



Recommendation 1299 (1996)¹

European cultural co-operation: activities of the European Union and relations with CoE

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The cultural committees of the Assembly and the European Parliament have a similar field of competence which, in addition to culture and education, includes the fields of youth, sport and the media. It is in this broadest sense that the word culture is used in this recommendation.
2. Competence for the cultural sector has been a matter of controversy since the Treaty of Rome set up the European Economic Community in 1957. With the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, this competence was admitted for the European Union on condition of subsidiarity. It is hoped that the ongoing intergovernmental conference will clarify what this condition may mean in practice and will contribute to more transparency, consistency and efficiency of European Union action in this field.
3. The increase of European Union involvement in European cultural co-operation since the Treaty of Maastricht entered into force in 1993 has been remarkable. The first generation of multi-annual programmes in the fields of culture, education, vocational training, youth and media are coming to an end. Some of the second generation programmes, even more ambitious in their scope and budget, have been adopted or are awaiting adoption. The international dimension of the European Union's cultural activities has also grown and arrangements for co-operation have been included in agreements with non-member countries. Possibilities exist to invite some of these countries to participate in the existing European Union programmes.
4. It is natural that at this point the Assembly should re-examine how these developments affect the activities of the Council of Europe and its co-operation with the European Union, further to its earlier recommendations, in particular Recommendations 1075 (1988) and 1216 (1993).
5. In formal terms, relations between the European Union and the Council of Europe are based on Article 230 of the Treaty of Rome and on the institutional arrangement concluded on 16 June 1987. The Council of Europe is mentioned in Articles 126 and 128 of the Maastricht Treaty and is referred to in most of the European Union programmes as a privileged partner. In the past these possibilities for cultural co-operation have not been fully exploited and co-operation has been based more on informal relations than on a negotiated and organic co-operation between the two institutions. There are, however, welcome signs of more constructive developments in the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC).
6. In practically all areas there are potential problems, but also opportunities for further co-operation. This is particularly true for the fight against racism and xenophobia, European youth platforms, transfrontier television, European cultural identity, assistance to central and eastern European countries and cultural co-operation with non-member countries in the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In all these fields co-operation could benefit from the considerable additional resources that the European Union can bring to the cultural sector.

1. Assembly debate on 25 June 1996 (18th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7575](#), report of the Committee on Culture and Education, rapporteur: Sir Russell Johnston). Text adopted by the Assembly on 25 June 1996 (18th Sitting).



7. The Assembly is also pursuing contacts with the European Parliament. The degree of co-operation at committee level is limited solely by relevance, given the degree to which the European Parliament committee is involved in the European Union's own legislative process, and the practical availability of both parliamentarians and secretariat. The Assembly hopes that more attention will be given to co-operation on this level in the future.

8. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

8.1. ensure that expressions of political will to co-operate are reflected in concrete, regular and meaningful co-operation between the two institutions, and in particular through regular meetings between officials of the Council of Europe Secretariat and the Commission, in order to identify and plan projects that could be carried out either jointly or in complementary manner or separately ;

8.2. develop European cultural co-operation in a flexible manner, together with the European Union, into an intelligent and pragmatic mixture of local, regional, national, intergovernmental and supranational initiatives for cultural action and apply the subsidiarity principle to determine the appropriate level ;

8.3. ensure that such co-operation will be based on recognition of each institution's specific character, experience and potential. The relationship has to be open, pragmatic and transparent, and one which allows for full exploitation of the complementarity as well as the diversity that exist between the two institutions ;

8.4. propose concrete sectors of co-operation where joint projects could be carried out and provide the means for the Council of Europe to play its appropriate role ;

8.5. continue to seek future ways of developing institutional relations in the field of culture and education and in particular :

a. ensure effective reciprocity in representation ;

b. revise and update the relevant parts of the 1987 arrangement by taking account of institutional and political developments since its conclusion and turning it into an efficient and comprehensive instrument for co-operation ;

c. invite the European Union Council of Ministers and its specialised committees for culture and for education to participate more closely in the development of future co-operation alongside the Commission and the European Parliament ;

d. repeat its invitation to the European Community to accede to the European Cultural Convention ;

8.6. include the development and financing of European cultural co-operation among the items to be discussed at the proposed second Council of Europe Summit.