

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Item 4.1 on the agenda

BUREAU OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE
FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE
(CDCPP)

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

CULTURE'S CONTRIBUTION TO STRENGTHENING
THE INTERNET AS AN EMANCIPATORY FORCE

For action

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Democratic Citizenship and Participation
Directorate General of Democracy – DGII

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Action required:

The Bureau is invited to:

- examine and exchange on the draft Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on "Culture's contribution to strengthening the internet as an emancipatory force";
- instruct the Secretariat to consult with the relevant Council of Europe Steering Committees including, *inter alia*, the Steering Committee on Media and Information Society (CDMSI) and the Steering Committee for Education Policy and Practice (CDPPE);
- agree to submit the draft Recommendation subsequently to the CDCPP for examination at its plenary meeting in June 2018.

Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)on

“Culture’s contribution to strengthening the Internet as an emancipatory force”

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.*b* of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage;

Conscious that some of the most recent developments in the Internet and digital media are currently undermining these ideals and principles that are their common heritage, and in particular the often covert profiling of citizens by Internet platforms or information disorder comprising misinformation, disinformation and malinformation that are carried out on an organised or unorganised basis and are emotional, visual and repetitive;

Aware that such developments in the Internet and digital media tend to influence, inter alia, political opinion, election results, prosumer behaviour and threaten respect for diversity and tolerance that are the hallmarks of democracy and peaceful societies;

Recalling the Council of Europe’s Indicator Framework for Culture and Democracy that demonstrates culture’s crucial role in developing well-rounded, competent, tolerant and democratically able citizens, by exposing them to diverse knowledge and a variety of influences and experiences;

Acknowledging that this exposure enables citizens to make cognitive connections, gain insights and innovate in ways that are of benefit to democracies and that might, without arts, culture and creativity, remain beyond citizens’ range of vision or comprehension;

Conscious that culture can only fulfill this crucial role if all citizens have a genuine open and democratic access to culture that fosters their active participation, and that the Internet and other digital tools facilitate this type of open and democratic cultural access;

Recognising that the Internet and digital media have become part of the shared public space for culture which should be supported by solid cultural policy aims;

Recalling also the Final Statement of the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture (Moscow, 15-16 April 2013), which highlighted the digital revolution as “crucial to the viability of creation and cultural diversity”;

Stressing that a human rights approach is required for all policies on culture, including those which address the digital shift. This is to give full effect to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ETS No. 5), as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights and as developed by the Committee of Ministers in its Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)2 on the internet of citizens and its Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)8 on big data for culture, literacy and democracy;

Taking into account the insights from the 4th Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitisation, held in Karlsruhe on 19 and 20 October 2017, which highlighted the Internet and digital tools as openly accessible creative spaces for enabling culturally, democratically competent and tech savvy citizens, who are critically aware and can stand against the threats of populist propaganda, disinformation, fake news and hate speech and that a paradigm shift towards a more public sector driven development of digital culture could facilitate this aim;

Recommends that governments of the member States:

- Draw on culture and cultural players as vital elements for strengthening the Internet and digital media as democratic and emancipatory forces, underpinned by respect for human rights, diversity, pluralism, tolerance, inclusion and solidarity;
- Enlarge the scope of critical digital media and information literacy programmes in the education and lifelong learning of children, youth and adults to boost their creative talent and make use of it for rising to digital challenges to democracy;
- Bring this recommendation, and appended guidelines, to the attention of all relevant stakeholders to enable them to take the measures necessary to contribute to its implementation.

Appendix I to Recommendation CM/Rec (2018)..

Guidelines on culture's contribution to strengthening the Internet as an emancipatory force

Draw on culture, cultural players and public sector cultural programmes as vital elements for strengthening the Internet and digital media as democratic and emancipatory forces

Member states are encouraged to recognise that the Internet and digital media have become part of the shared public space for new forms of culture, increasing the accessibility of cultural offerings and activities, including those of public service cultural actors and institutions, and the usage of these by citizens. Member states should specifically:

- a. highlight the public interest value of the Internet in cultural policy making;
- b. strengthen the presence of public providers of cultural content on the Internet to help them engage with citizens and facilitate access to cultural content;
- c. support the providers of existing public cultural infrastructures in their efforts to promote digital co-creation and co-production, mindful of the need to protect intellectual property;
- d. develop the provision of materials of public libraries and archives on the Internet in particular to promote and facilitate the search for diverse and pluralistic information and knowledge;
- e. promote and facilitate the use of open source tools, commons, shareware and related working methodologies for cultural and research activities by citizens and by public sector and public service actors and institutions;
- f. highlight the crucial role of culture and education in debates on the regulation of private digital platforms;
- g. support the setting up of an independent observatory to monitor Internet content, including cultural content, to provide citizens with a reliable platform for checking the source, validity and authorship of information and digital productions;

Raise culturally and democratically savvy and creative citizens

Member states should use digital culture and arts as a means of fostering digitally and democratically competent and creative citizens. Member states should specifically:

- a. highlight in policy documents and related strategy action plans the importance of stimulating creativity and its neighbouring competences of entrepreneurship, innovative thinking and problem-solving skills in citizens, stressing them as a means of fulfilment, intellectual and social development and economic prosperity;
- b. include critical digital media and information literacy training and design-thinking methods as core subjects in formal and informal education, and ensure their adequate financing as well as the training of educators who are able to teach these new skills in line with technological developments;
- c. encourage cultural institutions to co-operate and establish synergies with educational institutions to create digital learning opportunities for citizens by creating incentives that recognise institutions for their cooperation;
- d. encourage cultural and educational institutions to include the Internet and digital tools as an integral part of their arts and cultural programmes with a view to fostering citizens' critical thinking and tolerance of different viewpoints;
- e. encourage cultural institutions to be "pressure-free" spaces for creative learning, in particular to facilitate the experimental use of technology and to support e-culture and New Media Arts;
- f. support and promote new forms of digital culture and heritage in public cultural programmes.

Appendix II to Recommendation CM/Rec (2017)..

Glossary of terms (with specific implications for the purposes of this recommendation)

Co-creation

Use of the imagination, spirit of invention and innovation of consumers of arts and culture to build on the work of other cultural creators or to collaborate through these skills with other citizens to create arts and culture.

Commons

The Commons in a cultural context are cultural resources in the public domain, free from copyright restrictions and accessible to everyone to build upon and to share. This is distinct from cultural products that are privately owned, copyrighted and require explicit permission (and frequently payment) to use.

Co-production

Co-production is the process by which more than one person assembles the raw materials required to produce something new. It is the stage that follows creation and design.

Critical digital media and information literacy

New teaching and learning methods for consolidating and improving technical computer skills in combination with research, processing and critical analysis of information and creative personal development.

Design-thinking

The use of creative plans of action and strategies during the design process.

E-culture

E-culture is the production and consumption of arts and culture through digital media technologies.

Information disorder

Information disorder refers to the misinformation, disinformation and malinformation of citizens. Information disorders can be organised or unorganised, and are emotional, visual and repetitive.

Internet of Citizens

The Internet of Citizens promotes the human and cultural dimension of the internet in complement to the Internet of Things. It is a new notion which calls for a people-centred approach to the Internet, in particular to empower everyone who uses and relies upon it for their everyday activities. The term "citizens" is used here in a general sense, meaning people or persons, and not in any legal sense.

New Media Arts

Artwork created using new media technologies such as digital art, computer graphics, computer animation, virtual art, 3D printing and cyborg art.

Open source tools

Digital tools written in open code which is available to anyone to use and to alter.

Pressure free

Without obligations, restrictions or stressful circumstances.

Prosumer

A fusion of producer and consumer, it refers to the blurring and merging of these roles in the digital world. Processes like crowdsourcing and crowdfunding help to develop goods where the consumer is involved in the design or benefits from specificities of the creation, thus being less passive and more creative.

Shareware

A type of software that is provided free of charge to users, who are allowed and encouraged to make and share copies of the software.