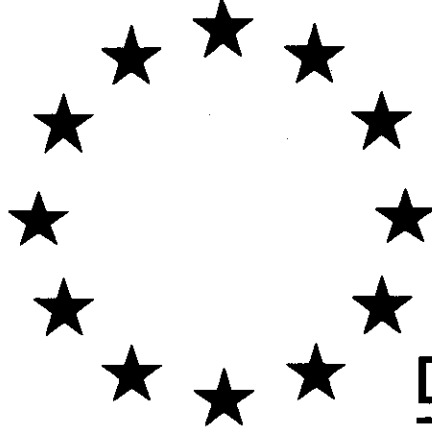


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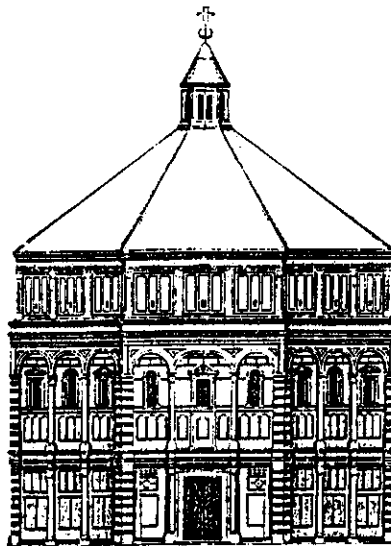
CONSEIL
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Council for Cultural Co-operation
Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

Culture and Regions: cultural action in the regional context

Florence (Italy), 14-16 May 1987



Florence Declaration

unanimously adopted on 16 May 1987

Strasbourg 1987

The participants at the "Culture and Regions" Conference, meeting in Florence (Italy) from 14 to 16 May 1987,

1. Express their thanks:
 - a. to the authorities of the Tuscany region for their kind invitation and warm hospitality,
 - b. to the Council of Europe for having initiated this conference, organised jointly by the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) and the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE);
2. Having in mind the Bremen Declaration on "Town and Culture",
3. Have learned with great interest the results of the experimental phase of CDCC Project No. 10 on "Culture and the Region";
4. Have carefully examined the various reports submitted to the conference and, having taken part in six working parties:
5. Observe that:
 - a. the European regions, drawing upon their experience and identity, offer in the process of European integration new responses to the requirements of development based upon greater harmony between quality of life, the exploitation of regional resources, creativity and economic activities;
 - b. cultural democracy has undoubtedly been firmly established, but it remains a major challenge in view of the disparities and exclusions which are being constantly worsened by economic difficulties and the competition which exacerbates selfishness and antagonism;
 - c. although decentralisation is indispensable in itself, it is not an automatic guarantee of progress towards that democracy if it implies no more than a move from one seat of power to another. It is by diversifying the centres of power and their methods of operation that the democracy desired can be achieved;
6. Believe that:
 - a. the region must in this context fully play the role of a place of solidarity, experimentation, innovation, exchange and responsiveness;
 - b. to that end, culture is an excellent field for overall regional development, to be promoted through the initiative of individuals, the co-operation of cultural, social and economic agents and the impetus provided by public, particularly regional, authorities;
7. Consider that, as regards the specific features of the regional level for the implementation of cultural policies:
 - a. the cultural responsibilities of the regions are essential for ensuring complementarity and interaction with the action of the state, municipalities and any other intermediate levels;
 - b. regional cultural policies, implemented in a democratic spirit, must contribute in particular:
 - to ensuring greater solidarity within the region through the territorial deployment and planning of culture,
 - to supporting networks of artistic creativity, cultural dissemination and training,
 - to providing an impetus for co-operation between cultural agents and territorial authorities,
 - to enhancing the regional heritage in all its forms, particularly in connection with tourism, whilst respecting the identity and life of local communities,
 - to making possible the existence of major European-minded cultural projects,
 - to encouraging an outward-looking artistic and cultural approach through major events and regional exhibitions.

- to broadening the scope of culture through scientific and technical culture projects whilst providing information about, and arousing an awareness of, what is at stake,
- to promoting regional media and inviting them to experiment with new forms of participation,
- to creating co-operation networks between regions and local authorities in general in different countries ;

c. the functions of the regions—or the initiatives they take in education and training—form an integral part of their cultural vocation, which cannot be confined to the arts ;

d. in order to perform their cultural mission, the regions must be able to rely upon resources, administrative personnel and technical instruments adapted to the framing, implementation and evaluation of actions and policies ;

8. Consider that, with regard to local participation in regional cultural development :

a. participation is both one of the instruments of a policy designed to achieve cultural democracy and one of the purposes of such a policy. In fact, the object is to enable everyone to develop his/her ability to create, express and communicate with a view to enhancing the cultural quality of all aspects of life in society ;

b. the region is an appropriate level for breaking down barriers between the cultural and economic aspects of development. Accordingly, co-operation between economic and cultural agents must be encouraged systematically ;

c. voluntary organisations are an essential aspect, a precondition of overall development in keeping with cultural democracy. From that point of view, the region is the appropriate level at which to develop the co-operative interactive networks required by voluntary associations in order to face up more effectively to the challenges they encounter. Active support must continue to be given to associations such as trade unions and working class bodies—as has been given for generations in some regions—by the regional authorities in a spirit of pluralism and acceptance of diversity whilst avoiding the damaging effects that may result from the excessive politicisation of cultural life ;

d. cultural development must be rooted in a positive cultural identity in relation to which the region constitutes the ideal setting. Although it is desirable to avoid a backward-looking approach which may act as a brake on change and innovation, it is also necessary to take into account the strength and vitality that collective initiative derives from an awareness of a real cultural identity when it is sustained by a regional development policy. Accordingly, the region must devote particular attention to the preservation of popular traditions that often represent the living memory from which the collective consciousness derives its nourishment ;

e. such cultural development should be enhanced by contributions from the cultures of immigrant communities in Europe. That goes without saying for intra-European migrants, but it also applies to those of extra-European origin. Europe's rich heritage is based on a mixing of peoples, and this will serve as an impetus for its future development ;

9. Are convinced, with regard to the ways and means of interaction between culture and development in the regions, that :

a. co-operation between economic and cultural agents must be sought and encouraged through regional action for a better appreciation of the economic challenge of cultural activities and qualitative requirements in development actions ;

b. culture is an investment in balanced and shared regional development based in particular upon creativity, innovation and the utilisation of human resources ; by recognising the necessary interdependence of culture, education, training, social welfare, by supporting programmes of comprehensive intercultural action in urban districts and disadvantaged rural areas, the regions can help to reduce disparities ;

c. European integration is cultural, just as much as economic and political. Interregional co-operation is the ideal way of implementing development programmes which integrate the cultural and economic dimensions. These programmes permit a more appropriate response to human needs and the specific socio-economic characteristics of the regions, whilst incorporating the advantages of external economies resulting from the European dimension. Several means can be developed to that effect :

- exchange of experience and joint reflection on key questions concerning their cultural vocation ;

- co-operation through cultural projects based on specific features and common cultural assets ;
- support for European networks of cultural amenities and places with regional vocations and for cultural routes ;

d. the regions must also take their place and contribute to the development of scientific and technological policies implemented at European level, notably by promoting :

- the opening up of their region to scientific knowledge and its results ;
- access for enterprises to existing technologies ;
- interregional scientific co-operation ;
- the promotion of scientific and technological training by school and out-of-school education.

In this respect, permanent education and training in all its forms must become one of the essential levers of European regional policy. Particular attention must be paid to the development of telecommunications in the most disadvantaged regions in order to promote their access to technological development and reduce the inequalities resulting from the concentration of research and development investments and the products of science ;

10. With regard to the place of communication in regional development :

a. observe that networks of audiovisual communication and the question of programmes are central to the concerns of the regions, some of which have taken important initiatives in recent years ;

b. emphasise the need to promote at regional level instruments of production and dissemination by the appropriate means of regional cultural events : particular attention should be paid to the training of operators concerned by these projects ;

c. stress that the promotion of local and regional programmes and audiovisual activities should be backed up by co-productions and exchanges in the European context ;

11. Regarding the cultural role of regional or minority languages :

a. recognise that regional or minority languages constitute an essential cultural heritage which, if it is to be protected and developed, calls for urgent measures, both practical and legal ;

b. are of the opinion that the attention paid by the European authorities to the recognition of the identity of linguistic minorities, far from being an obstacle to the unity of states or to communication in integrated Europe, constitutes a fundamental testimony of the attachment to human rights and respect for cultural diversity which characterise European society ;

c. fully support, therefore, the work in progress on drafting a European charter for regional or minority languages defining both general principles and concrete conditions for the maintenance and rehabilitation of these languages and thereby the local and regional cultures that they represent ;

12. With regard to the economy and financing of culture and the regions :

a. the incorporation at European level of cultural policies into regional development programmes calls for the elaboration of appropriate financial instruments permitting the implementation of regional projects of European interest geared to co-operation between regions in different countries. To that end, two avenues are possible and should be promoted :

- taking into account cultural projects in grants awarded by existing European funds,
- the creation of a European regional fund for cultural development financed by the financial institutions, guaranteed by the states and managed by the European institutions in consultation with the regions. This fund should give priority to projects concerning regions experiencing particularly acute economic difficulties in the present European context ;

b. in the context of relations between the economy and culture, the commitment of the regions to co-operation with the economic agents is essential :

- to foster projects likely to gain the support of the private sector,
- to secure for the cultural agents the quality standards and a contractual framework as well as the technological and financial means necessary for their co-operation with the economic agents,
- to mobilise the resources necessary for the enhancement, in a European framework, of the historic and contemporary regional heritage ;

13. With regard in general to the regions and European cultural co-operation :

a. request that a study be made on the setting up of a structure for the co-ordination and promotion of specific projects concerning cultural interregional co-operation and that initiatives be taken to foster the exchange and European training of regional and local officials responsible for cultural action. Such a structure could also assume the role of a "European observatory of cultural policies and practices", thereby constituting a valuable instrument for a transnational cultural co-operation policy between the regions ; and to that end request the CDCC and CLRAE to set up a select group to formulate concrete proposals, after consulting associations representative of the European regions ;

b. consider that the European regions also have the vocation of contributing, through support for decentralised projects, to co-operation and trade with the developing countries particularly in the context of the European Public Campaign on North-South Interdependence and Solidarity. This opening on to the world facilitates the necessary task of arousing the awareness of the citizens of Europe and prompts the cultural and economic agents to commit themselves to such co-operation ;

c. request the CDCC and CLRAE to commence without delay and jointly a study of the arrangements and conditions for the setting up of the aforesaid European regional fund for cultural development ;

d. are desirous that the operational phase of the "Culture and the Region" project should be implemented having regard to all the proposals contained in this declaration and in close association with the regions.