

Summaries of Background Papers

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Promoting Access to Culture
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CONTENTS

1. Governance of culture – promoting access to culture

Executive summary of the Background Paper by Elena Di Federico, researcher, Zsuzsa Hunyadi, sociologist, and Péter Inkei, Director of the Budapest Observatory

2. Assessing the impact of digitisation on access to culture and creation, aggregation and curation of content

Executive summary of the Background Paper by Divina Frau-Meigs, Professor, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle

3. Perspectives for the Council of Europe as the intergovernmental forum on culture in Europe and a laboratory of democratic governance – challenges and perspectives for the development of a more effective model of cultural co-operation in Europe

Executive summary of the Background Paper by Corina Suteu, external independent expert, Romania

1. Governance of culture – promoting access to culture

Executive summary of the background paper by Elena Di Federico, researcher, Zsuzsa Hunyadi, sociologist, and Péter Inkei, Director of the Budapest Observatory

Cultural policies need to be reconceptualised to meet today's challenges. A multi-stakeholder approach is required to move towards shared governance of culture. This requires effective alliances with the spheres of education, social policies, health, the environment and the economy. The involvement of citizens and their associations is a basic rule of European democracy.

- The concept of cultural democracy with the emphasis on involvement, equality and diversity has been gaining ground over top-down strategies of democratisation of culture.
- In spite of efforts to expand access to culture and successes in that field, inequalities prevail in every country, in various forms and to various degrees, but often at a disturbing level. In Western Europe non-participation is particularly acute among the urban migrant population, while in the Eastern European member states cultural exclusion is primarily a rural and post-industrial phenomenon.
- Cultural policy debates and cultural participation surveys usually focus on what *exists* (e.g. in terms of cultural participation), while the extent and nature of *non-participation* receive much less attention.
- The best results in cultural democracy programmes stem from a combination of local initiative and central promotion. The initial thrust may come from below: authorities identify a successful local project and find it appropriate to generate reproductions on a larger scale. Policy aims and the framework are specified by the national, regional or municipal administration, leaving scope for adaptation to local conditions.
- Many statements and pledges are made regarding culture's role in democracy, but empirical evidence, measurement tools and accepted proofs are scarce. As demand for evidence-based policies is on the rise, European governments should intensify and co-ordinate their efforts in this regard. The Council of Europe's CultureWatchEurope/ Compendium came forward with the proposal to select a set of key indicators to be applied by all member states.
- The Council of Europe should strive for agreement on a minimum of shared European standards in terms of the nature and degree of access to culture, indicators of access and participation, the desired effects of improved and increased access, and basic criteria for the democratic governance of culture.

2. Assessing the impact of digitisation on access to culture and creation, aggregation and curation of content

Executive summary of the background paper by Divina Frau-Meigs, Professor, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle

The introduction assesses dominant trends that affect media mutations, considering how they can impact on culture, diversity and the public interest at large. Looking at such enduring values and at how to preserve them in the digital era, the main thrust of the analysis weighs the various forces involved and dispels any illusions about the previous status quo between the cultural industries of the pre-digital era and the creative industries of the digital era, especially taking into account the strategies of digital infomediaries and the way they affect the culture value chain.

The two main sections in the report deal with broadcast-mode and broadband-mode media as they affect culture. The first section makes a plea for “mediated culture” and considers its characteristics. It looks at the “shuttle screen situation” in which what happens on the top surface screen of broadcast media sources for fiction and information is discussed within the deeper netroots screen of broadband media. It considers the social model that accounts for the shuttle screen situation, focusing on the centrality of users’ individual needs for “self-actualisation”, “play” and “life longings” as well as their collective needs for “curation” and “aggregation”. It looks at two complementary economic sides of media as relational goods and experiential goods, relating them to values of interaction and participation from the perspective of usage rather than ownership, in order to evaluate how the media sector takes advantages of such trends in the delivery of cultural spectacles and services to end-users. It proposes a version of culture as a leverage tool taking into account the changing nature of original content online, with issues of windowing, versioning and merchandising magnified by the “portal effect” that risks creating enclosure of contents behind digital pay-walls.

The second section considers the challenges and opportunities for mediated culture in the digital era. It looks at cross-cutting and emerging trends that can impact positively or negatively on the cultural outputs of the future. It analyses first the mixed promise of creative industries and establishes the new role of social entrepreneurs and the new practice of crowd-sourcing. It then discusses the risks of broadband media for European cultural diversity, in particular with the strengthening of “Hollyweb” and the controversies over net neutrality as a governance principle. It ends by contrasting OpenWeb options with Hollyweb options and open sourcing practices with crowd-sourcing practices. The final solutions are considered in the light of pro-poor empowerment and recommend a move to transliteracy as a means of dealing with the complexity of cultural content production requirements in the digital age.

The report concludes that far from signalling the demise of culture, these evolving issues and values herald a new age of content amplification and diversification that holds out promises for democratisation and info-empowerment, but also risks for enclosure of public interest content and for cultural institutions unless they make a transition to digital strategies and practices. Such implications have often been underestimated or compounded by decision-makers and players in the cultural sector.

The report makes a series of recommendations for the Council of Europe:

- 1- Promoting access to and participation in culture/s, also at a time of social, economic and financial change
 - **The Council of Europe needs independent research to report on key emerging and cross-cutting issues** identified in this report.
 - **The Council of Europe could draft guidelines for the governance of mediated culture**, incorporating principles such as fair access (universal, effective and sustainable), openness, participation and accountability. They should be expressed in terms of cultural content and based on fundamental freedoms and human rights.
 - **The Council of Europe could propose its own definition of net neutrality**, with democracy, freedom of expression and fair access as basic principles, not laissez-faire policies.
 - **The Council of Europe could address the issue of concentration of ownership and the implications of the “portal effect”** in terms of pricing, licensing and independent forms of content creation, curation and aggregation.
 - **The Council of Europe should identify strategies for promoting and enhancing democratic access to culture** and participation in cultural life, as well as free artistic expression, including via digital means.
 - **The Council of Europe should provide templates for national policy frameworks for mediated culture**, to help diagnosis and strategies, to shift the emphasis from heritage protection to more creative contemporary production, to fight cultural inequalities by overcoming monopolistic distribution of content that always seeks a market’s lowest common denominator (via hits and blockbusters), and to support mechanisms for the production and distribution of user- and community-generated content.
 - **The Council of Europe should promote training for transliteracy**, as key skills for lifelong learning and education include cultural sensitivity, cultural expression, and communication in foreign languages.

- 2- Enhancing the role of the Council of Europe as the only pan-European intergovernmental forum on culture and a laboratory of democratic governance
 - **Build co-operation with other international organisations (e.g. European Union and UNESCO but also WIPO and ITU).**
 - **Take initiative in advocating international measures on political dialogue on cultural matters.**
 - **Emphasise multi-stakeholderism.**
 - **Raise awareness and mobilise public opinion through CoE public hearings.**

3. Perspectives for the Council of Europe as the intergovernmental forum on culture in Europe and a laboratory of democratic governance – challenges and perspectives for the development of a more effective model of cultural co-operation in Europe

Executive summary of the Background Paper by Corina Suteu, external independent expert, Romania

For sixty years, the main directions of cultural policies in Europe have been oriented towards *access* and *participation*. Today, the European and global contexts have changed and there are a number of important factors that impact on the way these notions are to be understood and the measures to be taken in support of them by European ministries and similar agencies with cultural responsibility.

Also, because of different external and internal challenges affecting cultural realities and practices in Europe, the role of the Council of Europe as a generator of impactful policy lines has changed and found itself exposed to more powerful players (private or governmental).

Recent decades have at the same time brought to the forefront a clear interlinkage between cultural access and participation and the development of a better democratic conscience as well as a better informed and educated European citizen, capable of critical thinking and informed choice, and also capable of identifying democratic deficits and willing to take action to change them. However, the role played by the Council of Europe in the harmonisation and constant updating of cultural policy reviews now needs to move up to a more complex level, incorporating the new players in participative policy-making and a new dynamic process that puts producers and users of culture at the same level. The notion of democratic governance, as a key notion to which the Council of Europe will devote further attention, is therefore strongly related to these developments and ways need to be found in which the Council can confirm its role as a main guiding institution for the socio-political field in Europe.

Bearing in mind that the most important challenges ahead are:

- Globalisation and, as a consequence, the emergence of a global cultural system and a connective cultural paradigm;
- The unprecedented communication flow brought about by the unstoppable evolution of communication technologies;
- The endless possibilities in physical and virtual mobility offered by the internet and the development of accessible transportation means;
- The lasting effect of the global economic crisis and the reconfiguration of power poles;
- The 'interconnectivity' of exchanges and the diversification of different cultures co-existing within the same societies;
- The impact of new private players and public players (EU) and their interest and investment in the European cultural area,

the recommendations which the relevant Council of Europe bodies should reflect upon are:

Integrated legislation

Coordinated policies

- Encouraging member states to develop in a constant and visible way cultural policies in relation to education, employment and human right policies and derive from this integrated system a more impactful democratic governance practice.
- Encouraging member states to develop legislation (instruments) adapted to the new connective cultural dynamics and providing tools to act against all forms of cultural exclusion.
- Encouraging member states to initiate legislation that allows strong and efficient partnership between the private and public sectors in support of culture.
- Encouraging member states to devise regulations that allow contemporary arts to be as state-supported despite the crisis as the heritage field is.

Advocacy

- Devise campaigns that raise the profile and strengthen the public legitimacy of the Council of Europe's actions over the years; communicate better about achievements and goals; adapt the Council's communication strategy to the challenging marketing tools applied by private players.
- Promote the idea of culture as the 4th pillar or a cross-cutting pillar of sustainable development.
- Encourage member states to think beyond Europe and make the European approach visible and relevant to global players.

Research

- Encourage member states to invest in cultural research and use and communicate about the added value already brought by programmes like the Compendium or CultureWatchEurope:
 - Meaningful research makes a better case for culture;
 - Quality research creates a stronger narrative about the European value system.

Connector

- Act as a connector - with all-European membership - between the EU, UNESCO and other stakeholders concerned with cultural development in Europe (cultural networks, private players, cultural institutions with broad multilateral activities).

By acting upon instruments, advocacy, research and connectivity, the Council of Europe can confirm its central role as a leading force on European cultural policies and, hence, the European project.