

Recommendation 1216 (1993)¹

European cultural co-operation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Cultural co-operation along with the promotion of human rights and pluralist democracy are the basic areas of Council of Europe activity. Moreover, cultural co-operation can itself help strengthen human rights and democracy.
2. "Culture" means the quality of life and preparation for it. The field includes education, youth, sport, the media, leisure activities as well as the arts, literature, architecture and the cultural heritage.
3. For the most part, co-operation in this field is conducted on a multilateral basis under the European Cultural Convention, which by being open to non-member states now enables virtually the whole of the European continent to co-operate on equal terms. Canada has become a regular observer.
4. The Assembly is closely involved in this activity through its representation on the various intergovernmental committees and on the governing board of the European Youth Centre and Foundation. This involvement, alongside that of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, constitutes the interactive nature of cultural co-operation that is unique to the Council of Europe.
5. The Council of Europe is not, however, the only institution involved in cultural co-operation in Europe. In addition to regional bodies such as the Nordic Council, the most significant are Unesco, OECD and, following ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the European Community. There is a constant need to manage the co-ordination of this activity.
6. The Committee on Culture and Education has regularly reported to the Assembly on European cultural co-operation, the last occasion being in 1988, before the political changes in central and eastern Europe (see [Doc. 5871](#) and [Recommendation 1075](#)).
7. These changes have had several consequences. The first and most significant is that Europe has regained its historical dimension and has lost the artificial division between east and west.
8. In terms of effectiveness, however, increased numbers have reduced ease of communication and placed severe pressure on existing structures.
9. Working methods have had to be modified. Assistance for central and eastern Europe has been introduced alongside cultural co-operation. While resisting direct funding of cultural or educational activities, the Council of Europe should nevertheless continue to adopt this more operational role. The extension of the initial Demosthenes programme through new activities such as Socrates (for the democratisation of education, culture and sport) can be welcomed.
10. The crisis in the former Yugoslavia has revealed serious shortcomings in European capability to react decisively. Although the Council of Europe is not a humanitarian organisation, it has a technical capability and a moral obligation to make this available in many of the sectors affected (youth, education, media and cultural heritage).

1. Assembly debate on 1 July 1993 (43rd Sitting) (see [Doc. 6850](#) [Doc. 6850](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education, Rapporteur: Mrs Hawlicek). Text adopted by the Assembly on 1 July 1993 (43rd Sitting).



11. There is a problem of funding the participation of representatives of the new countries, and of ensuring their contribution. This should be met at Council of Europe level and not left to the hospitality of individual member states. Although extenuating circumstances can be admitted, it is not acceptable that new countries should not pay their agreed contributions.

12. Partly as a result of the changes in central and eastern Europe, partly in response to growing xenophobia and unemployment, a greater emphasis is now being placed on the situation of cultural minorities, on standards and on values. Alongside the traditional education system, greater emphasis is being placed on the roles of the family (whether one-parent or not), of religion (or non-religion) and of the community. The impact of the mass media is often singled out for criticism in this context.

13. At a time of recession and when there is a general drift towards privatisation, governments should not abdicate their responsibilities for providing for educational opportunities and ensuring the right conditions for the full spectrum of cultural activity. This also applies to the funding of European cultural co-operation.

14. The Council of Europe has now the occasion to assert its cultural vocation more forcibly. The Assembly can view with interest proposals that are under consideration for the normative use of culture and education to promote democracy, as long as these are separate from activities conducted on the basis of the European Cultural Convention.

15. Europe also has global cultural responsibilities. Development education is currently promoted by the North-South Centre in Lisbon. Cultural co-operation should be strengthened with neighbouring countries, for example around the Mediterranean and in eastern Europe.

16. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers: With regard to cultural co-operation in general

16.1. invite governments to reaffirm the cultural vocation of the Council of Europe and the importance of multilateral co-operation on the basis of the existing European Cultural Convention and maintain resources appropriate to perceived needs;

16.2. invite the European Community to adhere to the European Cultural Convention;

16.3. consider ways of associating other interested non-European countries in co-operation under the convention;

16.4. continue to reinforce co-ordination with other organisations and in particular with Unesco, OECD and the CSCE; With regard to specific sectors of cultural co-operation

16.5. place special emphasis on activities relating to young people and on integrating them into intergovernmental activities in general;

16.6. implement its decision to set up a second European youth centre in central or eastern Europe and to develop a network of national and regional youth centres;

16.7. continue to seek ways of promoting the diversity of cultural creativity and of reinforcing this, for example through support for literary translation or for the distribution of cinematographic works;

16.8. reassert the role of the state and the public authorities at all levels in the provision of educational opportunities and of conditions for cultural activity, while also extending co-operation with the other partners in cultural life: the teachers and creative artists, the journalists, the sponsors and the commercial sector in general;

16.9. insist on a greater responsibility of the media, in particular for the quality and ethical standard of their products;

16.10. develop new ways and incentives for funding cultural activities in Europe;

16.11. show greater interest in and support for the European Museum of the Year Award scheme; With regard to central and eastern Europe

16.12. continue its programmes of technical assistance and co-operation with central and eastern Europe and initiate confidence building measures in areas of tension and notably in the former Yugoslavia;

16.13. encourage a closer co-ordination of intergovernmental and Assembly activities along the lines of the joint consultative meetings on sports legislation (Order No. 479); With regard to the introduction of normative activity

16.14. consider favourably proposals for the introduction of forms of cultural and educational activity for the promotion of democracy and human rights, while maintaining a distinction between this activity and that carried out on the basis of the European Cultural Convention and while avoiding the questionable notion of European cultural identity; With regard to the dissemination of results

16.15. pay greater attention to the dissemination of the results of Council of Europe activity, through the co-ordination of subject mailing lists, the development of national information centres and the wider translation of key documents;

16.16. provide assistance for better reporting on Council of Europe activities in national parliaments.