



**Doc. 14070**  
24 May 2016

## Culture and democracy

### Report<sup>1</sup>

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media  
Rapporteur: Ms Vesna MARJANOVIĆ, Serbia, Socialist Group

### Summary

Culture and the arts are a source of human growth and intellectual renewal. They are a powerful tool for preventing radicalisation and empowering civil society in building democratic citizenship.

The year 2016 represents a window of opportunity in Europe to assert new political priorities and give a tangible follow-up to the political declarations made by the Ministers of Culture of the European Union in Riga and the Ministers of Education of the Council of Europe in Brussels concerning the promotion of citizenship and the common values of freedom and non-discrimination through culture and education.

The Council of Europe has a long-standing experience in the field of culture and democratisation and has to stay at the forefront of positioning culture as an integral part of the democratic process. The report recommends fostering co-operation between different sectors of the Council of Europe to develop innovative approaches to cultural policies and diversity management. It points to the need for member States to better integrate cultural activities into the system of education, improving access to culture for marginalised and underprivileged children and youth, and to support projects that aim to integrate cultural activities into other policy sectors such as health, social services, prisons and penitentiary rehabilitation schemes. The report also recommends devoting one of the World Democracy Forums to “culture and democracy” in order to promote innovative policies and exchange of good practices with stakeholders in the member States.

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1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 13343](#), Reference 4020 of 27 January 2014.



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## A. Draft resolution<sup>2</sup>

1. Economic and social difficulties, exacerbated by terrorist attacks and the consequences of political instability in neighbouring regions, are deeply affecting the life of people in Europe. People's fears and lack of confidence correlate with the erosion of civic bonds and the wearing away of established values and become fertile ground for anti-democratic and xenophobic movements to further radicalise and divide society.
2. In this context, the Parliamentary Assembly urges for much stronger recognition of the role that culture can play in upholding democratic principles and values, and building inclusive societies. It stresses that democratic institutions and democratic laws will not work effectively unless they build on a democratic culture.
3. Culture is a source of intellectual renewal and human growth. Active participation in cultural activities help people to acquire a critical mind, to develop a broader understanding of different world views, to interact with others, to have a voice and to define their role in society.
4. Education policies generally focus on providing professional skills and knowledge targeted at economic needs, while personal development, though a key element for personal and societal well-being has been to a large degree neglected over the last decades. The Assembly considers that education policies should be reviewed and used as a driving force in today's world of rapid change and increasing complexity. Cultural education should play an important part in this process, in particular to promote dialogue and mutual understanding and to strengthen solidarity and respect for human rights.
5. The Assembly insists that sustained investment in cultural activity and education must be given equal priority with investment in the economy, infrastructure, security and all other areas seen as crucial to Europe's global economic competitiveness and stability.
6. The Assembly therefore recommends that the parliaments and governments of the member States of the Council of Europe:
  - 6.1. uphold the right of everyone to participate in cultural life as a core human right, seeking to offset barriers which hamper the access to culture of women, youth, minorities, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other vulnerable groups;
  - 6.2. promote the diversity of cultural expressions and cultural pluralism as positive factors for innovation and development;
  - 6.3. secure sustainable funding for cultural policies and develop strategic thinking at inter-ministerial level to mainstream culture in other policy areas such as employment, research and innovation, social services and welfare, health, prisons and penitentiary rehabilitation schemes;
  - 6.4. foster partnerships between the cultural sectors (cultural institutions and individual artists) and the education system, including formal education and lifelong learning, to promote the understanding of freedom of expression, respect for diversity and the development of intercultural competences from a very early age;
  - 6.5. strengthen the role of local authorities in promoting and implementing cultural policy and pilot initiatives, by reviewing the existing mechanisms (allocation of powers, legal structure, co-financing, etc.) to bring decision-making processes regarding culture as close as possible to the citizen, and ensure co-ordination between different levels of government in cultural policy implementation;
  - 6.6. support innovative urban policies by investing in the cultural infrastructure of cities, especially in disadvantaged urban areas;
  - 6.7. increase public participation in the definition of cultural policies and involve interested citizens and non-governmental organisations in the management of cultural institutions;
  - 6.8. measure cultural vitality and evaluate its impact on the democratisation of society and the appreciation of human rights, as a way to evaluate policies, making use in this respect of the Council of Europe's Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD);
  - 6.9. in co-operation with the Council of Europe and the European Union, seek partnerships to develop shared cultural and diversity strategies and pilot projects which stimulate cultural exchange;
  - 6.10. actively support and financially contribute to the implementation of the Council of Europe Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019).

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2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 20 April 2016.

7. The Assembly recommends that the Steering Committee of the World Forum for Democracy devote one of the next Forums to “culture and democracy” in order to promote innovative policies and the exchange of good practices in this field.

## **B. Draft recommendation<sup>3</sup>**

1. The Parliamentary Assembly, referring to its Resolution ... (2016) on culture and democracy, stresses that culture is a powerful tool for preventing radicalisation and empowering civil society in building democratic citizenship. The Council of Europe has a long-standing experience in the field of culture and democratisation and has to stay at the forefront of positioning culture as an integral part of the democratic process.
2. In this respect, the Assembly fully supports the intergovernmental work on developing a “soft power” policy and information tools to assist member States in shaping new cultural and intercultural processes and welcomes the effort to integrate the activities from different sectors into the Action Plan on Building Inclusive Societies (2016-2019).
3. Accordingly, the Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
  - 3.1. encourage co-operation between different sectors of the Council of Europe to develop innovative approaches to cultural policies and diversity management, seeking to deliver policy guidance on how member States could better integrate cultural activities into the education system, and improving access to culture for marginalised and underprivileged children and youth;
  - 3.2. provide support for projects that aim to integrate cultural activities into other policy sectors such as health and social services (in particular for the elderly and people with disabilities), prisons and penitentiary rehabilitation schemes;
  - 3.3. launch the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD) as an important tool to promote political commitment and investments in the cultural sphere at all levels (local, regional, national and European).

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3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 20 April 2016.

## C. Explanatory memorandum by Ms Vesna Marjanović, rapporteur

### 1. Introduction

1. This report builds upon the following statement that was made in the motion for a recommendation:<sup>4</sup> “In the current context of deep economic crisis and severe cuts in public spending, culture is often considered a luxury that society can little afford. In reality, it is an asset for sustainable growth and a powerful tool to strengthen social cohesion and democratic stability.”
2. The report is intended to promote cultural democratisation, that is to say wide-ranging access to cultural assets and participation in cultural activities, which can trigger the creation of social capital, a reinforcement of social bonds and citizen adherence to democratic values. It also addresses the broader issue of the impact culture has on the level of democracy in our societies.
3. In the context of this report, the term “culture” embraces the spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also life-styles, habits of thinking and acting, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Going a step further, I believe that culture does not simply deal with the expression of ideas about the world, but also embodies the will to maintain or change them. Seen in this context, culture is indeed a powerful tool for exercising critical thinking, initiating public debate and strengthening democratic practice in our respective countries.
4. The economic and social crisis is deeply affecting the life of most people in Europe. People’s fears and lack of confidence are closely linked to social exclusion, discrimination, violence and segregation. Such a contexts provides fertile ground for anti-democratic and xenophobic political parties which radicalise and divide society and present a serious threat to our democracies.
5. It is therefore crucial to breathe new life into the way we practice democracy and find new ways to promote inclusion, citizens’ involvement in public and social life and democratic citizenship. Culture can play an important part in creating civil bonds, enhancing understanding of other perspectives and world views and of the inherent dignity of all human beings and encouraging a creative response to societal issues, but only if decision-makers in the public and private sectors are sensitive to its value. Regrettably, culture and education have been among the first sectors where many European governments have sought to make savings, with deep cuts in public funding.
6. “Culture is a security issue in an insecure world.” These are the words of Ivan Krastev, a Bulgarian political scientist. The tragic attack aimed at silencing the journalists and cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* magazine on 7 January 2015 in France, and the subsequent terrorist attacks on 13 November, were not only an assault on freedom of expression but also attacks against the very values of democracy and freedom in general. They are a wake-up call to European governments, showing that the challenge of extremism and violence cannot be confronted solely through securitarian policies, since many young people in quest of their identity and without future prospects are particularly vulnerable to radicalisation. Italy’s Prime Minister, Matteo Renzi, recognised this when he stated that for each euro invested in security there must be an additional euro invested in culture, since the response to terror cannot be exclusively “securitarian”. Mr Renzi announced additional resources of two billion euros per year.<sup>5</sup>
7. The year 2016 therefore represents a window of opportunity in Europe to assert new political priorities and give a tangible follow-up to the political declarations made by the Ministers of Culture of the European Union in Riga<sup>6</sup> and the Education Ministers at their informal meeting on 17 March in Paris,<sup>7</sup> concerning the promotion of citizenship and the common values of freedom and non-discrimination through culture and

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4. [Doc. 13343](#).

5. On 25 November 2015, Matteo Renzi announced that the additional resources of two billion euros per year would correspond to: €500 million allocated to Italian towns for rehabilitation projects in disadvantaged peripheral areas; a scheme whereby around 550 000 Italians reaching the age of 18 receive a card representing an amount of €500 to be used for taking part in cultural initiatives (theatres, museums, concerts), as a symbol of the responsibility the State confers on each of them to become actively involved in the Italian cultural heritage; €50 million for scholarships to help disadvantaged students, on a merit basis; and €150 million corresponding to a possibility for Italian citizens to donate 2/1000 of their personal income tax to cultural associations, such as local theatres.

6. [www.km.gov.lv/lv/doc/ES/Joint\\_statement\\_of\\_the\\_ministers\\_of\\_culture\\_of\\_the\\_EU\\_final.pdf](http://www.km.gov.lv/lv/doc/ES/Joint_statement_of_the_ministers_of_culture_of_the_EU_final.pdf).

7. [https://eu2015.lv/images/notikumi/2015-3-10\\_Declaration\\_EN.pdf](https://eu2015.lv/images/notikumi/2015-3-10_Declaration_EN.pdf) and <https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/964-education-ministers-release-declaration-to-tackle-intolerance-discrimination-and-radicalisation>.

education. In this context, I welcome the Council of Europe's decision to hold the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in Brussels on 11 to 12 April 2016, on the theme “Securing democracy through education – The development of a Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture”.

8. I also value the initiative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, who has made a number of proposals for immediate action by the Council of Europe to combat radicalisation leading to terrorism.<sup>8</sup> On the parliamentary side, the Parliamentary Assembly held a debate and adopted [Resolution 2031 \(2015\)](#) “Terrorist attacks in Paris: a democratic response”, and the Bureau of the Assembly decided to invite certain committees, including the Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media, to take follow-up action. In our committee, we have identified eight reports which are directly relevant to this debate, including the present report.<sup>9</sup>

9. In view of this compelling political context, I propose to focus on the following three key issues: a) enhancing “political democratic culture” through culture; b) mainstreaming culture in governance; and c) cultural vitality and its impact on democracy. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr Monika Mokre<sup>10</sup> for her valuable assistance and research.

## 2. Enhancing “political democratic culture” through culture

10. According to the motto of the French Revolution, democracy is based on freedom, equality and solidarity. These three values mutually uphold and reinforce each other. They cannot be pursued separately and must go hand in hand. Together, they are the foundation of a democratic society in which individuals identify with a State and with other citizens.

11. In today’s difficult context of eroded civil bonds and the wearing away of established values, culture can be a powerful tool to prevent radicalisation and empower civil society in building democratic citizenship. Since the Enlightenment, culture and the arts have been understood as an important means of political and societal education. In this vein, the German poet Friedrich Schiller defined theatre as a “moral institution” (*moralische Anstalt*) where people can learn about government and the critique of government. This is a rather academic understanding of the role of culture and the arts, which assumes that artists and cultural producers have “the right message” to convey and reduces the audience to a passive role. But even without subscribing to these aspirations, culture and the arts can be understood as a means of political education. However, culture needs to remain critically distant from power and to serve as a means to nurture freedom as a precondition for democracy. Therefore, it has to be a means of education for democracy and certainly not a tool of indoctrination, as in the former Soviet Union or Nazi Germany.

12. Pierre Bourdieu drew attention to the potential undemocratic effects of “high culture”, creating cultural and social capital, as well as economic capital, for those who are already privileged in such matters. Acknowledging both the positive and problematic dimensions of culture and the arts, the initiative “*Culture for everybody*” of the 1970s tried to open up high culture to all strata of society. It was proposed to achieve this by reducing entrance fees and regionalising cultural activities. However, the success of these initiatives remained rather limited. It is clear that the threshold of access to high culture is not predominantly financial, but rather connected to a specific habitus. Love of the high arts is a preference acquired mainly through early exposure.

13. Turkey provides a historic example. In the years following the foundation of the Republic of Turkey (1923), initiatives were taken to invest in culture and education of young generations, with the aim of modernising and democratising the State. The Turkish alphabet was introduced by replacing Arabic letters with Latin letters and the low literacy rate was increased with the campaigns. People’s Houses (Turkish: Halkevleri) were founded in 1932. Free courses were offered on the topics of language, literature, drama, music, fine arts, speaking and writing as well as handicrafts and tailoring. Village Institutes were established in rural areas in 21 different regions, qualified by UNESCO in 1951 as a unique “teacher-training experience” model.

14. In contemporary Europe, schools, and even nurseries, continue to play a crucial role for the democratisation of culture and the arts. It seems especially important to facilitate access to these art forms instead of letting them inspire awe and unease. Specific exhibitions, performances, etc. are necessary, in addition to specific forms of artistic and cultural mediation. The German foundation Robert Bosch Stiftung has

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8. See the information document “Immediate action by the Council of Europe to combat radicalisation leading to terrorism”, SG/Inf(2015)4, 20 January 2015.

9. For more information, see document AS/Cult (2015) 22.

10. Senior Researcher at the Institute for Cultural Studies and History of Theatre, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna.

been supporting 16 such projects in various cultural institutions in Germany since 2013. One example is the “Minifilmclub” run by the German Film Museum in co-operation with nurseries, where children aged 4 to 6 are acquainted with the film-making environment, including the backstage areas. They are then shown experimental animation movies and are invited to produce such movies themselves – for example by painting and scratching on celluloid or shooting moving stones.<sup>11</sup> These examples would have an even greater impact if their effects on individuals, such as enhanced knowledge of others, empathy, curiosity, critical thinking, respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings – all of which are aspects of democratic competence – were evaluated through targeted studies, also intended to promote mutual learning.

15. The same applies to programmes for adults with a hitherto limited access to and/or interest in culture and the arts. Such programmes have to be carefully developed, as they operate within a “paradox of recognition”: striving to promote equal access to culture while dealing with very specific groups identified as disadvantaged or less educated.<sup>12</sup> A good example of a careful and empowering approach to this paradox are the “arts ambassadors” who have been employed by cultural institutions in the United Kingdom for several decades. An arts ambassador is defined as “a community networker with the objective of spreading the word about arts and cultural events and/or representing the views and aspirations of a target community”.<sup>13</sup> Mention can be made of a project in Poole including various arts institutions and 100 arts ambassadors who aim to attract first-time attenders to the events of the participating institutions. Over 14 months, the arts ambassadors (many of them new attenders themselves) succeeded in attracting about 3 000 new people to the events. Feedback given by the ambassadors in focus groups and workshops was an integral part of the project.<sup>14</sup>

16. It is equally important to include different parts of the population not only as audiences but also as cultural actors and producers. Cultural production is a key form of empowerment and enables a self-confident relationship with culture and the arts. The “Diamond” project,<sup>15</sup> for example, combines mediation and cultural production by the audience. Under this programme, science museums in Italy, Romania and Spain have developed new forms of access for specific target groups. The initiatives included courses in “digital storytelling” where participants told stories about their respective museums. They thus approached the museum from a specific perspective, as a place for telling stories, which made these museums more accessible for other visitors while at the same time enhancing the participants’ digital knowledge and skills.<sup>16</sup>

17. The Antena project in the Flemish part of Belgium aimed to increase ethnic diversity within the boards of cultural institutions.<sup>17</sup> This can be regarded as a good example of mainstreaming diversity by using a top-down approach, similar to the approach recommended in gender mainstreaming.

18. Several programmes in different countries of Europe focus specifically on cultural productions by specific sectors of the population. There are programmes which support artists from ethnic minorities in order to counteract discrimination. In Sweden, the project “Artistnet” was founded by Intercult in Stockholm. Artistnet is a network made up of artists from a migrant background living in Sweden. The objective is to facilitate contacts with arrangers, producers, film companies, television channels, theatres and other cultural institutions looking for artists or actors for special projects.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, “kültür gemma!” in Austria awards one-year grants to artists with a migrant background for a specific project.<sup>19</sup>

19. Such activities are an important means of enabling cultural expression by marginalised groups. At the same time, it could be argued that, given their focus on a specific community, they may reinforce segregation of these groups instead of helping them to build transcultural relations. There is no one-size-fits-all analytical model for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of community arts and culture projects. Instead, it would seem important to analyse individual projects in depth with regard to their cultural policy aims, and with regard to specific effects which they might have on particular subgroups of participants.

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11. <http://deutsches-filminstitut.de/filmmuseum/minifilmclub/>.

12. [www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/zeit-fuer-vermittlung/download/pdf-d/ZfV\\_2\\_FV.pdf](http://www.kultur-vermittlung.ch/zeit-fuer-vermittlung/download/pdf-d/ZfV_2_FV.pdf), pp. 55-58.

13. [www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/downloads/toolkits/ambassadors.pdf](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/downloads/toolkits/ambassadors.pdf), p. 9.

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 96-99.

15. [www.diamondmuseums.eu/](http://www.diamondmuseums.eu/); Dialoguing Museums for a New Cultural Democracy, supported by the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Commission and EACEA.

16. Some of these digital stories can be found here: [www.diamondmuseums.eu/stories-spain.html](http://www.diamondmuseums.eu/stories-spain.html); [www.diamondmuseums.eu/stories-romania.html](http://www.diamondmuseums.eu/stories-romania.html).

17. [www.culturalpolicies.net/web/intercultural-dialogue-database.php](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/intercultural-dialogue-database.php).

18. *Ibid.*

19. [www.kueltuergemma.at/](http://www.kueltuergemma.at/).

20. These kinds of programmes also create opportunities for a diverse range of cultural productions, but usually remain on the margins of the cultural field. The structure and self-image of institutions in the field of the arts and high culture often constitute a barrier to the inclusion of non-professional artists or artists not perceived as satisfying criteria of excellence, which are frequently barely defined. It goes without saying that, to promote diverse societies, cultural policies should aim at ensuring equal opportunities of production and consumption of cultural and artistic works for all strata of society. However, there is heated debate about the right way to achieve this aim. Legal provisions requiring the inclusion of marginalised groups (like gender quotas) are frequently regarded as undue State restriction of the freedom of art and culture. Therefore, other forms of incentives (such as extra funding) are probably a more suitable way of achieving inclusive cultural productions. It can nonetheless be argued that such incentives constitute undue State influence.

21. Culture and the arts can fulfil another important democratic function: they can open up the “protected” public sphere with a view to addressing conflicts in society. Cultural institutions exercise the faculty of memory by dealing with complexities of the past in order to innovate for the future. Cultural institutions can offer meeting places and safe spaces for dialogue, communication and personal development. There is scientific evidence that meaningful dialogue, communication and co-operation between individuals who are engaged in activities with a common goal does indeed reduce prejudice and intolerance.<sup>20</sup> Artistic freedom can make possible the expression of conflictual positions which might otherwise be politically (or even legally) difficult or unacceptable. This can prove more productive than silencing such political positions. In Serbia, for example, the film *The Parade* (2011), directed by Srđan Dragojević, was the first to address questions of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and attained a box-office total of 330 000 in Serbia and a further 320 000 in the countries of former Yugoslavia, thus reaching a wide audience by approaching this important subject in a sensitive and open manner.<sup>21</sup> The 2015 theatre production of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* was a joint project by Radionica Integracije and Qendra Multimedia which also sought “to symbolically end the Serbia-Kosovo conflict”. The Montagues were played by Kosovan Albanians and the Capulets by Serbian actors.<sup>22</sup>

22. Even radical and extremist views can be discussed in such a “safe” environment, so as to develop alternative answers and narratives and openly discuss issues that people feel passionate about. However, some such forms of expression have also ignited unrest and a questioning of the understanding and limitations of freedom of expression. For example, the Mohamed cartoons published in a Danish newspaper in 2005 triggered demonstrations and violent protests by Muslims all over the world, diplomatic conflicts and boycotts of Danish products. These conflicts cost the lives of 100 people. Debates in the media set the Western value of freedom of expression against the limitations of this freedom within Islam. However, this juxtaposition was neither productive nor accurate, as in Western societies too, freedom of expression (including freedom of the arts) has sometimes been limited by religious sentiments. Art works have been forbidden since they allegedly offended religious sentiments, usually Christian ones. For example, a comic book by the Austrian cartoonist Gerhard Haderer, *The Life of Jesus* (2002), was forbidden in Greece following a complaint lodged by the Greek Orthodox Church, and Haderer was convicted *in absentia* to six months’ imprisonment.

23. Instead of reasoning in terms of a bipolar scheme of Western and Islamic values, it would make more sense to re-evaluate freedom of expression and the arts within the context of contemporary societies and global interaction. While limitations of artistic freedom should be ardently avoided, artists and cultural producers, as well as cultural policy makers, should be aware of the responsibility that goes hand in hand with every kind of freedom. In this vein, one could argue that representatives of majority cultures should be made aware of the values and sentiments of minorities. However, everyone should be mindful of the values and sensitivities of other communities. Not only would such an approach be consistent with democratic values (which are always a combination of majority power and minority rights), but it could also facilitate intercultural relations by exploring the advantages and disadvantages of Western values for those who were not born and raised with these values. We therefore need more debate about the ethics of cultural and artistic expression, and we need to have a public sphere for discussing the “political democratic culture” through culture.

24. In many instances, such a public sphere is created through provocative action by artists. For example, the action of the Russian feminist protest punk group Pussy Riot has captured international attention and led to heated debates about its appropriateness, in addition to discussion of issues raised by the group. In 2012, they staged a performance in the Christ the Saviour Cathedral in Moscow singing the song “Punk Prayer:

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20. See, for example, Pettigrew T.F. and Tropp L.R. (2006), A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90, 751-783.

21. See, for example, [www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/jan/24/the-parade-pride-of-serbia](http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2012/jan/24/the-parade-pride-of-serbia).

22. See, for example, [www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/apr/05/romeo-and-juliet-kosovo-war-shakespeare-serbia](http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/apr/05/romeo-and-juliet-kosovo-war-shakespeare-serbia).

Virgin birth-giver of God, drive away Putin!", a criticism of the Orthodox Church's support for Putin.<sup>23</sup> As a protest against the arrest of two members of the band, the Russian artist Petr Pavlensky, also widely known for his provocative projects, sewed up his mouth.<sup>24</sup>

### 3. Mainstreaming culture in governance

25. The term "culture" has many different meanings, ranging from "culture as a whole way of life" to the "high culture" of classical arts production and reproduction. As mentioned in the introduction to this report, when used here the term culture embraces spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise human beings and their societies. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also lifestyles, ways of thinking and acting, systems of values, traditions and beliefs. Going a step further, culture is a need and a necessity which distinguishes human behaviour.

26. However, government bodies dealing with culture usually confine their activities to cultural and artistic institutions and productions, whereas policies related to a broader understanding of culture (such as minority and integration policies) are usually dealt with by other institutions. Systematic mainstreaming of culture in all fields of governance can rarely be found in supranational, national or regional policies. Instead, culture is marginalised in governance, especially in times of austerity with severe cuts in public funding, which is earmarked for what are assumed to be more urgent political agendas. The main reason for this is undoubtedly a lack of understanding of the impact of culture on society. This lack of recognition has many causes, many of which lie outside the range of cultural policies (such as a mainly economically driven political discourse). It therefore seems crucial that the importance of culture and the arts should also be given legal recognition, for example in constitutional laws. As a recent Swedish study shows, this is the case in four European Union countries, while other countries may have regulations, but they are not part of the Constitution.<sup>25</sup> Generally, constitutional provisions on culture and the arts are to be welcomed, as they imply recognition of their importance at the highest level. However, this alone is not enough to permit the mainstreaming of culture in concrete policies.

27. The mainstreaming of culture comes up against the difficulty that (working) definitions of culture and of the aims of cultural policies are frequently lacking.<sup>26</sup> Without such working definitions, it would be difficult to establish an overall framework for mainstreaming culture. If the concept of culture mainstreaming is to be developed in a way similar to the widely applied concept of gender mainstreaming, all policies will have to be evaluated with regard to their impact on culture (and the different cultural possibilities, expressions and communities). However, the mainstreaming of culture should also include (and even emphasise) the converse relationship, namely the added value of culture for different policy fields.

28. Another perspective on culture mainstreaming has recently come to the fore, especially in German-speaking countries; it aims to ensure equal opportunities for participation by all ethnic groups.<sup>27</sup> While this approach may be considered more suitable for an understanding of culture as a part of and a precondition for democracy, it could also have problematic consequences, as it again focuses more on cultural differences and less on common cultural features. At the same time, envisaging the relationship between culture and democracy along the lines of diversity and a plurality of overlapping cultures seems an appropriate approach for contemporary societies. This overlap is absolutely essential in the area of human rights.

29. The Swiss cultural policies model might serve as an example here, since Switzerland has neither a homogeneous national culture nor a clear national identity.<sup>28</sup> The common culture is far more a question of permanent efforts to keep the cultural diversity of the country alive under a common functional roof. The main thrust of these efforts consists in measures to promote understanding and solidarity between the different linguistic regions and cultures of Switzerland. According to Article 3 of the new law, the promotion of culture by

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23. See, for example, [www.vice.com/read/A-Russian-Pussy-Riot](http://www.vice.com/read/A-Russian-Pussy-Riot).

24. See, for example, <http://blogs.reuters.com/fullfocus/2012/11/30/best-photos-of-the-year-2012/#a=67>.

25. European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD), Request No. 2981, Law for the Promotion of Culture and Art. Final summary prepared by the research service of the Swedish Parliament, December 2015.

26. This is clear from the country profiles collected in the Compendium, see: [www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries-profiles-download.php](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries-profiles-download.php).

27. See, for example: [www.good-practice.de/3843.php](http://www.good-practice.de/3843.php).

28. The principles of federalism and double subsidiarity, combined with the fact that Switzerland has four official languages and a high proportion of inhabitants from diverse cultural backgrounds (foreign nationals make up more than 20% of the Swiss population), make it very difficult to provide a national definition of culture.

the federal government shall have the following aims: a) to strengthen the cohesion and cultural diversity of Switzerland; b) to promote a richly diverse and qualitatively outstanding range of cultural activities and offerings; c) to establish favourable conditions for cultural workers and cultural institutions; d) to provide the population of Switzerland with access to culture and to facilitate such access; e) to make Swiss cultural works known abroad.<sup>29</sup>

30. As an example of a plurilingual project, mention can be made here of the project “Creativity in the Community” implemented by Goldsmith College, which investigates “the potential for using creative works (stories, dance, drama, art works, multimedia) in the teaching of community languages as a stimulus for learners’ own creativity”.<sup>30</sup> As part of the project, a play entitled “Happy families” was written and staged in a Panjabi complementary school for 6 to 17-year-old students in Greenwich. The students chose both the means of artistic expression and the theme of the play, a sensitive community issue: unfair treatment of young women by their mother-in-law when they get married and become part of their husband’s family. The play was written in Panjabi and translated into English by two A-level students, the music was chosen by two 8-year-old pupils, and most students were part of the performance. After the performance, the students decided to publish the story in a bilingual English-Panjabi comic book. The project succeeded in “legitimising and supporting areas of students’ linguistic and cultural experience which tend to be excluded from mainstream education”.<sup>31</sup>

31. Such approaches are clearly important as regards not only ethnic and linguistic diversity, but also sexual diversity, or the needs and interests of different socio-economic groups. Mainstreaming cultural policies in this way would mean: 1) acknowledging the impact of culture and cultural productions in all sectors of society; and 2) applying the principles of cultural policies within all parts of governance.

### **3.1. Education policies**

32. In the field of education, cultural and arts education has to be recognised as an integral and important part of general education. A major challenge for education systems today is not just to equip young people with the knowledge and skills required to respond to labour market demands in a fast changing environment, but also to help them develop attitudes and values with which they can embrace their future with more confidence, openness and creativity. The challenge is also to enhance a sense of respect, solidarity and social cohesion, and their democratic and intercultural competences.<sup>32</sup>

33. However, education on all levels is increasingly devised as vocational training rather than a more general preparation for a fulfilled life.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, arts education frequently suffers from cuts in budgets and teaching time, while the importance of the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is emphasised. Without denying the importance of these disciplines (as well as the need for a more gender neutral way of teaching them) an expansion of the teaching of these subjects at the expense of cultural and artistic disciplines must be rejected. As the labour market requires more and more job flexibility, general education, including cultural and arts education, should play a more important instead of a less important role. This means equipping young people with the competences that are needed for life as active democratic citizens (such as analytical and critical thinking skills, co-operation skills, flexibility, respect for others, responsibility, etc.).

34. Secondly, the question arises how to develop arts education in order to apply the general principles of cultural policies, as outlined above. Active cultural production is probably more suitable here than a somewhat passive reception of culture and the arts. The French association “Les Engraineurs” based in the municipality of Pantin organises writing and film-making workshops for children and young people, most of whom have a migrant background. Individual and collective works are produced in these workshops under the supervision of professional film makers. Each participant is part of the entire film-making process.<sup>34</sup> One recent production by this association discusses different opinions on homosexuality in a very open way, thereby creating a forum for discussion on an issue which is rarely openly talked about within the different communities in France (and elsewhere).<sup>35</sup>

29. [www.culturalpolicies.net/download/switzerland\\_102014.pdf](http://www.culturalpolicies.net/download/switzerland_102014.pdf), pp. 4-5.

30. [www.gold.ac.uk/clcl/multilingual-learning/creativity/](http://www.gold.ac.uk/clcl/multilingual-learning/creativity/).

31. [www.gold.ac.uk/media/migrated/media/goldsmiths/departments/researchcentres/centreforlanguagecultureandlearningclcl/multilinguallearning/creativity/NALDIC-SE-London--June-2010-PPT.ppt](http://www.gold.ac.uk/media/migrated/media/goldsmiths/departments/researchcentres/centreforlanguagecultureandlearningclcl/multilinguallearning/creativity/NALDIC-SE-London--June-2010-PPT.ppt).

32. [www.coe.int/competences](http://www.coe.int/competences).

33. See, for example, Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)6 on the public responsibility for higher education and research.

34. <http://les-engraineurs.org/content/lassociation>.

35. At the same time, it is also important for children and young people to become acquainted with important cultural works of the past and the present. Here, schools may face a problem, as the concept of a recognised canon of literature and the arts has been rightly rejected, in favour of a multitude of diverse cultural achievements. The question arises which art works children and students should be acquainted with? For example, in Austria, the selection of works of literature for teaching purposes is now to a great extent left to the teacher. Since the final exams are centralised for the whole of Austria, this means that language exams cannot include questions on the substance and form of specific literary works, but are instead confined to very general literary questions, as well as the writing of job applications, business letters, etc. Since the year preceding this exam is mostly devoted to preparing pupils to sit it, literature is neglected throughout this school year.

### **3.2. Social policies**

36. In the field of social policies, it has to be recognised that access to culture is a universal right bestowed on every individual irrespective of gender, ethnicity, race, class, sexual orientation, etc. This results in an obligation for the public authorities to provide access to culture for those who have hitherto been deprived of such access, for example by putting in place reduced entrance fees, free admission or culture vouchers for specific groups. In several provinces and cities in Austria and Germany, as well as in Luxembourg, culture passports have been introduced for people with a low income. These culture passports allow free or reduced-cost access to many cultural institutions.<sup>36</sup>

37. Again, these activities should not be limited to cultural consumption, but should include cultural production incentives or specific support measures for artists and cultural producers. Developing participatory cultural projects with specific groups could be a suitable approach here. A world-famous example of such an approach is the Venezuelan project “El Sistema” aimed at providing musical education for the neediest children in this country: “Many begin attending their local El Sistema center, called a ‘nucleo’, as early as age 2 or 3, with the vast majority continuing well into their teens; attending up to six days a week, three to four hours a day, plus retreats and intensive workshops. Participation is free for all students. The country now has over 500 000 students with plans to expand it to serve 1 000 000 annually.”<sup>37</sup> The project thereby pursues two goals: education for poor children and training of excellent musicians. Similar projects have been developed in other countries. However, it should be noted that El Sistema has also been much criticised: the orchestras have been described as “a model of absolute tyranny ... part of a drive for moral improvement and high profits”. It has been claimed that the students in fact come from a middle-class background, that the scheme’s financial affairs are opaque and that the proclaimed successes are not adequately evaluated. These harsh criticisms have been followed by equally harsh rebuttals.<sup>38</sup> Without taking sides in this dispute, one can say that the project appears valuable and important, but certainly needs adequate assessment and evaluation.

38. It is now more widely recognised that culture and the arts can play an important role in social inclusion. The European Social Fund (ESF) finances a considerable number of cultural projects. For example, between 2009 and 2013, the ESF part-funded co-operation projects between schools and cultural institutions in Hungary under the project title “Assisting out of classroom and free time activities of educational institutions”. The forms of co-operation ranged from theme days to workshops and nurturing of talent. Socially challenged schools were a priority. Theatres, culture centres, museums and libraries participated in the project.

### **3.3. Foreign policies**

39. Arts and culture usually play an important role in international politics and external relations, especially in the form of cultural diplomacy. With regard to the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union (CFSP), more active cultural diplomacy has been described as an attempt to “soften” the CFSP (while the latter should be deepened through more intensive European Union co-operation, widened with regard to its geographical scope and hardened through active and possibly also violent intervention in wars). However, not every form of cultural diplomacy can be understood as softening foreign policy. By portraying one’s own culture as superior or drawing sharp borders with other cultures, cultural diplomacy can in fact harden foreign policy. In order to increase mutual understanding, international cultural policies should be less bound up with cultural diplomacy and aim rather at developing transversal relations, including between public institutions in different countries as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs).<sup>39</sup>

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35. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nhWLJP0juw>.

36. See, for example, [www.culturall.lu/](http://www.culturall.lu/); [www.kulturpass.net/](http://www.kulturpass.net/); [www.hungeraufkunstundkultur.at/allgemeine\\_infos.html](http://www.hungeraufkunstundkultur.at/allgemeine_infos.html).

37. <https://www.elsistemausa.org/el-sistema-in-venezuela.htm>.

38. [www.theguardian.com/music/2014/nov/11/venezuela-el-sistema-music-scheme-disadvantaged-children-geoffrey-baker-study-uk](http://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/nov/11/venezuela-el-sistema-music-scheme-disadvantaged-children-geoffrey-baker-study-uk).

40. Furthermore, the principles of federalism and participation should also be fostered in international cultural activities. This firstly entails moving away from the idea of a unified national culture, so as to also encourage activities focusing on – smaller or larger – regions. As regions frequently transcend national borders, this transversal aspect can be brought to the fore. An example of a cultural institution with a trans-European, regional perspective is the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MUCEM) in Marseilles,<sup>40</sup> the winner of the Council of Europe Museum Prize in 2015. Perfectly placed in a city which has always been influenced more by its location on the shores of the Mediterranean than by its national affiliation to France, the museum conceptualises the Mediterranean in the tradition of Fernand Braudel as a foundation not only of European culture but also of the Arab world, creating a unique place of communication between cultures. Besides being an exemplary museum, the MUCEM also functions as a contemporary Agora, attracting the widest possible public. However, above all, the MUCEM plays an important role in the democratisation of society through educational activities, debates with artists and writers, seminars, conferences, cinema festivals, contemporary theatre performances, concerts, etc., addressing a vast array of contemporary and often highly controversial issues linked to the Mediterranean.

41. Traditionally, in international relations, cultural activities are confined to the presentation of cultural and artistic works. Participatory projects have not played an important role in cultural diplomacy up to now, but a shift towards transversal cultural activities could and should lead to changes in this regard. Here, reference can be made to an interesting project of the Goethe Institute in Sofia, entitled “Bud.Ko”. This project takes place in and around the derelict building of a former newspaper kiosk from the socialist era, a “budka” in Bulgarian. Several of these buildings can still be found in Sofia, and the one the Goethe Institute chose is in a very central position close to the Opera. This kiosk is now a place for the exchange of ideas between artists, inhabitants of the surrounding neighbourhood, passers-by, etc. This exchange is organised in different ways, through workshops, by wrapping the building with white paper and inviting people to express their ideas on it, or through graffiti of “Sofia monsters” produced by two artists.<sup>41</sup>

### **3.4. Health policies**

42. Culture and the arts could and should be mainstreamed also in other policy areas. Within health institutions, giving patients the possibility to access culture and the arts or to participate in cultural productions can help them improve their quality of life and empower them. In this vein, the Liverpool museum (winner of the Council of Europe Prize in 2013) has developed the project “House of Memories”, providing the carers of people with dementia with “information about dementia and equip[ping] them with the practical skills and knowledge to facilitate a positive quality of life experience for people living with dementia”.<sup>42</sup> Part of the project consists of “memory suitcases” which contain objects, memorabilia and photographs. Other thematic suitcases focus, for example, on African and Caribbean memories, the Irish community and the LGBT heritage.

43. Borderline experiences and very specific life situations can, furthermore, lead to very interesting aesthetic productions, as attested by the famous art brut works of patients in the Austrian psychiatric clinic of Gugging.<sup>43</sup>

### **3.5. Justice policies**

44. In a similar way, culture and the arts can be integrated in the judicial system, for example by enabling and encouraging artistic production in prisons or as part of rehabilitation measures. There are many examples of prison art throughout Europe and, especially, in the United States. A well-known example is the annual “Multiart Festival for Prisoners” in Romania, “encouraging inmates to assert themselves in the field of acting and to exploit their desire for social and moral recovery. Organised every fall since 2009, this unique event in Europe brings together artists and troupes of prisoners throughout the prison system, allowing the public to directly get in touch with the reality that otherwise they do not have access to. In fact, the festival takes place throughout the whole year. In the first phase, the prison identifies the inmates and together with the representatives of the theatre world (directors and actors) they establish the convenient artistic formula,

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39. Bátora J. and Mokre M. (2011), Introduction: What Role for Culture in the EU's External Relations?, in: Bátora J. and Mokre M. (Eds.), *Culture in the EU's External Relations: Bridging the Divide?*, Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 5-21.

40. [www.mucem.org/en](http://www.mucem.org/en).

41. [www.goethe.de/ins/bg/de/sof/kul/zukunftswerkstatt.html](http://www.goethe.de/ins/bg/de/sof/kul/zukunftswerkstatt.html); <http://blog.goethe.de/budko/>.

42. [www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/](http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/learning/projects/house-of-memories/).

43. [www.gugging.org/en/startseite](http://www.gugging.org/en/startseite).

inspired from the prison reality and from classic or contemporary theatre. Artistic performances are presented in the prison and after that on the stage of the local theatre. The final phase takes place in Bucharest. The best theatre acts are staged at the Nottara Theatre, a well-known theatre of the Romanian capital".<sup>44</sup>

### **3.6. Research policies**

45. In the field of science and scholarship, culture and the arts have begun to play a more prominent role due to the relatively new concept of arts-based research. By recognising that art is a form of research, the hegemony of academic research is challenged. On the one hand, understandings of research are thus broadened, allowing interesting encounters between academics and artists. On the other hand, such a perspective also enables new understandings of academic research, for example encompassing the creative and intuitive aspects of academic work. Many forms of arts-based research can currently be found in different artistic as well as academic disciplines. One very interesting example is co-operation between neuroscientists and different artistic disciplines. This co-operation pursues two main goals – to learn more about the impact of the arts on brain activities and to use artistic experiences for further developing neuroscience. In particular, studies in the first area of co-operation have sometimes been criticised, not without reason, for being over-general and simplifying the possible impact of the arts.<sup>45</sup> Still, interdisciplinary research between the neurosciences and theatre science has proven especially fruitful both in order to understand what is going on in the brain of an actor, while acting, and so as to transfer methods used by theatre actors to the treatment of mentally disabled people.<sup>46</sup>

### **3.7. Media policies**

46. Contemporary developments in the media play an ambiguous role for culture and the arts. The mass media system is usually described as dual, consisting of the private and the public sectors. Yet, even the public sector is coming under increasing pressure to be commercial and to reach out to a mass audience. This leads to further marginalisation of culture and the arts. Austrian public television has tried to compensate for this by setting up a new television channel exclusively devoted to culture and the arts. This affords those interested in this field the possibility to consume the arts and to be informed about cultural and artistic developments. However, a broader audience is as a rule not confronted with culture and the arts, while, in the past, cultural and artistic productions formed part of the regular TV offer and were therefore able to reach out to the general public. At the same time, it can be argued that a specific channel for culture and the arts is a move towards empowering TV audiences to make their own choices and, in any case, towards the opening up of media space for culture and the arts. An example of this is the European Culture Channel ARTE, which provides cultural programming that fosters understanding among Europeans and brings people together.<sup>47</sup>

47. The term "dual sector" is not entirely correct. In many countries, a third sector of non-commercial, non-State media can be found, in the form of free radios, community TV, alternative newspapers and journals and their respective websites. These media play a vital role, especially for promoting expression by minority groups and specific communities (defined by ethnicity, political affiliation and sexual orientation, etc.). For example, in Ireland, the radio station "Raidió na Life" provides "a comprehensive Irish language radio service for the greater Dublin area, on an educational and community basis". This permits the provision of a cultural service and fosters awareness and enthusiasm for the Irish language.<sup>48</sup>

48. Lastly, the mass media seem to be having a declining impact on individuals' lives due to the social media, which enable individual choices of contents and interactivity. While the social media can be seen as problematic for social cohesion, since local and regional communities are set apart in virtual space, on the other hand they create new, transnational links which can also be used for cultural exchange. An Internet presence can also be used by cultural producers to attract audiences, inform them and stay in contact with them.

49. The political system can support cultural producers and artists in their efforts to attract audiences via the Internet and other media. This can be done through infrastructure and financial support. Legislation plays a paramount role here, especially for the Internet. Copyright regulations have to be shaped so as to support cultural producers and artists, instead of furthering the financial interests of big commercial enterprises. At the same time, audiences need to regain legal certainty, so they can use Internet content without fear of

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44. [www.europis.org/the-5th-edition-of-multiart-festival-for-prisoners/](http://www.europis.org/the-5th-edition-of-multiart-festival-for-prisoners/).

45. [www.nature.com/news/neuroaesthetics-is-killing-your-soul-1.12640](http://www.nature.com/news/neuroaesthetics-is-killing-your-soul-1.12640).

46. See, for example, a recent workshop on the performer's cognition: <http://faa.web-interaction.fr/index.php?id=475>.

47. [www.arte.tv/sites/en/corporate/qui-sommes-nous-cluster/?lang=en&lang=en](http://www.arte.tv/sites/en/corporate/qui-sommes-nous-cluster/?lang=en&lang=en).

48. [www.raidionalife.ie/en/history/](http://www.raidionalife.ie/en/history/).

prosecution. The legislation must therefore be adapted to new technological possibilities, and the best solution would probably be to introduce a form of flat fee which legalises the activities of users and permits financial compensation for the creators of contents.

50. Finally, it should be mentioned that culture, the arts, and creativity in general, have become more prominent in the field of economic policies in recent decades. It can be argued that “the arts and creativity can enhance economic growth in knowledge-based societies”. While this is certainly true, it leads to the question what is the function of culture and the arts?

51. All the initiatives discussed in this chapter should be understood as examples. Mainstreaming culture and the arts means assessing every political measure with regard to its cultural consequences and also considering whether artistic or cultural production could be used in a fruitful way to further the measure’s foreseen aims.

#### 4. Cultural vitality and its impact on democracy

52. Culture is a source of intellectual renewal and human growth. It embraces different kinds of creative activity from the “high arts” to popular culture, all which foster creativity, reflection and social debate. Exposure to culture from an early age and active participation in cultural activities enable us not only to acquire knowledge, a critical mind and a broader understanding of the world around us, seen from different perspectives, but also help us to use our creative capacity for self-expression, to gain openness and confidence and to interact with others, to have a voice and define our role in society.

53. There is a need to acknowledge the role of different cultures, including minority and migrant cultures, in the building of national identities, and their potential to help new generations transcend national boundaries and over time define a European identity characterised by diversity, pluralism and respect for human rights and human dignity. However, the dominance of the cultural industries, with the power to disseminate “mass culture”, has a strong influence on the building of “public culture” and threatens to erode the distinctiveness of national and regional cultures and identities. As an alternative to this global trend of passive “cultural consumption”, we need to mobilise creative energies within our societies to support culturally vibrant and diverse forms of life.

54. Creating and sustaining the conditions for cultural activity and networking at local, regional, national and European level are therefore crucial. Moreover, European co-productions, partnerships and transnational tours expose artists to new audiences, stimulate the exchange of ideas and practices, create impulses for artistic development and, at the same time, bring economies of scale and cost-sharing. However, such cultural exchange and networking projects are seldom sustainable in the long term, as the funding usually favours one-off projects.

55. Measuring cultural vitality in the member States and its impact on the democratisation of society should be an important tool for politicians to maintain their commitment and investments in the cultural sphere at all levels (local, regional, national and European). In this context, I welcome the initiative of the Council of Europe to develop an Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy (IFCD), currently under way following the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture held in Moscow in April 2013, which focused on “Governance of Culture – Promoting Access to Culture”.

56. In its interim report published in May 2015, the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape (CDCPP) discusses a number of hypotheses of considerable relevance to this report. The first hypothesis assumes that “the political institutions of legal rights and basic freedoms have an impact on the cultural participation of certain societal groups” and confirms this assumption using the example of women’s rights and women’s cultural participation. Another interesting example for this interrelation can be found in the Council of Cultures of Palermo, representing all the inhabitants of Palermo who do not have citizens’ rights (EU and non-EU-citizens as well as stateless people and persons without legal documents). The Palermo Council offers an opportunity for these people to influence the relevant (municipal) legislation concerning them and supports cultural and economic projects implemented by the people it represents. The Council is not a political decision-making body, but its proposals have to be discussed by the City Council of Palermo.<sup>49</sup>

57. The second hypothesis assumes that cultural participation enhances political participation. Although we still need to support research which will find more evidence on this hypothesis, this supports the considerations on political education through culture as developed in Chapter 2 of this report. Another

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49. [http://palermoworld.it/PalermoWorld/Archivio/Voci/2013/6/3\\_Council\\_of\\_cultures.html](http://palermoworld.it/PalermoWorld/Archivio/Voci/2013/6/3_Council_of_cultures.html).

hypothesis deals with the interrelation between cultural participation and trust in society. Research provides supportive evidence that participation in cultural activities is strongly linked to increased trust in others. Countries with high cultural participation rates also show high levels of interpersonal trust among its people.

58. These hypotheses are only preliminary examples showing the possible uses of the IFCD. This framework has to be supplemented with qualitative and in-depth studies, as well as further normative political reflections. However, even at this stage, it is proving its worth as a tool for the assessment of the correlation between culture and democracy, as well as for political decision-making with regard to cultural policies and funding.

## 5. Conclusions

59. Without a democratic culture, a democratic system is an empty shell. Globalised neo-liberalism has eroded both democracy and culture by reorganising social relations exclusively according to economic principles, taking into account only the interests of global commercial actors and forgetting the need for “freedom, equality and solidarity”. Additionally, most European countries today face the challenge of mass migration movements. Both factors are generating an increasingly precarious state of democracy and human rights, as more and more people are excluded from political rights and social welfare.

60. People’s fears and lack of confidence are fertile ground for anti-democratic and xenophobic political parties to further radicalise and divide society, presenting a serious threat to democracies in Europe. A society where politics becomes divisive and polarised, where there is no respect for minorities and where free expression and critical thinking are subdued, inevitably has a deficit of political culture.

61. In my report I therefore advocate a central role for culture in policy-making today. I strongly believe that the Council of Europe has to stay at the forefront of positioning culture as an integral part of the democratic process. Perhaps one of the main lessons we have learnt in the sixty years since the European Cultural Convention came into force is that the road to peace and stability inevitably passes through education and culture.

62. I wish to pay tribute to the Council of Europe’s long-standing work in the field of culture and democratisation. In particular, I refer here to the comprehensive, thought-provoking research carried out by numerous artists, intellectuals, cultural researchers and senior policy-makers, as distilled in the Council of Europe report “In from the margins”, published in 1997.<sup>50</sup> The report’s central themes were two interlocking priorities: to bring the millions of dispossessed and disadvantaged Europeans in from the margins of society, and to bring cultural policy in from the margins of governance. This report remains extremely relevant today and it is regrettable to observe that, despite the urgency, its recommendations have not yet been followed by concrete action.

63. Concerning national policies, I strongly advocate the mainstreaming of culture in governance. Strategic thinking should take place at inter-ministerial level concerning the application of cultural resources to a wide range of public authority responsibilities, seeking to integrate culture in other sectors such as the economy and employment, research and innovation, social services and welfare, health, formal education and lifelong learning, prisons and penitentiary rehabilitation schemes.

64. Exposure to culture from an early age and active participation in cultural activities can help people to acquire knowledge, a critical mind and a broader understanding of the world. It also helps individuals, particularly young people, to use their creative capacity for self-expression, to gain openness and confidence, and to interact with others, to have a voice and define their role in society.

65. Cultural education is another key issue. Education policies should be reviewed and used as a driving force in today’s world of rapid change, bringing with it increasingly complex economic, societal and cultural relations. A major challenge for education systems today is not just to equip young people with the knowledge and skills to respond to labour market demands in a fast changing environment, but also, and equally important, to help them develop attitudes and values with which they can embrace their future with more confidence, openness and creativity. The challenge is to enhance a sense of respect, solidarity and cohesion in society. Culture can be a vehicle for the integration of all those who feel in some way excluded and vulnerable, by providing them with new skills and rooting them within themselves, within their local community and within society. Promoting early encounters of children and young people with culture and the arts, as well as lifelong learning, is therefore of crucial importance.

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50. [https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Resources/Publications/InFromTheMargins\\_EN.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Resources/Publications/InFromTheMargins_EN.pdf).

66. We also need to recognise the increasingly important role played by local authorities in promoting and implementing cultural policy and pilot initiatives, and to review existing mechanisms for bringing decision-making processes regarding culture and their implementation to the level closest to the citizen, while ensuring better co-ordination between the different levels of government. Investments are needed in cities' cultural infrastructure, especially in urban ghettos and places of exclusion and marginalisation, so as to transform them into new cultural hubs.

67. Public participation in the definition of cultural policies should be improved, democratising cultural institutions and broadening partnerships in order to actively involve citizens and NGOs. The Council of Europe Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy constitutes an important tool for the future in order to measure cultural vitality and evaluate its impact on the democratisation of society, as a way to evaluate policies and secure future funding in this sector.

68. In conclusion, I strongly believe that long-term human investment in culture and education must be given equal priority with investment in the economy, infrastructure, security and all other areas seen as crucial to Europe's global economic competitiveness and stability. The issue for us politicians today is not only how to make the best use of limited resources, but also how to find a way to ensure that culture and education are given due recognition and a lasting political priority.