

Chairmanship of Azerbaijan
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Présidence de l'Azerbaïdjan
Conseil de l'Europe
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Baku Conference – First Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitisation “Creating an enabling environment for digital culture and for empowering citizens”
4-5 July 2014, Baku, Azerbaijan

Conférence de Bakou – Première plate-forme du Conseil de l'Europe d'échanges sur l'incidence du numérique sur la culture «Création et mise en place d'un climat propice à la culture numérique et à l'autonomisation des citoyens»,
4-5 juillet 2014, Bakou, Azerbaïdjan

Mədəniyyət və rəqəmsallaşmanın mübadiləsi üzrə Birinci Platforma – Bakı konfransı
“Rəqəmsal mədəniyyət və vətəndaşların imkanlarının artırılması üçün əlverişli mühitin yaradılması”
4-5 iyul 2014, Bakı, Azərbaycan

Conference concept note



**Ministry of Culture and Tourism
of the Republic of Azerbaijan**



Background

Digitisation is shaping the 21st century: not only in terms of new technology, but also in terms of our information environment's culture. These transformations have a significant impact on our societies. Several recently published global reports underline the importance of the knowledge society and the related role of culture for development¹.

In its preparation of the 2013 Ministerial Conference, which focused on access to and governance of culture, the Council of Europe highlighted the importance of users' individual and collective needs vis-à-vis digital media. Its analyses hinted at risks for European cultural diversity and the need for adequate conditions for cultural content production and creativity in the digital age. If ensuring the widest possible access to and participation in culture is the objective and opportunities for individual and collective creativity are to be fully used, digitisation must be accompanied by enlightened cultural policies, tuned into the new digital world. Data, information and knowledge have to be acquired and exchanged in order to develop such policies. The role and function of cultural infrastructures and of public service are key issues of interest to governments. Media education and the challenge of "trans-literacy" are equally important: without the latter, digitisation may not unfold its potential as an engine for democratisation, for the democratisation of culture and for individuals' self-empowerment.

In its final statement, Ministers responsible for Culture invited the Council of Europe:

"To offer a platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices for policy makers, for co-operation for practitioners and civil society, on the impact of digitisation on culture and to study common European orientations for promoting – in full respect of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the European Convention for Human Rights, and of cultural diversity, especially on the Internet – the democratic governance of culture by ensuring, in particular, citizens' access to, and participation in, culture in the digital era"²

This concept note for the "First Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitisation", to be held in Baku on 4-5 July 2014 in the framework of the Chairmanship of Azerbaijan of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, builds on the reports approved by the CDCPP's Bureau in October 2013³ and the CDCPP's Plenary Meeting in March 2014⁴.

It is articulated around the lessons drawn in the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society (Belgrade, 7-8 November 2013), the World Forum for Democracy (Strasbourg, 23-29 November 2013), an international conference on Public Policies in Media and Information Literacy in Europe organised by the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris, 13-14 December 2013) and the Council of Europe Internet Governance Unit's High Level Conference "Shaping the Digital Environment – Ensuring our rights on the Internet" (Graz, 13-14 March 2014).

Conference focus

The suggested conference theme is "Creating an enabling environment for digital culture and for empowering citizens".

The issues of media literacy and existing divides in the take-up and use of digital technology for cultural purposes - related to questions of societal inclusion and cohesion- will be treated as transversal key topics, whilst the event would approach the conference theme from two main angles of interest to stakeholders:

- How to bridge gaps between digital and pre-digital cultural institutions?
- How to reconcile digital and pre-digital forms of cultural expression, creation and production?

¹ E.g. UNESCO Knowledge Societies Report (2013), IFLA Trends Report (2013), UNDP Creative Economy Report (2013), Huanzhou Declaration on Culture (2013)

² MinConfCult(2013)7 (emphasis added)

³ CDCPP-Bu(2013)10

⁴ CDCPP(2014)9

Practical questions to be addressed include, inter alia:

- How to enhance access to and participation in digital culture and overcome the digital divide?
- What new professional roles and mind-sets for those working in cultural institutions?
- How to enhance the governance and resources for (public) cultural institutions and help the transition to the digital era? What role for private actors?
- Who are the creative actors? Who is an artist? What are the new art forms and practices?
- What are the new sector specifics as related to open data and content, e.g. art, markets, tourism, etc.?
- How to stimulate cultural expression, creation and production in the digital era? Are new regulations required?
- What role for cities, regions and *terroirs* in view of the socio-economic impact of their digitised cultural activity

Five input papers will provide initial inspiration for debates. These include: a mapping of the impact of digitisation on the cultural sector (i.e. public cultural institutions), a paper on new practices and needs as regards cultural expression and creation, a contribution on media literacy issues, an approach to emerging art forms and the need for new regulations and an initial compilation of case studies and good practices as regards the transformation of culture from the pre-digital to the digital era.

The event will be very interactive in nature and held in the form of plenary sessions, panels and work-groups. It will be moderated by specialists in the field and aimed at maximizing the involvement of the participants.

Conference output

The conference is expected to produce the following outputs that will be developed further in co-operation with the CDCPP and interested conference stakeholders:

- 1) Elements for policy guidelines⁵ on priority issues identified during the Conference (e.g. ensuring access to and participation in digital culture – overcoming the digital divide; enhancing governance and resources for public cultural institutions – helping the transition to the digital era; stimulating cultural expression, creation and production – addressing the need for new regulations)
- 2) Ideas for possible future transversal Council of Europe initiatives - e.g. on digitisation and a new culture of democracy.

Participants

The conference aims at bringing together representatives of Ministries of Culture and/or other relevant Ministers, as well as cultural/media practitioners, representatives of professional associations, of civil society organizations and researchers focusing their work on the cultural aspects of digitisation. Representatives of International Organisations active in the field will also be invited. Special efforts are made to secure the participation of young(er) people from the above clusters in the event.

The Government of Azerbaijan is kindly covering the travel and accommodation cost of one participant per signatory state to the ECC, (a governmental representative or a “cultural practitioner”, i.e. representative of a cultural institution, artist, cultural/media producer or a specialized researcher, as suggested by the Government).

Practical issues

Invitations to the conference will be sent by mid-April and registration closed on 16 May.

⁵ Two policy orientation shall be produced in 2014/15

A conference website will be available from mid-April, offering draft background papers and access to the documents prepared for the 2013 Ministerial Conference on Culture, practical information including visa issues and access to the dedicated online registration tool.

In preparation of the event, a short questionnaire will be send together with the invitation letter to Ministries of Culture. It will gather information on interesting case-studies, good practices and lessons learnt as regards the digitisation of culture.