



STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE

CDCULT-BU(2011)14

20 July 2011

10th Meeting of the Bureau
Paris, 8 July 2011

Bureau Meeting Report

A. Opening of the meeting by the CDCULT Chair and adoption of the agenda

The Chair of the Committee, Ms Christine M. Merkel, opened the CDCULT Bureau session and welcomed all attendees to the meeting. Bureau members thanked the Chair for her opening remarks and adopted the draft agenda.

B. New structures for the Council of Europe's inter-governmental work in the field of culture – CDCULT's proposed terms of reference for the new committee to be set up in 2012

The Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage gave an overview of the ongoing reform process at the Council of Europe, giving particular details of the changing structure of operational directorates and the management roles within this new framework. He also addressed the restructuring of intergovernmental work mechanisms. The Bureau members thanked him for his comprehensive briefing, noting their appreciation for his efforts to relate the general reform process to the specific work done by members of CDCULT.

The Bureau moved on to discuss in greater detail the proposed Terms of Reference for the new Steering Committee that would supersede it in 2012. This discussion built on earlier rounds of debate and consultation with members of CDCULT and CDPATEP.

Several Bureau members addressed the topic of the proposed 'advisory groups' that would work in conjunction with plenary sessions of the Steering Committee. It was felt that attention should be paid to how experts for these groups would be recruited: there could be financial problems and the problem of inequity if member states had to bear the travel/subsistence costs for experts representing their states. Some Bureau members felt it was of paramount importance to recruit the leading experts in their respective fields, irrespective of nationality. It was suggested that recruitment should be a 'shared responsibility' between member states and the Secretariat, with the Secretariat coordinating a possible call for experts. It was felt that it would be advantageous to involve civil society in these groups to make the most of their expertise and perspective. In operational terms, clear goals needed to be set for the advisory groups to optimise their success.

Discussion of working methods for the new committee led to a consensus that there needed to be very clear objectives and a tightly defined structure for plenary sessions, to ensure that they were productive and delivered the expected results. 'Break-out sessions' of smaller working groups, delineated perhaps by specialised areas of expertise, were proposed as a useful component of future plenary sessions. The enlarged scope of the new committee meant that the role of the Bureau would become even more important for coordination and strategy; it was felt that there should be dynamic cooperation between the new Bureau and representatives of advisory and working groups, to ensure coordinated policy decision-making.

The name of the new committee was discussed extensively. A majority of Bureau members supported the idea of 'Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Diversity'. This name was felt to embody the political message communicated via the reform process, while still clearly reflecting the committee's area of expertise. Although the word 'landscape' is not in the proposed name, the main tasks unequivocally state that landscape falls within this committee's

domain. The Bureau wanted to avoid a simple additive change of name that might suggest a non-response to the reform agenda.

C. Selected CDCULT projects

1. European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage

The Bureau was briefed by the Secretariat on the follow-up to the European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage, building on previous discussions at the CDCULT plenary session in May. Particular attention was drawn to the creation of a new comprehensive information grid that would allow for the straightforward collection of data from all member states; publishing the results via the Compendium. This would also help provide a wide promotion of the Convention. The Bureau encouraged member states to take part in this exercise by completing the grid. The Bureau offered its thanks to those who had offered support to the Convention in financial or practical terms, in particular the Hungarian authorities for their kind offer to host the second meeting of the Convention's Standing Committee in September 2011.

2. Possible revision of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production

The Bureau thanked the Secretariat for its update on the possible revision of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production. After hearing an explanation of the revision process, the Bureau agreed to the idea of recruiting an external consultant to study and draw up a summary of the implementation of this Convention (see CDCULT(2011)08). The Bureau invited member states to offer support by suggesting experts to assess the possible revision of the Convention and potentially make recommendations. Support in financial or other terms would also be warmly welcomed.

3. Future work on cultural rights

The Secretariat introduced various aspects of the Council of Europe's planned future work scheme on cultural rights issues, including diversity management, intercultural dialogue policies and practices, and issues of participation. This briefing was supplemented by conceptual documents, including the recent report from the Group of Eminent Persons on 'Living Together – Combining Diversity and Freedom in 21st Century Europe' and an expert reflection paper on 'Renationalisation Policies in Europe'. The Bureau encouraged members of CDCULT to study these reports to prepare the ground for upcoming work on cultural rights. Ideas or proposals for concrete actions to follow up would be greatly appreciated, as would support in financial terms or in kind.

The Bureau was very supportive of work done to date on cultural rights, and expressed their hope that the future committee would progress on this topic in a dynamic way – the specific details of which should be decided by the new Committee itself. Some Bureau members brought up the point of negative perceptions of 'the other' as a key cultural rights issue that will need to be addressed in the future. This reflects the ongoing popularity of right-wing nationalism in Europe, the need for political leaders to provide more realistic approaches to

immigration and discrimination stemming from a lack of accurate images of different population groups.

The new Committee could take up work with a view to the recommendations of the 'Living Together...in 21st Century Europe' report on strengthening civil society in its efforts to confront discrimination. The issue of 'the image of the other' could also be addressed more in the education and youth sectors, opening perceptions among younger people in particular. The new committee might also wish to support the newly recommended 'Diversity Fund' of Eurimages.

The Bureau concluded that it would be wise for the current Committee and Cultural Policy, Diversity and Dialogue Division of the Council of Europe to continue the process of conceptualising future cultural rights-related work in the months leading up to the first plenary session of the new committee. The Bureau decided to create an electronic Bureau working group to continue efforts on this issue, and emphasised their willingness to carry on the valuable work being undertaken in this area. CDPATEP Bureau members with an interest in this subject could also become involved.

4. Cultural policy review of Turkey and of the Russian Federation

There was little to report in terms of progress on the Cultural Policy Review of Turkey. The Bureau regretted this state of affairs and expressed its hope that progress would be made in the future, leading up to the second visit of experts to the country and conclusion of the Review in spring 2012.

The Bureau noted the progress that had been made with the Cultural Policy Review of the Russian Federation. Although the government still needed to confirm the final choice of regions participating in the review, the Bureau was pleased to note the forthcoming meeting of national and regional authorities, researchers and experts, to take place in Strasbourg in October 2011.

5. Forthcoming Conference of Ministers of Culture (Moscow, autumn 2012)

After a presentation of initial plans by the Russian Federation, the Secretariat invited Bureau members to give their views on a unique theme that would attract ministers to Moscow for a one-day conference. The Director counselled that focusing on a single critical issue, with just one central question, as well as carefully considering the anticipated result, would maximise the conference's chances of success.

Bureau members echoed the need for an attractive theme. Issues such as the 'crisis of multiculturalism', new technologies and copyright issues were cited as examples of suitably topical themes. Some Bureau members cautioned against making the theme too specific, as this might lead to specialists being sent in their Ministers' stead, which would change the character of the conference away from the original intention. On the other hand, too general a topic could lead to the conference lacking focus.

The Bureau noted the timetable of the EU presidency for 2012, with Cyprus taking over the presidency during the time the Russian Federation proposes to hold the conference. The Cypriot government might well be hosting a meeting close to this date, and care should be taken to avoid a clash or thematic overlap. Bureau members also briefly discussed the possible format of the conference, suggesting that splitting the delegates into smaller working groups, before reconvening in a plenary session, might produce more fruitful discussions.

The Chair noted a general consensus forming around Theme V of the Russian Federation's draft proposal paper: 'The influence of new social factors on cultural policy of European countries: Internet and mass communications exposure'. Bureau members suggested that issues such as migration and digitisation might be particularly relevant. The Russian Federation pledged to revise and refine the conference proposals, receiving advice and assistance from the Secretariat on appropriate formatting and further focusing of the content.

6. CDCULT reply to PACE recommendation 1962

The Bureau was happy to endorse the final text of CDCULT's reply to PACE Recommendation 1962, and asked the Secretariat to ensure follow-up with the relevant Council of Europe bodies as necessary.

D. Other business

The Bureau noted with interest the reflection paper by an independent expert on "The Impact of the New Nationalism and Identity Politics on Cultural Policy-Making in Europe and Beyond" (CDCULT-BU(2011)11) and suggested that it be considered in the framework of the Committee's future cultural policy work.

It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the outgoing Chairs of both CDCULT and CDPATEP to report to the first plenary session of the new successor committee in 2012. Their input and experience could help break down barriers and identify horizontal themes for future work. Their cooperation would also be useful in preparing the agenda. With this in mind the current Chairs would remain in close contact with each other. In the interim period before the expiry of the mandate for CDCULT and CDPATEP, Bureau members would use electronic means to monitor ongoing commitments and work schemes to ensure optimal implementation.

E. Closing of the meeting

The Chair thanked all CDCULT Bureau members and the Secretariat for their contributions and professional commitment over the past years, and expressed her desire that future work continue to be based on constructive and fruitful relationships.