperation and activities of cultural operators.

- **Functioning and management of the programme**

  The largest number of criticisms relate to the functioning and management of the programme:

  While many consider the management of the programme itself as chaotic, cultural players also commonly question the underlying attitude of the DG EAC. Thus, in addition to the poor management of the programme and administrative delays, there is a perception of a lack of transparency (e.g. the unwillingness of the Commission to share data) and concerns about generally weak engagement and dialogue with the sector. This leads to mistrust, which is unhelpful in both directions.

  As far as the functioning of C2000 is concerned, several aspects attract recurring comments:
- Large projects benefit disproportionately from the programme: large institutional projects tend to be favoured over those of smaller cultural operators; the financial requirements are hardly feasible for small and middle sized cultural organisations, and the criterion of visibility seems to favour prestigious large scale projects. Yet it is very often in the smaller, innovative initiatives that the groundbreaking new practice requiring support is taking place. All too often in Western European public systems subsidy goes to the institutionally dependent, and not to the culturally independent.

- Lack of flexibility: the flexibility of artistic projects is often seen as incompatible with the rigid financial regulations at Community level - payment schedules do not recognise, let alone comprehend, the day to day realities of the sector.

- Period of eligibility: the period of eligibility does not genuinely reflect the reality of cultural projects, or how they are conceived, developed, executed and evaluated.

- Selection process: the nature, composition, qualifications and functioning of the board of experts responsible for examining and evaluating projects are essential aspects in the selection of such projects and must be ensured greater credibility and openness.

**Themes for the consultation**

The consultation relates to a number of guidelines concerning areas of cultural cooperation and the types of operation towards which Community support could be geared, categories of players and operators capable of carrying out such operations and possible procedures for Community intervention.

In the light of the criticism formulated against C2000, is the methodology for the consultation adopted by the Commission adequate? DG EAC is consulting but will it, or indeed can it act on the professionally informed concerns and recommendations of cultural players? What are the real and perceived barriers to the design and implementation of a much better and more flexible programme that could revitalise the role of the EU in the cultural sector?

Beyond the redesign of C2000, there is a real need to establish permanent dialogue between the DG EAC and the civil society and cultural players. Up until now, and perhaps unfairly, there has been an impression that the DG and its predecessor DGX were not genuinely interested in exploring these boundaries with those who should be their natural allies.
Towards a future programme of cultural cooperation

Culture 2000 is still a recent programme. Parallel to some very positive aspects, a number of problems - which have been acknowledged by the Commission - need to be tackled.

In the current context, the question is to know how to realise greater, more concrete cooperation in cultural affairs by the member states of the EU, with the assistance of Community programmes. As matters stand, the conclusion of many of the cultural players consulted for this paper is unfortunately one of extreme pessimism. A quantum leap in trust and goodwill is urgently needed in both directions.

The recommendations of cultural players

With regard to the scarcity of human and financial resources for the programme’s implementation, the cultural players are unanimous: the forthcoming review of the programme must ensure, as a matter of priority, that it receives adequate funds and highly competent staffing to enable its actions to be fully and effectively implemented.

The recommendations from cultural players fall into four ‘categories which have been summarised as follows:

The introduction of new criteria for cultural action within the framework of European democratic politics;
Enabling multi-lateral co-operation to grow in the expanded Europe;
Inaugurating new organisational models within the cultural field;
Establishing an appropriate administrative system to back up relevant projects.

Objectives and policies of C2000

- Necessity to meet the needs of the sector: the Commission should ensure that the objectives are better adapted to the needs and realities of the kind of innovative cultural projects actually being undertaken at a European level. All too often these are unrecognised by the relevant authorities at member state level.

In particular, the priorities for C2000 are subject to comment and some substantial concern about the programme’s main objective possibly being European integration rather than cooperation through culture. European artists throughout history have been internationalist in outlook and aspiration.

- A crucial issue is the implementation of Art. 151.4, which states that the Community must ‘take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty’. How can the C2000 programme be re-designed and implemented to make it a more effective catalyst across the board?

There is an absolute necessity to raise the visibility of the opportunities for culture in other programmes. The Commission’s own Bates & Wacker report in 1993 revealed that DGX (which was then responsible for culture) had no knowledge of or connection with 92.3% of the Community’s total resources made available for cultural purposes over that particular budget period. Yet many examples of culturally based good practice were already commonplace in local developments being supported through ERDF and ESF, particularly in designated Objective 1 and Objective 2 areas. Currently, important research is being conducted for DG Employment and Social Policy into the role of cultural policy and practice in promoting social inclusion.

Changes to C2000 programme & management

- Timetabling: (calls for proposals – notification of results – payments): in particular there is a clear need to avoid delays in publication of the calls, in notification of the selected projects and in prompt payment. Changes should be considered in the payment schedule, which take proper account of the
nature and working practices of cultural operators and artists. The recent change from 50/50% to 80/20% is a good move and should be maintained.

- Sectoral priorities: C2000 should remain a genuine framework programme thus giving equal opportunities to all sectors, and encouraging innovative, trans-sectoral, interdisciplinary projects, which embrace several disciplines. This would necessitate the abandoning of artificial annual themes, introduced mainly to limit the number of project applications). Creative endeavour organised on the basis of single art forms or sector ‘silos’ is in any case increasingly being superseded by more flexible ways of working.

- Types of projects: innovation vs. large-scale projects. At present the rigidly applied rules tend to favour established institutions, whereas greater ‘European value added’ is to be found in the practices of smaller-scale and more innovative cultural organisations.

- A more accessible and user-friendly management approach on the part of the Commission would help resolve some of the unfortunate conflict that has unnecessarily built up.

- Selection process: there is a real need to give attention to the role and functioning of the boards of experts charged with selecting the projects. They need to be seen to be more credible and effective, not only in terms of their independence, qualifications and representativeness (of the specific characteristics and needs of the various elements of the cultural sector), but also to be able to take full account of interdisciplinary cultural projects, and to establish a horizontal approach and reasonable comparability with regard to the sectors and thematic content. There needs to be a much more transparent means of selecting assessors, also balancing the need for specific expertise, diversity, continuity and regular turnover.

- It might be worth examining the possibility of outsourcing the management of the programme, through the creation of an executive agency as a useful way of ensuring the required fiscal accountability while making its operation more sensitive and user-friendly to the target sector.

The need to establish permanent dialogue with civil society and cultural players

There is an urgent need for improved dialogue and cooperation between the European institutions and cultural operators, through CCPs and cultural networks. To secure this, permanent structures and mechanisms are necessary.

According to the report from the Working Group, established by the Director General for Education and Culture to reflect on the issues in respect of a new cultural policy and framework programme for the EU, ‘consultation and open discussion must form an ongoing part of the process in order to encourage and maintain a strong sense of partnership with the cultural sector’. This is the key to delivering ‘an effective programme of EU cultural action’ which ‘will be the strongest argument for an increase of the budget and for developing new partnership models’.

To that end, the DG EAC, which does not appear to have great influence within the Commission and is only weakly backed by the member states, should develop strong links with the cultural sector via intermediary networks and representative structures.

According to Barbara O’Toole MEP: “participation and grass roots approaches characterise the culture of the future: it is an exemplary field for civil society participation in policy making. Artists and creators participate in the development of local strategies for the promotion of culture, but they also build national and supranational networks for the exchange of fruitful ideas and the mutual stimulation of creativity”.

In that context, the roles of the existing intermediate structures should be reinforced, and a European Cultural Observatory established in line with the recommendations of the Ruffolo Report.
Role of CCPs – cultural networks and platforms

As part of the C2000 programme, the CCPs are the interface between users (i.e. the cultural sector) and decision makers (i.e. the European Commission and its Management Committee).

In this respect, their task is to act as a two-way information channel, providing feedback from the sector regarding the operational effectiveness of the programme, and furnishing the Commission with information that will help them improve the implementation and delivery of the C2000 framework programme so that it may better achieve its stated objectives.

The role of the contact points should be strengthened and they should liaise on a permanent basis with the various institutions which support the cultural sector in the member states and their regions, while ensuring an appropriate level of information and contacts between players involved in the C2000 programme and other Community programmes open to cultural projects.

The Commission should optimise the information flow towards regular dialogue with the CCPs, to enable them better to anticipate the demand for info on the programme’s specific procedures and as the first point of contact to improve public perception of the programme.

- Cultural networks & platforms for cultural cooperation: their role should be extended and strengthened (see Community actions in that field). These – often informal, though legally constituted – voluntary organisations are a readily available means for the Commission to connect with the culture and heritage sectors throughout Europe. Furthermore, through their voluntary and participatory nature, they already provide ‘European value added’ at extremely low cost, besides being rather efficient communication mechanisms. Not only do the networks provide the vital infrastructure for international cultural co-operation but also provide a direct link into civil society. As Gudrun Pehn has written, ‘Cultural networks are structures of civil society, and as such their actions and objectives come under the acknowledged role of a third way, playing an important role as intermediary between government institutions and the cultural sector’.

European Cultural Observatory

The discussion about the establishment of a European Cultural Observatory was fuelled by the Ruffolo Report, which calls for ‘setting up a European agency to monitor cultural cooperation, with the aim of promoting the exchange of information and coordination between the cultural policies of the member states and Community policy’. The question has become a widely discussed issue among policy makers in Europe.

The Ruffolo report envisages that this body should be linked to the Commission and the national Cultural Contact Points. It could also act as an accessible means of fostering greater understanding of how to deal with the cultural challenges in most of the Accession States, and in eastern, central and south east Europe generally. Currently, there is too little appreciation amongst the EU15 of the key differences and inherited infrastructure for cultural participation in the new democracies as they grapple with economic and social restructuring.

Its tasks would entail systematically identifying and promoting best practice in the member states’ policies, work on reliable, comparable and comprehensive statistical data (in conformity with agreed Eurostat standards) and the respective indicators in the member states. It would promote cultural cooperation in Europe and generally stimulate research, reflection processes and the exchange of ideas or practice.

However, some fear that the establishment of the ECO could unintentionally lead to a degree of centralisation on cultural issues, and have expressed concern about the extension of competence at the European level if it were not sufficiently independent in its governance and operation, and how the Observatory would be funded at the level …necessary for it to be credible and effective.
Conclusions

The successor to Culture 2000 should continue as a ‘framework’ programme, but with sufficient focus in its objectives to increase the profile and effectiveness of DG EAC within the Commission.

The successor programme should be devised in such a way that it can be linked in practical ways with other related EU policy areas, so that it can begin to make a contribution to Article 151.4 being employed constructively.

The budget eventually set for the new programme from 2006 should take account of the broader cultural policy possibilities, but equally the programme’s focused objectives and aspirations should be in some realistic relationship to the resource levels agreed.

Politically motivated and nationally restrictive interpretations of subsidiarity should not be allowed to prevent appropriate and proper discussion in the development stages of the potential scope and roles of the new programme.

Multi-lateral cultural co-operation across the whole of Europe is an increasingly important contribution to the growth of ‘civil society’. It is essential that design of the replacement cultural framework programme incorporate an informed and sensitive appreciation of the very different conditions and challenges for the sector in new democracies.

Valuable lessons about the design, methodology, management, evaluation and transparency of the Culture 2000 programme and its predecessors must be learned and absorbed, to ensure that the replacement programme can be both more user-friendly and effective.

Useful papers developed from the cultural sector perspective already exist, setting out helpful criteria, targets and constructive ways forward. These should be fully understood and used in the re-design process, as should the practical expertise accumulated by the CCPs and the thinking that has gone into the putative European Cultural Observatory.
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Advocacy for Culture in Europe – The European Forum for the Arts and Heritage

Established in 1994, EFAH is an advocacy platform for cultural policy development in Europe: for action and reflection, for monitoring and feedback; a rallying point for active cultural operators in Europe; a networked organisation which seeks to stimulate genuine debate and policy development. EFAH has 65 organisational members at local, regional, national and European level.

EFAH believes that culture is a vital and dynamic force, which through developing creativity and self-expression can be a lever for cohesion, communication and development within society. EFAH asserts the importance of an international dimension of culture in achieving these goals.

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Endnotes

1 The programme will be extended until the end of the current financial perspectives for the Union, with an additional budget of euro 69.5 million.


3 Art. 151 EC treaty:
1. The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.
2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:
   improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
   conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
   non-commercial cultural exchanges;
   artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.
5. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:
   acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 and after consulting the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States. The Council shall act unanimously throughout the procedure referred to in Article 251;
   acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

5. Cultural policy, which is a shared competence between the EU and the member states, is ipso facto covered by the subsidiarity principle.


10. See Council of Ministers of Culture meeting held on 11 Nov. 2002 - the Council approved the draft resolution on added value and mobility submitted by the Danish Presidency. This text is intended to clarify the concept of “European added value”, which is at the heart of Community action in the field of cultural cooperation, and to help identify the most appropriate ways to further encourage the mobility of artists and their works.
11. Art. 1 Decision N° 508/2000/EC - Objectives of the C2000 programme:
   promotion of cultural dialogue and of mutual knowledge of the culture and history of the European peoples;
   promotion of creativity and the transnational dissemination of culture and the movement of artists, creators and other cultural operators and professionals and their works (…));
   the highlighting of cultural diversity and the development of new forms of cultural expression;
   sharing and highlighting, at the European level, the common cultural heritage of European significance (…);
   taking into account the role of culture in socioeconomic development:
   the fostering of intercultural dialogue and mutual exchange between European and non-European countries;
   explicit recognition of culture as an economic factor and as a factor in social integration and citizenship;
   improved access to and participation in culture in the EU for as many citizens as possible.

12 Post Culture 2000, eiccp, Vienna 2003. This paper usefully offers working definitions of appropriate new criteria.
13 See: C2000 – Contribution to the mid term evaluation by the European CCPs: ‘The objectives stated in the C2000 framework programme are largely the result of a political compromise, and illustrate the fact that institutional needs as well as cultural needs have been taken into account. Because of this, the detailed criteria for the calls often seem to be out of step with the normal modalities of good practice operating in the cultural sector. This sometimes forces operators, to adapt, or even fabricate, their projects simply to fit the requirements of the calls.’
16 See supra note 7.
18 See “from a European Observatory of Cultural Cooperation to a European Laboratory of Cultural Cooperation’ European Cultural Foundation, 29 Sept 2003.