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STANDING CONFERENCE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES OF EUROPE
COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

TOWN AND CULTURE

New responses to cultural problems

Bremen (Federal Republic of Germany), 25-27 May 1983



BREMEN DECLARATION

unanimously adopted
on 27 May 1983

STRASBOURG
1983

BREMEN DECLARATION

1. The representatives of European towns taking part in the Conference on Town and Culture jointly organised by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and the Council for Cultural Co-operation, at the invitation of the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen,
2. Thank the Council of Europe for taking this initiative and the City of Bremen for its welcome and its hospitality;
3. Consider that the Council of Europe must continue to play its predominant role in European cultural co-operation;
4. Recall the Declaration of Principles concerning cultural activity at local and regional level adopted by the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe in 1978 and appended to its Resolution 97 (1978);
5. Have appreciated the opportunity to benefit from the experience of the 21 towns which have collaborated in a Council of Europe project aimed at promoting cultural development;
6. Welcome the fact that the cultural activities of the Council of Europe reveal an increasing consciousness of the importance of local and regional communities as the primary framework for community development based on cultural aims;
7. Regret, on the other hand, that many governments are failing to realise that the potential for action and new modes of thought exist in local communities but that these must be stimulated by effective promotion and financial support;
8. Consider it essential that every local authority should have the right and the capacity to formulate and implement its own cultural policy in the light of its particular cultural traditions, the existing infrastructure, the extent and nature of its cultural catchment-area and the cultural characteristics of its population;
9. Ask governments to pursue a consistent policy of cultural decentralisation and to ensure that local and regional authorities have adequate powers and resources to play their vital role in the provision of artistic and recreational facilities and the promotion of cultural activities;
10. Believe that, at a time when the danger of the destruction of humanity is increasing alarmingly through a growing threat to world peace, cultural policy has a duty to make its contribution to preserving peace, and that this gives rise to important tasks for regions and local authorities, in particular that of encouraging individuals, groups of citizens and artists to express and demonstrate their fears, their protests and their proposed solutions for maintaining peace, provided they do so by non-violent means.

11. Consider that precisely at a time of economic recession and high unemployment, the promotion of cultural values and of the means of cultural expression at the local level assumes an increased social and economic importance, and moreover that in general cultural development is an essential condition of economic development;

12. Call upon local authorities therefore to redouble their efforts, including their financial efforts, to enable the individual citizen to take part in the cultural life of his town. Cultural policy must become a priority item on the municipal agenda.

13. Furthermore the participants adopt the following conclusions based on the deliberations of their six working groups:

I. NEW MEANS OF PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL CULTURAL LIFE

14. Participation in cultural events, processes and decisions represents an essential step in the conscious involvement of the public in social and political life. It takes place most effectively in the local setting - the town, village or neighbourhood, that is the true "locus" of participation where individuals can be more fully presented to each other, in both aspirations and actions.

15. In order for cultural life to thrive, innovations to develop, and cultural democracy to expand, it is essential that municipal authorities endorse cultural diversity, ie popular culture as well as specialist and elite interests. Positive programmes to counter the increasing dominance of passive media consumption are urgently required at the local level.

16. Thus municipal authorities should create an environment and infrastructure favourable to amateur cultural activity and initiatives, and should pay special attention to those groups which may be at a disadvantage as a result of their social background or economic condition.

17. In addition, authorities should:

- a. Be aware of the need to re-train staff and reassess priorities in the face of changing conditions, as well as of the positive role which may be played by elected members in stimulating community participation and by professional artists in the public space of cities,
- b. Be ready to surrender responsibilities or activities to community groups,
- c. Consider seriously the need to establish and support programmes aimed at setting up networks which allow local information and innovations to be communicated on a town-wide, regional, national and international scale,

- d. Support experiments with a view to stimulating or reinforcing local participation in cultural affairs; in each case they should indicate clearly why the experiments are to take place, define the limits to the support available, and make a commitment to joint and open evaluation,
- e. Adapt their approach in response to public interest, especially by flexible budgeting to advantage culture, and with this in view ensure that a member of the municipal staff is alert to emerging needs at the local community level,
- f. Be aware of the considerable opportunities offered by a local orientation of aspects of school and adult education in order to develop a local participatory culture as a prerequisite for effective public participation in planning, managing and using cultural facilities.

The participants further:

18. Consider that cultural activities and facilities must not be limited to the inhabitants of the cities, let alone the city-centres, and furthermore that the cultural infrastructure ought, as far as possible, to be brought closer to the people where they live;

19. Consider accordingly that it is essential to involve those responsible for culture in urban planning in order to provide opportunities for cultural innovation in each neighbourhood and in the suburban districts (in particular premises made available to associations for the organisation of cultural events);

20. Call for the development of mobile cultural amenities such as itinerant theatres and mobile libraries which have already proved their worth;

21. With regard to cultural relations between central towns with cultural capacities and their neighbouring communities, consider that, on the one hand, a solution must be found to the problem of a financial contribution by national and regional authorities to the cultural services provided by the town and, on the other hand and in return, these small municipalities must be given the possibility of genuine participation in the definition of the relevant cultural programmes; in this field too innovation is called for;

22. Consider that the cultural activity of small local authorities must not only be encouraged financially but also assisted in specialist areas by the regional and national authorities.

II. LOCAL CULTURAL POLICY AND INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE INITIATIVE BY CITIZENS

23. The participants consider that:

- a. Individual and collective initiative by citizens is essential for innovation and creativity in culture, and to promote cultural pluralism,
- b. Collective initiative rests for the most part with voluntary organisations, who therefore must be accepted as essential in policy-making, although the question of full participation in decision-making remains open.

24. Therefore public authorities must support voluntary organisations, and accept the challenge to traditional ideas and notions of culture that such organisations inevitably present. A mutually satisfactory "partnership" arrangement must be found as a framework for this support.

25. There are two risks to be avoided in this arrangement. Firstly there must be no interference by the public authorities in the content of the cultural proposals put forward by voluntary organisations; and secondly, the relationship between the partners should be clear and agreed. The type of relationship will depend in each case on the type of voluntary organisation, and the public authorities, recognising this, must have a diversified approach in their cultural policy. However, a contractual arrangement should normally be sought, in which both partners agree on duration, monitoring procedures and overall aims.

26. In modern society public planning is necessary even in the field of cultural development, but at the same time the need to avoid dirigisme is even greater in the cultural field than elsewhere, since scope for individual spontaneity and autonomy for associations is the prerequisite of creativity and cultural innovation.

27. Cultural pluralism presupposes experiment. The local authorities must therefore be flexible and open-minded in assessing applications for support, and must recognise the right of people (and their cultures) to be different.

28. This flexibility should also extend to the forms of support made available - eg finance, premises, equipment, administrative assistance, etc. As a consequence, public authorities' budgets must include support of individual and collective initiative by citizens;

29. In addition, public authorities must be prepared to fulfil three other requirements:

- a. Councillors must be encouraged to broaden their perspectives with regard to culture, and to recognise the strengths and weaknesses of private initiative;
- b. Administrators should be similarly encouraged;
- c. Research should be undertaken to monitor and evaluate projects and policy and to assess the role of professional field workers;

III. THE CULTURAL CONTRIBUTION OF POPULATIONS OF FOREIGN ORIGIN

30. The participants are gravely concerned at the increasing xenophobia in many European countries as a result of the aggravation of the economic crisis and of unemployment, and at the sporadic outburst of serious conflicts and violent incidents between the local population and certain groups of immigrants.

31. They consider necessary a major reinforcement of local authorities' action to encourage acceptance of the multi-ethnic societies which several European cities have already become and derive therefrom all the enrichment which they can bring to the life of all their citizens.

32. European immigration countries have to recognise that they have become multi-ethnic societies. They must draw the legislative conclusions from this development in order to ensure and promote equal rights for all the people living in their territory;

33. Ethnic minority cultures must be supported so that the members of the ethnic minorities can live as equal partners in the host country and yet at the same time maintain contact with their country of origin and thus retain the possibility of returning there, if they freely express the wish to do so. There must be no forced repatriation.

34. The members of ethnic minorities should have a free choice in deciding to what extent they wish to retain their native culture or develop it in the new social context, or to what extent they wish to be assimilated.

35. Acceptance of these objectives entails the obligation to:

- a. Educate citizens for co-operation in a multi-ethnic society,
- b. Regard finding the means necessary for solving the problems of ethnic minorities not as a special exercise but as a normal duty of our society,
- c. Grant them the right to vote because participation without this has proved ineffective and, further, because according to democratic principles this right is incontestable.

36. The participants accordingly call for the following measures with a view to enabling the immigrants on the one hand to maintain contact with the development of the culture of their country of origin and on the other hand to integrate themselves into that of their country of residence:

- a. Using modern technology to equip cinemas and theatres with multilingual auditory systems and encouraging programmes which take account of the needs of cultural minorities,
- b. Instituting multilingual columns in newspapers and circulars,
- c. Stocking both the main libraries and, by a lending system, the immigrants' associations with books written in the immigrants' languages,
- d. Providing communal premises to meet the specific needs of the immigrant communities,
- e. Encouraging the creation of associations to promote the culture of the various countries of origin and supplying them with the necessary infrastructure and financial resources,
- f. Promoting the organisation of exhibitions, especially about the country of origin, the introduction of cultural products (records, books, films, etc) from the countries of emigration (provided that they are works of quality), tours by theatres, ensembles, dance groups, orchestras, sports teams from the countries of emigration, etc,
- g. Organising multilateral cultural evenings,
- h. Holding courses or seminars for schoolteachers and for public officials on the immigrants' mentality and way of life so as to enable them to apply or pass on their knowledge in their daily work,
- i. Setting up neighbourhood information offices open to both the indigenous and the immigrant population and stimulating joint initiatives by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, for example for improving the environment,
- j. Establishing relations between immigrant families and indigenous families who are prepared to welcome foreigners and help them to solve their everyday problems and vice versa,
- k. Including immigrants on committees or consultative commissions where they can make their wishes and needs known, establish contacts with the administration and reach general consensus on problems common to different groups of immigrants,

1. Facilitating the training of managers from the immigrant population and their integration into public offices and services so that they can contribute to the development of a multi-ethnic society.

IV. YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE CITY

37. The school is primarily responsible for training young people in the sense of:

- a. Guiding them towards autonomy in the search for solutions to their personal problems,
- b. Enabling them to participate in the search for solutions to the sectoral problems affecting the young (employment, housing, leisure, etc),
- c. Preparing them to participate in determining the present and future shape of their city:

38. To this end, it must include or intensify in its curriculum reflection and research on subjects directly linked to the life of the pupil and his/her present and future environment (family relations, work, habitat, society, artistic and especially musical education, etc). It must also introduce among its methods the apprenticeship of participation, dialogue and the spirit of co-operation.

39. Local authorities need to be very attentive and carry out their responsibilities to the full in relation to young people in general and especially unorganised youth, who are the vast majority.

40. Local authorities must create forms of permanent dialogue with the young. This policy is essential in the light of the increasing numbers of young people relegated to the margins of society by unemployment and the problems of drugs, alcohol, vandalism and violence.

41. The local authorities must respond in flexible and appropriate ways to young people's desire to be integrated into society.

42. A very important response by local authorities to the problems of young people is the implementation of forms of direct participation on specific issues. They must be consulted on particular problems affecting the daily life of young people, such as:

- a. Consulting groups of young people on urban transport networks in order to take account of their specific needs,
- b. Establishing forms of consultation as an intermediary between young tenants and the proprietors of buildings (such as the creation of housing co-operatives for young people),

- c. Setting up working groups and centres to mediate between young people and the administration on matters of employment, so as to enlarge their conditions of access to work (improving the reception of young people by trainers and foremen and making young people aware of the problems of running businesses).
43. The local authorities must create the necessary conditions for this concertation to be organised at local level and ensure that it can lead in some cases to the adjustments and changes in the administrations and institutions that are required to promote the integration of young people into professional and public life.
44. In addition to consultation on specific issues, the local authorities should offer young people all the necessary means of expression. In particular there should be a permanent platform where they can express themselves and engage in an institutionalised dialogue with the elected authorities. This platform can take various forms according to the individual traditions and structures of each local authority, particularly as regards its composition, mode of election or appointment and operation (eg youth parliament, youth council, standing conference of youth, etc).
45. Youth policy must be based not only on traditional aid to associations (machinery for recognition and subsidisation) but, more widely, on a policy of support of all kinds (especially by agreements on long-term objectives) for collective or individual initiatives that are specific, spontaneous and do not derive from the structures of organised youth (responses to needs not currently satisfied, the creation of co-operatives, the introduction of new media, animation of neighbourhood cultural activities).
46. A convergent network of intervention and stimulation must be set up on a decentralised basis, taking into account the financial, legal, fiscal and technical aspects, accounting systems and the necessary additional training.
47. Better knowledge of the European countries helps to make young people aware of the European ideal.
48. The CLRAE's Committee on Cultural and Social Affairs is requested to undertake a study of the conditions for carrying out European co-ordination with a view to setting up a network of reception and information centres for young people, linking the many initiatives already existing or still to be taken in the towns of Europe.
49. The role of these centres would be to supply young people who apply to them with all kinds of tourist, cultural and social information, advice on accommodation facilities and contacts with local youth groups, and guidance on any possibilities of social assistance.

50. In full respect for the young people's autonomy and without any idea of supervising them, the centres belonging to the network would accept a number of common basic ethical rules and adopt a common emblem.

V. THE CULTURAL REPERCUSSIONS OF TOURISM ON TOWNS

The participants:

51. Consider that cultural and educational tourism, harmoniously integrated into the life of the town, can instil a better understanding of the world and its problems;

52. Believe that such tourism is also capable of contributing to greater European unity;

53. Are convinced that the towns, as the natural homes of culture, are often well placed - especially those in border regions - to demonstrate that tourism can be a means of communication and understanding between peoples;

54. Consider that certain forms of tourism are liable to alter the natural and social environment and affect the quality of life and cultural identity of the inhabitants of the areas visited;

55. Are persuaded that the culture presented to tourists must not be simply a product offered for economic reasons;

56. Think it appropriate to suggest that towns take every suitable measure in order to:

- a. Foster among visitors a better knowledge of the inhabitants' way of life, by encouraging them to stay with families, especially during festivals, and to take part in events of genuinely local inspiration as opposed to artificial folklore,
- b. Safeguard the cultural identity of the inhabitants especially by:
 - i. Warning against excessive internationalisation or standardisation and discouraging parodies, for the benefit of tourists, of the town's most solemn ceremonies and its religious and popular festivals,
 - ii. Seeing to it that the occupants of temporary residences do not introduce into the town life-styles that are harmful to the quality of life of the permanent inhabitants,
- c. Encourage the inhabitants to remain in old districts that have been renovated,
- d. Promote the greatest possible expansion of town twinnings, which can be powerful cultural stimulants and are apt to bring new ideas to sometimes inward-looking communities,

- e. Encourage voluntary associations in their efforts to inform and entertain the tourist,
- f. Promote tourism by young people in municipalities where they are totally unable to practise it even in their own region, still less abroad.

VI. NEW WAYS OF FINANCING CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

57. Local authorities need not only to carry out a financial evaluation of their cultural activities but also to view them in their broad social context. In particular they must constantly bear in mind the vital interaction between cultural development and economic development.

58. Local authorities must make a determined effort to remedy the common situation whereby the less institutionalised sectors of cultural policy, which are often the most likely sources of innovation, are the least well secured in the cultural budget and thus tend to be badly hampered by lack of funds.

59. They must give high priority to increasing their financial support for new cultural tasks which are entailed by the threat to peace, unemployment, increasing xenophobia and pollution of the environment.

60. In view of the growing importance of cultural action precisely at a time of economic crisis and high unemployment, local and regional authorities should take account of the necessity and the possibility of shifts of emphasis in their hitherto rather inflexible budgets. Such shifts of emphasis are conceivable and possible:

- a. Within the total budget in favour of the cultural budget,
- b. Within the cultural budget in favour of new cultural activities,
- c. Within the budgets of the major cultural institutions in favour of the items with the highest cultural and artistic value.

61. The managers of cultural institutions must be allowed more flexibility and responsibility in spending their budgets with more freedom within the limits of global financial allocations.

62. The participants recommend that the relevant authorities should envisage new approaches and new resources for culture in co-operation with private initiative. This could mean that the authorities:

- a. Adapt their tax legislation so as to give greater encouragement to private patronage of the arts,
- b. Do everything possible to encourage the sponsorship of cultural activities by industry and commerce, while maintaining sufficient public control to ensure that concern for publicity or other commercial considerations do not impair artistic freedom or give rise to other abuses; specific codes should be elaborated for this purpose, if possible by the Council of Europe,
- c. Bear in mind:
 - i. That while the encouragement of private sponsorship makes for greater spontaneity and flexibility, private money should never be regarded as a substitute for public funding,
 - ii. That it must remain the particular task of public financial assistance to correct imbalances in cultural promotion carried out according to commercial criteria, and to seek out and assist areas of neglect and potential rather than those of accepted strength,
 - iii. That in order to safeguard the position of such cultural institutions and activities as are clearly in the general interest but depend, in order to maintain artistic quality, on a steady flow of financial support, financing priority should be given to their activities of production and creation.

63. The participants appeal to the trade unions to involve themselves closely in catering for the socio-cultural needs of their members and contribute to local cultural development.

64. In order to stimulate cultural activities local authorities should decompartmentalise their local services and favour an overall and multisectoral approach as opposed to the former unsatisfactory tendency towards partitioning and specialisation.

65. The public authorities must bear in mind that cultural activities are particularly labour-intensive and therefore that at a time of high unemployment the maintenance and development of such activities is of increased social importance;

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66. The participants are convinced of the cardinal importance of evaluation both as an aspect of the in-service training of decision-makers and as an agent for transforming institutions and decision-making processes. With this in view, they suggest that the Council for Cultural Co-operation should:

- a. Institute an enquiry which would present a selection of fruitful examples of different types of evaluation,

- b. Make an evaluation in two or three years' time of the results of the 21 towns project whose implementation is continuing in several of the towns concerned.
67. The participants welcome the intention of the Council for Cultural Co-operation to submit a draft European Declaration of Cultural Objectives to the next Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs in Berlin in 1984.
68. They ask the drafters to:
- a. Give due weight to Europe's fundamental asset of cultural diversity,
 - b. Set as a goal the construction of a society on a human scale based on the principles of decentralisation and local and regional autonomy,
 - c. Recognise the importance of the local and regional community as the primary framework within which the citizen finds his cultural identity and means of cultural expression,
 - d. Stress the need to ensure that Europe's towns and regions have the capacity to fulfil their vital role in maintaining and fostering their cultural heritage, providing facilities and opportunities for cultural expression for all their citizens and developing the creative potential of the local community.