

“Consultation on the new cultural programme”
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Public consultation on the future programme of cultural cooperation for the European Union after 2006

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority (ABM-utvikling) have been asked by the Council for Cultural Affairs to submit a consultation response to the public document *Designing the future programme of cultural cooperation for the European Union after 2006*. ABM-utvikling is pleased to do so and we hope our response can contribute to shaping the new programme and to creating increased focus on culture and cultural heritage in research and development programmes within the European Union.

General comments

The decision by the EU Commission's DG Education and Culture to ensure an extended period for Culture 2000 is commendable. Likewise, the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority applaud the suggestion by the European Commission to promote a new programme for cultural cooperation at the end of 2006. This is all the more important with the strong focus, given by European societies, on the development of technologies, industries and the knowledge-based economy. It is, in our view, essential that this trend become balanced by equally strong efforts and measures to promote cultural values, increase the quality of cultural activities and ensure the preservation of cultural expressions and collections.

This can be achieved not only by developing a programme for culture alone, which Culture 2000 so far has demonstrated. It can also be achieved by reviewing Culture 2000 and the new programme on cultural cooperation against other EU programmes where culture and cultural heritage can be and are included. Culture is discouragingly absent in the seven thematic issues within the European 6th Framework Programme. Where culture is most prominent is within the Information science technologies programme (IST), and even here the focus is clearly on technological rather than cultural development. We strongly recommend that the EU Commission examine the relationship between the different programmes both in regard to crosscutting issues relevant to culture, knowledge and technology and to encourage a more significant role for culture in the various EU programmes.

We also encourage the commission to give considerable more weight to research on cultural issues in their entirety in the new programme on cultural cooperation and in future research programmes. The reason being that we believe there is a general weakening of the role that culture plays in societal development and progress in the western world. There are many lessons to be learned from developing countries where, even under oppressive governments, local cultural forces are at play and even enhance social cohesion, cultural diversity, local involvement, local knowledge and environmental and cultural heritage protection. Research on the relationship between culture, cultural diversity and the generation of knowledge will be increasingly important as technological development and innovative industries continue to grow.

It is our concern that the European Union's emphasis on reaching the same level of technological and industrial development as Japan and the United States, will overshadow the importance of cultural values and weaken our knowledge base, which has strong roots in a diversity of cultures. Investments of 3% of our GNPs for research should not be limited to key technologies and industrial innovation. We must make it our goal that increased public spending on research includes adequate budgetary provisions for long-term strategic planning of cultural innovation in addition to increased investments in development of culture in all its expressions and in the broadest sense of the term including content.

ABM-utvikling represents institutions with the purpose of ensuring cultural diversity and the preservation of information and knowledge contained in collections within museums, libraries and archives. These collections reflect the history, language and culture of the different population groups in Norway through manuscripts, literature, film, video, photographs, sound archives, maps, documents objects and more. Archives, libraries and museums are thus important content providers contributing greatly to the European pool of culture and its various contexts. Knowledge of our cultural heritage, within and beyond our national borders as reflected in these three cultural institutions, improves our cultural understanding, an increasingly important aspect with regard to the expansion of the European Union.

Specific comments

With regard to the six specific questions posed in connection with the new cultural cooperation programme, the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority has the following comments:

Question number 1

We refer to the above general comments on the importance of placing culture as a focal point for a balanced development of any society. This means that the European Union should not limit its efforts to increase transnational cultural cooperation, but it should also emphasize the importance of culture in all aspects of societal development. The European Union should therefore coordinate their research, technology and development (RTD) programmes in such a manner as to ensure greater visibility of culture within the different programmes. A stronger coordination would also serve as an efficient tool for planning EU strategies and priorities and would ensure easier access to relevant programmes for potential applicants.

Question number 2

We support the three main measures mentioned in reference to the European added value, but would like to emphasize that mobility, circulation of works and exchanges must not be limited to the performing arts. There is a need to include professionals in cultural institutions such as archives, libraries and museums in any given mobility programme and in intercultural dialogues and exchanges.

Question number 3

In order to increase visibility we refer to the general comments above. Particular attention should be given to the suggestion of promoting a research programme on cultural issues for example in relation to social inclusion, cross-cultural understanding, cultural diversity, technological industries and the knowledge-based society. Similarly, we suggest that the European Union promote the view that 3% of our GNPs should go to research on technological, industrial *and* cultural innovation. The European Union should take advantage of the suggestions put forth in UNESCO's publication *Our Cultural Diversity* and place cultural issues as an integral part in any RTD programme. There are cultural issues in almost all innovation projects, and culture should therefore not be excluded from them. Again we point out the need to balance our European values.

ABM-utvikling supports the need for increased visibility in order to make citizens aware of Europe's role in cultural cooperation, the development of exchanges and the promotion of cultural diversity. One way to increase visibility is to improve dissemination of information about the future programme of cultural cooperation to relevant research institutions, networks and potential applicants via the web and the national nodes. The European Culture Portal is another example of how information on specific actions can be and has been coordinated. The portal has, however, the potential for further improvements. There is also a need to highlight dissemination of projects that are given funding. Information about other projects and their objectives can be an advantage to potential applicants. In order to expand citizens' knowledge, we find it important to put more resources into dissemination of the results of the project both through Internet and the media.

Question number 4

With regard to this question, we support the general idea, but it is unclear what the mentioned "platforms" are and how they are supposed to function. What is the difference, for example, between how actions and activities are organised today and how they will be organized within the European cooperation platforms? Will these "platforms" be similar to Networks of Excellence for example, or Integrated Projects? How will the new programme increase the total activity and mobility?

Question number 5

We are in favour of measures that increase cooperation between projects developed by the Member states and the European Union and between different cultural institutions. Focus on mobility is therefore important. However, we would also recommend greater focus on local communities where much of the actual inter-institutional cooperation takes place.

Question number 6

We agree that there is a need to focus on issues concerning cultural industries. However, this should not be limited to Europe. We consider them a global issue because the commercialisation of culture is of worldwide concern. European policies naturally influence the course this commercialisation takes, but we are also dependent on international and global policies. We don't find there is a need to limit Community actions to the music and publishing industries. There is an overriding call for concerted efforts to increase awareness on policies, rights, international conventions, regulations and laws governing culture as a commodity. From our perspective, as a representative for archives, libraries and museums, this is important to ensure access to cultural material both for society at large and the individual user. It is necessary to increase research activity within this area, and we would recommend coordinated activities and measures in the next generation of Framework Programme for research and technological development.

ABM-utvikling hopes that the extended period for Culture 2000 will entail an opening for third countries to participate, just as they have been able to in the existing Culture 2000 programme.

Concluding remarks

To repeat what has already been said, we emphasize the point that it is vital that culture be made more visible through its own EU programme for research and development. ABM-utvikling finds it equally important that the European Union launch a campaign that places culture and technological innovation side by side in the objective to reach the 3% GNP benchmark. We also recommend that the new programme for cultural cooperation be given substantial enough funding to be able to support collaboration between commercial enterprises and cultural institutions. Our experience has shown that funding for cooperation projects within the framework of Culture 2000 does not enable partnerships between small and medium-sized businesses and cultural institutions. This is another example of how culture is "segregated" from important activities in society and of how the structural foundations for cultural development are reduced.

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority wish the European Commission good luck in its endeavour to shape a new cultural cooperation programme and to fulfil the objectives of Culture 2000 till the end of 2006.

Yours sincerely,

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Director General

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Cc: The Norwegian Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs
The Norwegian Council for Cultural Affairs