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COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION

CULTURE COMMITTEE

Meeting of the Bureau

Chisinau, 4 (9.30 a.m.) – 5 (5.00 p.m.) October 2001

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Str. Nicolai Iorga, 21)

EUROPEAN PROGRAMME OF NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY REVIEWS

CULTURAL POLICY IN MOLDOVA

REPORT OF A EUROPEAN PANEL OF EXAMINERS

Item 8 of Draft Agenda

Distribution:

- Members of the Bureau of the Culture Committee

Documents are available for consultation on the Internet page of the cultural co-operation: <http://culture.coe.int>, username and password: decstest.

DRAFT DECISION

The Bureau of the CC-Cult :

- took note of the experts' report on the Cultural Policy in Moldova (CC-Cult – BU (2001)2A) and congratulated its authors for its quality;
- thanked the Moldovan authorities for their invitation to hold the first meeting of the CC-Cult Bureau in Chisinau on the occasion of the national debate on the cultural policy in Moldova;
- is pleased that the MOSAIC II project will contribute to the implementation of the recommendations contained in this report.

Membership of the Panel of Examiners

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Acknowledgements

The Examiners wish to express their thanks to all who took part in our meetings in Moldova for their warm welcome, for their interest in our mission and their concern for its success. No errors or omissions in this report are to be attributed to them.

Exceptionally, we were invited to discussions with President Lucinschi and Prime Minister Braghis as well as the Minister of Culture, Mr Ghenadie Ciobanu and Mr Gheoghe Duca, President of the *Parliamentary Commission for Culture, Education, Sport, Mass Media and Science* and other members of the Commission, and with Mr Valeriu Culev, Deputy Director General, and other representatives of the state *Department for National Relations and Languages*. We also had the opportunity to meet with representatives of the regional and local authorities in Chisinau, Gagauzy, Taraclia, Cahul and Orhei. At the end of our visit we took part with the Minister in a press conference. In Chisinau our meetings included representatives of all the principal national cultural institutions and cultural training establishments and the Soros Foundation Moldova. A list of meetings is included at the end of the report. Our work was further informed by visits to exhibitions, concerts and performances.

The Examiners particularly wish to thank Mr Eugen Martin, Director of the *Division of Image and International Relations* at the Ministry of Culture, who coordinated the National Report and organized our visit, for his commitment to our mission.

Schedule of the Examiners' activities

6 - 8 December 1999

Preliminary meetings in Chisinau by the Head of the Cultural Policy and Action Department and the Rapporteur with the Minister and Heads of Department at the Ministry

21 -29 October 2000

Visits by the Panel of Examiners in Chisinau, Gagauzy, Taraclia, Cahul and Orhei

9 March 2001

Examiners' meeting at the Council of Europe's office in Paris

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INTRODUCTION

Starting again with culture?

If I could do it all again, I would start with culture. Jean Monnet

1. We begin our report by congratulating the Moldovan authorities for their decision to review their national cultural policy in a European context, just ten years after their country gained independence, amid an on-going programme of political and administrative reform and social change, and at a time of extreme economic hardship. At such a time culture will either, as we hope, become one of the principal agents of Moldova's successful development as a democratic European state but could, equally, find itself marginalized by the many pressures of the transition process.

2. Our report is based on an intensive programme of meetings undertaken in Moldova in the course of a single week from 21 to 29 October 2000. In so short a time, and with no possibility of making a further visit before finalizing our report, it has not been possible to consult with all those who play a leading role in Moldova's cultural life or who will have a stake in guiding the country's cultural policy in the future. Since our visit, the results in Moldova's parliamentary elections on 25 February 2001 have altered the balance of political power in the country and this report is consequently addressed to a new national government and a new Minister of Culture.

3. One week is said to be a long time in politics but it is a very short time in which to make a reasoned assessment of Moldova's rich, complex and diverse culture, of the policies adopted by the public authorities and of the challenges they currently face. We were asked to give particular attention to issues of finance, decentralisation and creativity, and to make recommendations. This we have attempted to do while not neglecting the full range of issues customarily addressed by the Council of Europe's review programme. Our hope is that this report will make a useful contribution to the national debate which the Moldovan authorities themselves have initiated.

The National Report

4. The first step in the review process was the preparation by the Moldovan authorities of a National Report, a document that has been of great assistance to the Examiners in their work. We understand it is intended to develop the Report further. In the form in which we received it, the Report struck the Examiners as representing a position statement for the Ministry, and for specific cultural sectors, rather than a comprehensive analysis of overall policy: such an analysis is needed and will require a wide-ranging self-evaluation of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

5. However, the preparation of the National Report has already created an invaluable point of departure from which a more inclusive public debate on cultural policy can begin at every level. In order to promote this process we feel it would be helpful for the government, when publishing the Report, to add a short preface stating the importance it attaches to the formulation and development of cultural policy as an integral part of Moldova's new identity, of the country's social, political and economic reform programme, and of its aspirations for increasing integration with European institutions.

6. The National Report contains a useful statement of the powers vested by Parliament in the Ministry of Culture and we suggest it would also be helpful to include, at the beginning of the Report, an articulation and assessment of the aims, objectives and priorities that have been set by the Ministry itself since 1989, how these have needed to be modified over time, and the results so far achieved. We further suggest that a brief account should be added about the methodology adopted in compiling the National Report: who the authors are, who has been consulted, and what further steps the Ministry intends to take.

Other relevant documentation

7. The Examiners' task has been made simpler by the availability of a number of other recent reports and reviews that we commend to the Moldovan authorities; details are provided in the Select Bibliography at the end of this report. Two independent studies concerning specific aspects of cultural policy in Moldova itself have been completed recently: one examines the book sector and the other the mass media. In addition, while we have been drafting our report, the Council of Europe has completed the first two studies in its new programme of Transversal Reviews which are intended to complement the Reviews of National Cultural Policy: these studies deal respectively with National Cultural Institutions in Transition and with The Management of Cultural Diversity: both are highly relevant to issues in the development of cultural policy in Moldova.

8. More generally the arguments and recommendations in this report should be seen in the context of the Council of Europe's major contribution to the debate on culture and development in Europe, In from the Margins, and its two central themes "to bring the millions of dispossessed and disadvantaged Europeans in from the margins of society and cultural policy in from the margins of governance."

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The road to national and cultural identity

9. The following historical facts may already be familiar. However, culture is historically created and, in particular, the recent history of the Moldovan (that is to say Romanian) language in Moldova is of central importance to an understanding of the new republic's quest for national and cultural identity at the beginning of the 21st century.

10. Moldova was formed as an independent state in the fourteenth century, between the east Carpathians and the Dniestr, but the country now called Moldova straddles two different historic regions – Romanian speaking Bessarabia to the west and Slavic populated Transdnestr to the east. The Republic of Moldova lies between the river Prut to the west and the river Dniestr to the east, sharing borders with Romania and the Ukraine: within these borders, Moldova has not previously enjoyed independent statehood in modern times.

11. In 1940, under the terms of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Moldova was carved out from Romanian Moldavia whose eastern part, between Prut and Dniestr, is also known as Bessarabia and became the Moldavian SSR. The north and south of the territory were ceded to the Ukraine while Bessarabia was subjected to sovietisation. In 1941 the Moldavian SSR was occupied by German and Romanian armies and thousands of Bessarabian Jews were subsequently deported to Auschwitz. In 1944 the country was re-occupied by the Soviet army and Soviet power was confirmed by the terms of the Paris treaty of 1947.

12. As part of the Soviet Union, Moldova's classic configuration as a European borderland was submitted to a relentless programme of integration and uniformity which included the deportation of many thousands of Romanian Moldavians to Siberia and Kazakhstan, and the inward migration of large numbers of ethnic Russians and Ukrainians, as well as the establishment of many new educational and scientific institutes similar to others in the USSR. Russian became the official state language and the Romanian language in Moldova was 'Russianised' through the imposition of the Cyrillic alphabet. Nicolas Dima in *From Moldavia to Moldova* says that even folk art, particularly music and dance, which was assiduously cultivated by the Soviet regime, and for which Moldova was famous throughout the Soviet Union, was reinterpreted and distorted to break it away from its Romanian origin.

Independent statehood: 1989 to the present day

The shared view of national identity has a particularly important role in a multicultural society because of its greater need to cultivate a common sense of belonging among its diverse communities. PAREKH Bhiku, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* Macmillan Press 2000

13. In 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Moldova constituted itself as an independent state. This legal and symbolic act established Moldova as a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual fledgling democracy within a presidential republic (now changed, since 2000, to a parliamentary republic). However, independent statehood did not resolve the issues of national and cultural identity on the territory. Writing in the Gagauz weekly *Literatura si Arta*, E.Mandacanu considered that, at the point of independence, the population was broadly divided into four groups with four distinct opinions about the future:

- i. We are Moldavians (a separate people) and we want to be part of the USSR
- ii. We are Moldavians (a separate people), but we want our republic to become an independent state
- iii. We are Romanians (Moldavian Romanians), but we want to live as an independent state
- iv. We are Romanians (Moldavian Romanians) and we want to unite with Romania

In BRUCHIS, Michael: *The Republic of Moldova - from the collapse of the Soviet Empire to the Restoration of the Russian Empire*, East European Monographs, Boulder/Columbia University Press NY 1996

14. When Moldovan (that is to say Romanian) was adopted in the new constitution as the official language of the new state the tensions indicated in Mandacanu's analysis quickly manifested themselves. From Russian citizens, and other minorities for whom Russian is their first language, there was determined opposition and, in 1991, both the Gagauz and Transdniestr regions of Moldova made separate claims of their own to national independence. The government refused to accept these claims. After intensive negotiations, Gagauzia (a region dominated from Tsarist times by its christian Turkish community) was granted the status of an autonomous region in 1994. The issue of independence for the predominantly slavic enclave of Transdniestr led to a brief but intense period of civil conflict in 1992 before an uneasy armistice was restored, leaving the separatists in control down to the present day: it remains uncertain how this situation will be resolved.

15. Between the political crisis of 1991-92 and the failure of the Russian rouble in 1998 Moldova's economic situation steadily declined. Poor harvests, the collapse of markets in the former soviet union, large scale tax evasion, a thriving black economy, the effective loss of the industrial base in Transdniestr, and dependence on external energy supplies are all contributory factors. So too is the burden of annual debt repayment to international financial organisations which last year represented 30% of the state budget. Poverty has greatly increased and the gap between the richest and poorest in society widened very considerably: more than 90% of the population earn less than \$2 a day and in 1999 salary arrears in the public sector rose from 2 to 4.5 months. Although we found the Finance

Ministry quietly optimistic about the general prospects for improvement in 2000 and 2001, Moldova's economy currently remains in crisis.

CULTURAL POLICY: CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

Economy in crisis: culture in danger

A society's culture is closely tied up with its economic, political and other institutions. No society first develops culture and then these institutions, or vice versa. They are all equally vital to its survival, emerge and develop together, and are influenced by each other. PAREKH Bhiku, *Rethinking Multiculturalism* Macmillan Press 2000

16. Culture cannot expect to be exempted from Moldova's current economic difficulties or from the government's corrective regime of extreme financial austerity; nor can it be expected to flourish as a dynamic, challenging and independent force in a climate of corruption. Since declaring for independence in 1991, Moldova's progress towards a civil society and a free market economy has been fraught with every kind of difficulty and, although the country is now a signatory to many European conventions, it is acknowledged that a significant gap persists between legislation and practice in many aspects of society. In the opinion of the Examiners there is a distinct danger in this situation that culture, and the Ministry, which is the champion of culture in government, will become increasingly marginalised.

17. If such a decline is to be avoided, the role of culture as a dynamic agent for social change and cohesion, economic regeneration, sustainable development and civil society must rapidly become more widely understood and accepted at a political level: in the words of UNESCO's World Commission on Culture and Development

Culture shapes all our thinking, imagining and behaviour. It is the transmission of behaviour as well as a dynamic source for change, creativity, freedom and the awakening of innovative opportunities. For groups and societies, culture is energy, inspiration and empowerment, as well as the knowledge and acknowledgement of diversity *Our Creative Diversity* UNESCO 1995

We urge the Moldovan government to consider afresh the determining role that culture can play in the current transition period and beyond. This will mean taking bold, practical and urgent steps - through legislation and the national budget - in order to promote an ambitious and forward-looking cultural policy that can secure specific and substantive benefits for the country and its future social and economic prosperity.

Cultural Policy: a working definition

18. The National Report invites the question: what do we mean by cultural policy? In answer, we have adopted the following as a working definition in the general context of the Council of Europe Programme and the specific context of the current Review in Moldova. In both contexts, cultural policy represents the judgement and determination of the public authorities – national, regional or local – to intervene, with others, in particular fields of activity in order to achieve specified objectives for public benefit. The following are some of the main characteristics of their intervention:

- The growing international recognition of culture as a key means of communication and sustainable social and economic development
- In most European countries, cultural policy is focussed on the arts and heritage but the definition can usefully be widened to include commercial as well as non-commercial activities and the constant interaction between them, and to embrace amateur as well as professional arts activities
- Relevant areas of intervention can include Education and Training, the Arts and Creative Production of all kinds, Heritage Protection, the Cultural Industries, Marketing and Distribution, Audience Development, Cultural Institutions, Individual Participation, Access Networks, Facilities and Equipment
- Intervention by the public authorities may take a number of forms, both direct and indirect, legislative and financial
- The general trend in cultural policy delivery across Europe (East and West) is for the public authorities:
 - to disengage as much as possible from the direct management of cultural activities and institutions
 - to encourage the development of vigorous institutions and networks that are independent of public authority
 - to act with partners in the public and or the private sector
 - to identify public responsibilities at regional and local as well as national level
 - to support cultural activities for their intrinsic value
 - to support culture as a means of achieving social and economic public policy objectives and the development of civil society
 - to base public funding on programmes of grants that are awarded on the basis of specific agreements about aims, objectives and outcomes
 - to balance a response to the on-going needs of cultural institutions with programmes of project funding that encourage creative development, artist-led initiatives and new ways of working
 - to expect most activities to be supported by plural funding in the form of grants, sponsorship, trading income and other fund-raising activity

Benefits of cultural policy

Cultural activity is a bulwark of civil society in that it sensitizes citizens to the value of individual creativity, not simply in the arts but across the range of social and economic life, and promotes individual self-confidence and self-awareness.

European Task Force on Culture and Development *In from the Margins* Council of Europe 1996

19. We believe the potential benefits of a robust, forward-looking and inclusive cultural policy to be those set out by Jacques Renard in an earlier Review. The primary objective is to preserve the national heritage, and to pass it on to future generations, as well as supporting artistic creation in all its diversity and taking steps to make all forms of culture and artistic activity more accessible. However, if we accept that the process of economic reform and development involves issues of quality, and not just quantity, it is apparent that culture is much more than a discreet sector and is in fact a dimension of development itself.

20. Furthermore, the pursuit of a vigorous and diverse cultural policy will encourage the sustained development of civil society - a society where individual rights flourish, democratic participation is the norm, and multiple associations or agencies develop their own projects within a framework of free competition which it is the task of the authorities to guarantee. Culture is a vital factor in the quest for new values and new moral and psychological reference points in the maelstrom of change that confronts Moldovan society today.

CULTURE AND FINANCE

National institutions and networks on the brink

21. The National Report describes a serious decline in the value of public sector funding over the period 1995 to 1999 for cultural institutions and networks at both national and local levels. This decline has been due to the depressed state of the economy as a whole, to the effects of inflation and currency devaluation and, ultimately, to the government's inability to pay in full the budgets which it has allocated to the Ministry in successive financial years.

22. The decline in public funding has been partly offset by the determined efforts of the principal cultural institutions themselves, at the Ministry's instigation, to increase and diversify their trading income, particularly by means of the fees they are able to charge for providing educational activities and for letting their premises. Some of the larger institutions have been able to raise limited additional funds in the form of grants from independent foundations and from business sponsorship. For a few, international tours of their productions have also made a useful contribution to their income. In this way, the Chisinau State Opera and Ballet companies for example have become familiar to audiences in the United Kingdom, and excellent ambassadors for Moldova; however, the wear and tear of arduous touring schedules on everyone involved should not be underestimated.

23. Judging from the information in the National Report, it seems to us that the national institutions have responded as well as could be expected to the Ministry's challenge to increase their extra-budgetary funds. However, in current economic circumstances, and even in the context of the government's more optimistic forecast for 2000 and 2001, it is probable that the potential for raising such funds has already reached its limit. In any case such funds represent at best a welcome bonus: private foundations and business sponsors cannot be expected to make good shortfalls in public subsidies and cannot be seen as a regular substitute for the more adequate levels of state funding that are needed.

24. It should also be recognised that these extra-budgetary funds can benefit only a relatively small number of state-funded organisations and depend in every case on the facilities available to them and on other special circumstances. Looking to the future it has also to be appreciated that fundraising is a sophisticated and complex business, demanding a great deal of senior management time and a range of specific professional skills: it is therefore essential that appropriate training opportunities be offered in order to sustain and maximise the potential for extra-budgetary fundraising that has now begun. For more information on this subject we refer the reader to the recent reports by Andrew McIlroy and Peter Inkei as listed in the Select Bibliography.

A crisis situation

25. It was all too apparent to the Examiners that, in general, the financial position of the institutions and networks constantly borders on crisis if not imminent collapse: salaries are very depressed and in arrears; there are substantial accumulated deficits; buildings are commonly delapidated; essential equipment is not repaired or replaced. Furthermore, the major performing organisations are prevented by Moldova's employment legislation from introducing much-needed reforms in their contracts and working practices, and so find themselves caught between their soviet structures on the one hand and an embryonic market economy on the other, belonging neither to one system or the other. In our view what is needed is a specific cultural employment strategy supported by legislation and tailored to the operating requirements of the sector.

26. After ten years of attrition, it is still scarcely possible to talk of a market for cultural goods and services in Moldova and such a market is still some years away, its development tied to the general state of the economy. Under these conditions, productivity and efficiency as well as creativity and innovation, are constantly under threat. Inevitably the institutions ask: "what value does the state really place on culture?" and in answer to this question it is a sad fact that many of the country's most gifted artists are leaving to find better living and working conditions elsewhere.

The way forward?

27. What is to be done? One proposal, referred to during our visit, is to set up an endowment fund for culture on the Estonian model, employing a percentage of the VAT paid on tobacco and alcohol: parliament would need to approve the necessary legislation. Another suggestion is that more could be done to attract one-off grants from some of the larger international foundations and we urge that this should be the subject of specific research led by the Ministry.

28. However, there is no avoiding the fact that what is needed above all in the current situation is a renewed demonstration by the government of its faith in the cultural sector as a major catalyst for economic and social development: the key requirements are

- a strategic view of capital as well as revenue funding needs
- new public money to protect and modernise the public institutions and networks
- a significant real terms increase in the Ministry's budget
- fiscal measures targetted to the specific needs of artists and cultural institutions in a market economy
- a specific cultural employment strategy, focused on the needs of the sector
- practical incentives in the form of tax breaks to encourage business sponsors and individual donors
- in-service training provision, particularly in project management, leadership skills, and the management of change

29. Increased finance is not the only issue here, and we are far from suggesting that the government alone can resolve the current crisis in Moldova's cultural life simply by injecting more cash. The National Report makes clear that, in addition to the urgent requirement for more adequate levels of public funding, there are also substantive issues of policy and structure needing attention, and we urge the Moldovan authorities to address these issues without delay.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND STRUCTURES

The strategy of protecting for the future

30. Since independence, the Ministry of Culture has consistently taken the view that, in the field of culture, the processes of economic and administrative reform should proceed gradually and, if possible, without casualties. In the face of what were optimistically seen as short-term difficulties, the Ministry's principal strategy has been to avoid arbitrary measures, and to protect valued cultural institutions and networks from the worst effects of the economic crisis and the consequent regime of severe austerity in state expenditure.

31. This strategy is an honourable one that has allowed a degree of continuity and stability to be maintained in circumstances that have been far from stable. The Ministry has been largely successful in avoiding arbitrary reductions in activity, and this is no mean achievement in itself, but there are weaknesses as well as strengths to be found in the current strategy, as there are in the structures and funding patterns that support it. These weaknesses are well illustrated in the National Report, and were confirmed in our discussions with the Minister and his colleagues and with the Directors of the national cultural institutions.

32. The Ministry could not have anticipated the severity and duration of the current crisis and the main disadvantage of the present strategy has been to provide short-term solutions for what can now be seen as medium-, and even long-term, transitional problems - problems of finance, infrastructure and organization - demanding policies and strategies that take a longer view. We were aware that, as the economic crisis goes on, there is growing concern on all sides over the perceived devaluation of culture in the country and the Ministry finds itself short on policy and with little strategic room to manoeuvre.

"A muscular, enterprising Ministry of Culture"

33. The Ministry should be mandated to develop a comprehensive and forward-looking cultural policy but in order to command a political consensus for such a policy it first needs to enjoy sound relationships with a number of key constituencies: these include,

- the arts and heritage (which make up the bulk of the Ministry's present responsibilities)
- the cultural industries (in particular broadcasting, cinema, book and record publishing)
- the Judets, which are the Ministry's key partners in developing national cultural policy at the regional and local level
- those other Ministries and Departments of government whose actions and budgets have either a direct or indirect effect on culture.
- NGOs, voluntary associations and clubs whose activities, or their absence,

are a barometer of civil society.

34. Broadly speaking, we believe it is vital to the development of cultural policy in Moldova that the Ministry of Culture should be in a position to coordinate action between all the agencies responsible for the full range of activities described in the Law on Culture. We therefore recommend that the government establish beyond doubt that the Ministry of Culture is the entity within the state which is expected to function as the strategist of cultural development and national coordination, and to ensure that culture plays a full part in every aspect of Moldova's reconstruction and development.

35. We emphasise that this recommendation is not aimed at increasing the centralized powers of the Ministry but at making the role of the Ministry more effective and transparent in the key areas of policy development and national coordination. The Examiners endorse Jacques Renard's formulation, in another Review, of "a muscular, enterprising Ministry of Culture" - a Ministry that can be seen to generate debate, articulate objectives, coordinate interests and instil a sense of purpose, basing its credibility on a broad overview, open dialogue and consultation, clear objectives, and the transparency of the structures, procedures and criteria it employs for funding and decision-making.

New tasks for the Ministry

36. Even within a narrow brief for the arts and heritage, the Examiners recommend that the Ministry should begin to formulate and promote a more flexible and inclusive policy, and address itself to new and important tasks that only the Ministry can undertake effectively. These tasks, which we regard as urgent, include:

- internal policy coordination and review within the Ministry itself
- policy-led initiatives in cooperation with other Ministries and government Departments
- ensuring that culture is consistently identified and promoted as an integral part of the government's programmes of social and economic development and administrative reform
- pro-active engagement with the cultural industries, in particular broadcasting, cinema, book and record publishing
- regional and local policy development in partnership with the Judets and Municipalities
- pro-active engagement with artists and artist-led activity in the independent sector
- development of audience-related strategies
- NGO development to encourage broad-based participation in cultural activity
- development of training in leadership and management skills, and particularly in the management of change
- international relations and European integration strategies

Reorientation towards policy development

37. In the light of the “new” tasks indicated above, we recommend that the Ministry should review its present organizational arrangements in order to reflect its responsibility for policy coordination and review. We understand that the Ministry has already undergone a process of restructuring which reduced its staffing complement from 160 to about 50 (including 17 involved in state publishing activities). However, while the Ministry is more streamlined in appearance, the National Report indicates that it remains organised on a vertical structure of specialist departments related to the arts and heritage, each responsible for championing its own activities and dependent institutions.

38. Of course it is important that the Ministry should continue to employ professional specialists of the highest calibre, but we would argue that it should also be seen to give a strong lead on a wide range of issues that affect all its departments and go well beyond the servicing of the state institutions and networks. In other words, the Ministry needs to create space in which to develop those horizontal dimensions of policy that are becoming increasingly important as culture begins to find a new position in a new society.

39. The Ministry cannot afford to define culture or cultural policy only in terms of those institutions and activities that currently receive or need its financial support. It has a special responsibility to take a broader and a longer view in order to avoid the potential marginalisation of culture, and to counter the tendency of governments under pressure to regard support for culture as an optional extra rather than a vital necessity.

40. Changes of the kind we propose will take time to implement. In the short term, we recommend that the Ministry should consider setting up an internal Cultural Policy Unit, within existing budgets and staffing levels, to assist in focusing on new tasks and new ways of working. The unit would be responsible, inter-alia, for:

- maintaining effective links with other Ministries and with the Judets
- monitoring the implementation of cultural policy and ensuring its periodic review
- monitoring and coordinating legislation affecting culture
- developing the collection and analysis of cultural statistics
- initiating and coordinating the Ministry’s own research activities.

POLICY AND PARADOX: ASPECTS OF CREATIVITY

Cultural diversity and the language question

The only choice open to any society today is to manage and build on the creative potential of its diversity. PAREKH Bhiku, Rethinking Multiculturalism

41. It seems all too likely that the decision to establish Moldovan (that is to say Romanian) as the official state language in the constitution of the new republic will remain a source of political tension for the foreseeable future. Historically, from the establishment of Moldova as a soviet republic, Russian became the official language, and the use of the Romanian language in Moldova was 'Russianised' by the imposition of the cyrillic alphabet. This policy continued until 1989 when *perestroika* made possible the restoration of the latin alphabet.

42. In all countries, language is a key element in national and cultural identity. For Moldovan citizens whose first language is Russian the legislation adopting Moldovan (Romanian) as the state language has been seen as a threat to their previously dominant position in the country's political, economic and cultural life. Some political parties have demanded that Russian should be declared the country's second official language. At the same time, the majority population for whom Moldovan (Romanian) is their mother tongue feel threatened by the largely uncontrolled and increasingly dominant position that Russian language programmes broadcast from outside Moldova occupy in the mass media.

43. To the Examiners, the multi-national and multi-lingual composition of the Moldovan population, embracing as it does some 100 nationalities, has to be seen as an enviable and self-evident cultural strength. For example in the 28 schools in Taraclia district, where 64% of the population are ethnic Bulgarians, the children study four languages: Romanian, English or French, Bulgarian and Russian. We were also impressed by the good relations that appear to exist on the ground between Moldova's ethnic minorities, by the measures taken by the state to protect their civil, economic, social and cultural rights through legislation, and by the sensitivity with which the state has approached the specific issue of the Romanian language.

44. Much of the credit for this must go to the strenuous efforts made by the government *Department of National Relations and the Functioning of Languages* through whose work the state acknowledges the importance of cultural diversity in shaping Moldova's future. The Department performs a consultative and harmonising role with Moldova's nationalities (including the statistically elusive Tsigane), and the 60 or so NGOs that represent them. Moreover, the Department is active on behalf of Moldova's minorities in the country's international as well as its internal relations. The Department's approach to the issue of the state language is to safeguard diversity while promoting Romanian at all levels as the language of cohesion and integration.

45. The Department is optimistic about public attitudes towards the Romanian language

among Moldovans whose first language is Russian. However, as the National Report makes clear, and the Department does not deny this, it is extremely difficult in the current economic situation for the government either to enforce the existing language legislation, or to promote the use of Romanian more effectively as the official language of education and public life, and as a language of “inter-ethnic communication”: there are, quite simply, not enough teachers, textbooks and other learning resources available to do the job effectively.

46. Because of these practical difficulties, the position of the Moldovan (Romanian) language, and its ability to act as a unifying factor in establishing Moldova’s political and cultural identity as a nation, remain ambiguous in spite of the legislation in its favour. We agree with the National Report that the state authorities alone can give the lead in resolving the present impasse. It should be the unquestioned right of every citizen to speak, to be educated, and to write in his or her own language, but the human and financial resources that are required to make this a reality also have to be made available.

47. More positively, the Examiners believe that as a multi-cultural country Moldova has the potential to develop a practice of multiculturalism and to provide an important bridge between east and west in the on-going development of mature strategies for cultural diversity in Europe. As the Council of Europe’s recent transversal study *Differing Diversities* makes clear, such strategies are set to become an increasingly important dimension of cultural policy throughout the continent:

Cultural diversity, in all its forms, is posing a profound challenge to traditional formulations of cultural policy and to our understanding of the public interests served by this policy. *Differing Diversities* First year final report (see Select Bibliography)

The Examiners hope that Moldova can become an active participant in the further period of work that has been anticipated following the study’s recent publication.

The national cultural institutions

We consider that arts institutions should be given as much artistic, managerial and financial independence from government control as is consistent with public accountability. European Task Force on Culture and Development *In from the Margins*

48. The Ministry currently has direct responsibility for a large number of dependent national institutions and their employees, comprising dramatic and lyric theatre companies, orchestras, galleries and museums, as well as the national arts education and training establishments. This task currently dominates the organisation and management of the Ministry’s activities and the allocation of its resources, both human and financial. To the Examiners this seems to have resulted in a rather exclusive preoccupation with the state institutions, particularly in Chisinau, and the relative neglect both of other activities, which have their own legitimate demands, and of the urgent need to support new ways of working that can mediate in the complex and changing relationship between culture and society.

49. We support the case for sustaining strong national cultural institutions, in line with the conclusions of the Council of Europe's recent transversal study, *National Cultural Institutions in Transition*. We also support the case for the Moldovan government to increase its investment - both capital and revenue - in the national institutions in order to secure their future. At the same time, we believe it is vital for cultural policy to become less exclusively preoccupied by the national institutions so that other areas of the state's responsibility for policy development and for other sectors of activity can begin to be supported more effectively.

50. We therefore recommend that the efforts recently made by the national cultural institutions for the performing arts and heritage to increase their extra-budgetary funding should mark the beginning of a fundamental change in their relationship with the Ministry that sponsors them. We recommend both that the Ministry's investment in these institutions should be increased and that it should begin to take a new form; and we recommend that the institutions themselves should begin to develop their organisational structures in new ways.

51. What we have in mind is that the institutions should be encouraged (progressively but not precipitately, over a period of time, and supported by appropriate training opportunities) to become autonomous, self-governing organizations: as such they will eventually become wholly responsible for their internal leadership and development, and for their creative, management and employment policies.

52. As autonomous organisations, the institutions would receive their funding from the state in the form of grants. These grants would be negotiated periodically for specified cultural objectives, programmes and projects, and form only a part (albeit a major part) of the income raised by the institutions themselves from a variety of sources. This decisive shift in policy, and in the relationship between the Ministry and the major cultural institutions, would make it possible for the first time to identify the public funds invested in them with creative production, projects and services to audiences, instead of the salaries, infrastructure and operating deficits of the present inadequately subsidised state-run enterprises. As part of a new national cultural employment strategy, Parliament should allow the institutions to bring in more flexible employment practices and reform the system of contracts that is currently mandatory for state theatres.

53. The Examiners believe that, in an emerging market economy, the national institutions should remain at the heart of national cultural policy and that independent status can only benefit their long-term future. Independence from the Ministry will encourage other potential funders and sponsors, and open the way for the general public to organize in due course voluntary networks supporting the work of individual institutions.

54. This transformation will take time and determination (and we repeat that it must not be rushed) but we are confident that it can be introduced through progressive exposure to international examples supported by high quality cultural management training programmes. We emphasise that it is only feasible if the level of state grants effectively guarantees the institutions' new independent status by remaining sufficient to support their cultural objectives.

The state's responsibility to artists

55. In the limited time available for our visit it was not possible for the Examiners to meet with artists who are working as individuals, or in groups outside the national structure of cultural institutions and networks, or with the artists' unions which we understand continue to play an important role in representing the interests of their members. Our evidence with regard to artists is thus provided mainly by the National Report which identifies the general problems created by poor working conditions and declining standards of living as well as a number of the specific difficulties confronting particular professional groups - composers, fine artists, and writers. Our meeting with senior members of staff at the Soros Foundation also assisted us by identifying the imaginative and practical steps the Foundation has taken to improve matters: these include an active dialogue with artists and a number of low-cost programmes tailored to their needs and aspirations.

56. It is important in one sense not to exaggerate the difference between artists in different fields of activity – they are all “economic beings” and in Moldova, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, more and more artists are set to become freelance workers outside the increasingly doubtful protection of state employment: but it is also important that any system of arts funding - at regional and local as well as at national level - should take into account essential differences in their patterns of work and professional career development.

57. In the performing arts, for example, dancers must be reckoned to have shorter performing lives than actors and instrumentalists and provision should be made accordingly to assist them to retrain at the appropriate time. In the fine arts and crafts, it is very often the first years after training that are the most difficult for young painters, sculptors, craftspeople etc. when they are establishing their professional working practice: consideration could therefore be given to assisting them as a specific category, for example with start-up grants or with low-cost, short-term accommodation, and expert help in promoting the sale of their work.

58. The Ministry makes a major commitment to the national institutions and to the education and training of artists. However, the Examiners were less clear about what other policies and practical measures the Ministry has adopted in order to achieve its stated aim of “ensuring favourable spiritual and material conditions for the free expression of artists' talents”. We understand that limited support is given to individual artists by purchasing or commissioning work from them; however, our impression is that the Ministry's understandable preoccupation with the problems of the national arts and heritage organisations in Chisinau does result in the relative neglect of non-institutional artistic practice and production and, more generally, of cultural life outside the capital city.

New activities and new ways of working

59. We recommend that, alongside the maintenance and protection of the state

institutions, the Ministry should find the means to establish and manage a regular programme of state funding that is specifically designed to encourage new artistic activities and new ways of working. This should include encouragement for multi-cultural and other projects and for artist-led initiatives such as small drama, dance and music groups, independent galleries etc. These were not part of the state sector in the past but are now struggling to emerge as an important facet of cultural life in civil society. We recommend that similar funding programmes should be introduced at the regional as well as national level, perhaps taking particular account of the potential for linking investment in culture to economic development through tourism. If new money cannot be found such programmes should be introduced within existing budgets. The Ministry should begin to support, monitor and evaluate new activities in a systematic way, and work to ensure that the legislative framework and taxation system are adjusted to support them, or at least do not penalise them.

60. We recognise that democratically elected public authorities do sometimes find it harder to justify support for individual artists than for cultural institutions for the reason that it may be more difficult to identify a demonstrable public benefit. However, there are numerous ways of harnessing an artist's distinctive creativity, for example in the context of projects involving specific communities, that are entirely consistent with the general principle that artists, like organisations, are remunerated from public money in order to achieve a public result. What is important to appreciate above all is the creative contribution that artists of all kinds can offer in solving Moldova's current difficulties, and in building a new society and a dynamic and prosperous future. An objective picture of specific needs and opportunities can be built up, sector by sector, and appropriate systems and methods of funding can be developed, that are transparent, equitable and accountable.

Making a commitment to artists

61. What then should the Ministry do, in addition to its commitment to the state education and training system and the major national cultural institutions, to support professional artistic activity of all kinds? We recommend the following broad approach: the Ministry should:

- ❑ Affirm the value of, and national commitment to, individual as well as group and institutional artistic activity
- ❑ Seek a national and open dialogue with artists, not just with their unions, building on the experience already gained by the Soros Foundation Moldova.
- ❑ This dialogue could be organised on a County by County basis in order to ensure the involvement and cooperation of the Judets and Municipalities in developing and monitoring appropriate regional and local strategies
- ❑ The inclusion of such strategies in regional and local cultural development policies as well as in national cultural policy is of particular importance, and must take account of the situation of artists and craftspeople in rural areas as well as in the towns

- Develop a medium-term national strategy, in partnership with the Judets and, if possible, the Soros Foundation, in order to identify and respond to the distinct needs of different kinds of creative practice
- Work in partnership with the Judets to support the development of local independent galleries, promotional networks and touring exhibition programmes
- Work with the Judets to encourage amateur participation, and especially the participation of young people, in a wide range of cultural activities of their choice
- Develop targeted programmes of project funding, to be made available annually by open competition, aimed at supporting artist-led initiatives
- Involve artists in peer group assessment of grant applications
- Institute a system of project evaluation and programme review
- Seek changes to tax regulations in order to reflect a sympathetic understanding of the variable earning patterns of freelance artists
- Support international exchanges for individual artists and independent groups of artists
- Support national in-service training schemes geared to the economic and employment needs of artists and independent groups

Arts education and professional training

62. In addition to supporting the national arts and heritage institutions, the Ministry makes a major contribution to creativity through its direct responsibility for a remarkable and intensive system of professional arts training embracing fine art, music, choreography and popular arts. The system is adapted from soviet practice and is based on the early identification of gifted children and their selection for a progressively specialised education in music schools and lycees, and their subsequent training at specialist colleges and universities. In the case of music training the process may extend to 20 years, and almost as long in the fine arts. Within this system, the Ministry of Culture is directly responsible for specialist training and the Ministry of Education for general education.

63. The system makes provision for several hundred students and delivers a professional elite of remarkable calibre. As we were able to witness in the field of music, the results of the Ministry's investment can be most impressive. The difficulties experienced by the education and training establishments at the present time mirror those of the national cultural institutions and we were also informed that it is difficult for Moldova to get access to European funding for professional arts training except, on occasion, in cooperation with Romania.

64. At some point in the future the difficult issue of matching the numbers of students in training to the available employment market will need to be faced. In the meantime we recommend that the opportunities available to staff and students to take part in international exchanges should be significantly increased: Moldova will have much to contribute to these exchanges but their main thrust should be to raise awareness in the country itself of the rapid changes taking place in artistic practice across Europe, not least as a result of new technologies, and of the consequent need for national education and training provision to be kept under constant review.

65. At several points in our report, we refer to the importance of training as a key strategy for success in the development of cultural policy and in the management of change. In addition to vocational education and training we regard the provision of in-service training of all kinds, for artists and managers in every cultural discipline, as especially important in a time of rapid change and, as part of this, the opportunity to travel abroad. In a free market system, there will be a premium on creativity, innovation and diversity: leadership as well as management skills are needed and both can be developed through training. We recommend that the Ministry establish a special task force to report on future vocational and in-service training needs in all areas of its responsibility and to make recommendations.

PROTECTING THE NATIONAL HERITAGE

Museums and heritage protection

66. As the National Report makes evident there are particular benefits to be gained from a nationally integrated policy for Museums and Heritage. Ensuring protection and restoration services, improving public access and education facilities, developing information technology and publications, promoting scientific and managerial standards and staff training, maximising compatible economic development particularly in the field of tourism, increasing extra-budgetary funds, and avoiding the fragmentation or duplication of scarce resources are all paramount considerations.

67. The Examiners were surprised to learn that the Moldovan Museums Association is in abeyance apparently because the membership cannot afford to meet: we believe this to be a false economy and would urge the Judets (County Councils) and the Municipalities to make it possible for their staff to take part, and the national museums to contribute their time and expertise as generously as possible, in order to make the Association a success. Everything should also be done to encourage the formation of NGOs who can begin to harness public interest and voluntary support for the work of individual museums or other heritage agencies not only in Chisinau but in all parts of the country.

Folklore and traditional crafts

68. The National Centre for Popular Culture has an important role to play in promoting the state's commitment to protect Moldova's rich and diverse traditions of popular and rural culture, to establish favourable working conditions, to develop professional training, to act as a national coordinator and catalyst, and to promote any necessary legislation. The National Report makes a number of recommendations, suggesting that these functions need to become more effective at both national and County levels.

69. The Examiners saw no evidence on the ground to suggest that a strategic approach is yet being adopted to the protection, development and promotion of popular culture and, in particular, of local craft skills and traditions, for example in such fields as textiles, ceramics and architecture. By some paradox these appear to be all but invisible, in spite

of their intrinsic merits, at the very moment when they could begin to play a significant role in the development of sustainable employment and cultural tourism strategies at a local level.

70. The detailed planning and infrastructure development that will be needed to implement an integrated strategy of this kind represents a major task for the Judets and Municipalities working with local people and with guidance from the Ministry. As part of such a strategy, we recommend that consideration be given to revitalising cultural centres in rural areas: the centres would be responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of local people, encourage community action and voluntary initiative, and provide new focal points where cultural and community development can be linked to local programmes of economic regeneration.

CULTURAL POLICY AND THE REGIONS

Regional and local authorities

Regional and local authorities should be given the responsibility to establish comprehensive cultural strategies linked to their programmes of planning, economic, social and educational development. *In From the Margins*

71. We were able to hold brief discussions with elected members and senior officials responsible for culture in the Municipality of Chisinau, in the Judets (Counties) of Cahul, Taraclia and Orhei, and in the autonomous region of Gagauzia. Brief as these visits were they gave a vivid impression of the rich diversity of traditions, nationalities, languages and cultures to be found side by side in Moldova and, in particular, those of the Gagauz and Bulgarian communities which were established in Bessarabia in Tsarist times.

72. In reforming Moldova's local government structure, it was always anticipated that the Judets and the local Municipalities would be given devolved responsibilities for culture in each area of the country. The responsibilities that have now been decentralised include the staffing, management and upkeep of very substantial networks of local libraries and cultural centres - approximately one library and one cultural centre per 2000 population - and local museums, monuments and heritage sites. The local authorities also have the task of supporting the traditional crafts and the several thousand amateur music and dance groups for which Moldova was famous throughout the Soviet Union.

73. Our impression is that it is solely the preservation of these existing networks and programmes which currently constitute what the Judets and Municipalities understand by cultural policy, and we detected no interest in the possibility of radical change, rationalisation or development unless the economy improves: in one Judet we were told that they could do little more than redistribute the budget to the municipal authorities in their county.

74. The overall result of decentralisation to date therefore appears to be the replication at regional and local level of the very same problems that have been identified elsewhere in

this report in relation to the Ministry's strategies of continuity, and protecting for the future. The legislative and structural reforms in local government administration have been put in place but no-one appears to be asking what new policies are needed and how the new structures should deliver them.

75. We accept that the current difficulties at every level in the system are formidable: for example, salaries in the cultural sector are not only minimal but in some cases up to nine months in arrears; buildings are in disrepair, equipment is not being renewed, and information technology is not readily available; a market economy is not in place, many people live in poverty and do not have the disposable income to allow them to become regular purchasers of cultural goods and services. In urging the Judets to adopt a positive approach to change, it is also important to acknowledge that, whatever new needs are waiting to be identified, people continue to depend at present on the existing networks for their access to basic services however restricted these may be.

76. As to the Judets and Municipalities themselves, we understand that it will take many years to establish a confident tradition of democratic local self-government in Moldova, as it will in other Eastern European countries; elected members and officials in the new regional and local administrations may not always be well prepared for their new responsibilities. This should not be taken as a criticism of dedicated people working for their communities in difficult and bewildering circumstances but rather as a clear indication of the need for vigorous and well-coordinated national training programmes particularly in leadership skills and the management of change.

The need for cultural policy at the regional level

77. The Examiners believe that, since fundamental change is inevitable, it is better that the local authorities should prepare for it now and manage it positively, in spite of all present difficulties, than risk being unprepared and overwhelmed by it in due course. We suggest that the process of formulating forward-looking regional and local cultural policies can indeed help to find the answers to some fundamental questions that need to be asked sooner rather than later. For example,

- What is the role of a cultural centre in a changing society?
- Are new kinds of multi-functional institution needed?
- What is the role of museums in meeting local community needs in the 21st century? What are the links between the heritage, the countryside, and cultural activities in a particular region and the economic potential to develop cultural tourism?
- In what other ways can cultural, economic and social development support each other?
- What are the particular cultural needs and aspirations of young people?
- What new forms of artistic practice need to be encouraged alongside more traditional ones?
- What contribution can the traditions of cultural and linguistic diversity in the regions make to the new Moldova?

78. We were encouraged to find evidence that such questions are beginning to be asked, for example: in Chisinau, which is addressing the role of culture in promoting social cohesion in the urban environment in relation to young people; in Orhei, in relation to its exceptional heritage sites and countryside and the potential to develop cultural tourism; in Komrat, where the museum is providing an important focal point for the culture and history of the Gagauz people right up to the present day; in Taraclia, the newest and smallest of the Judets, where 66% of the population are Bulgarian, 27 other nationalities are resident, and at least four languages are spoken and taught.

79. In Cahul, which has some 20 resident nationalities, the theatre was destroyed by an earthquake and there is no prospect of its early restoration; but the drama company - comprising 17 actors out of a total workforce of 55 - now tours its productions to the villages instead, including Romanian speaking villages in the Ukraine. In Taraclia the Examiners took part in a discussion with students at the Teacher Training College who quickly convinced us that Moldova's rising generation are already looking with realism as well as optimism well beyond the country's current problems.

80. In brief, what is missing is not the potential for a rich and diverse cultural life in the regions, but a framework of cultural policy systematically developed by the Judets through the democratic process, area by area, through consultation and discussion with the Ministry and the Municipalities, with all the cultural interests and with local people in each part of the country, aimed at identifying local needs and aspirations, setting objectives and priorities based on quality and sustainability, and looking three to five years ahead. We recommend that the Ministry should take the lead in developing regional and local cultural policies, perhaps by working with one or two Judets and their Municipalities in the first instance in order to establish effective models and show the way forward.

Decentralisation and shared responsibilities

81. A further aspect of decentralisation is the relationship between the state cultural institutions based in Chisinau and the rest of the country. We understand that, in soviet times, a regional touring network existed to facilitate the distribution of work created by the national institutions, but this no longer functions because of the collapse of the economy, the breakdown in the transport and building infrastructures, and the inability of audiences to make any significant contribution to costs through the box office.

82. In our view there are serious dangers for cultural policy now and in the future if the state institutions become isolated from audiences in the regions, and if those audiences find themselves disenfranchised from professional activities of high quality that they help to maintain through their taxes. We therefore recommend that a study be undertaken to see whether some regular touring of theatre productions, concerts and exhibitions can be reinstated, even if it is only on a limited scale at first. This should be undertaken on the basis of shared responsibility and co-funding between the Ministry and the Judets.

83. We see a more general danger in the present approach to decentralisation in the

field of culture if too sharp a distinction is made between the responsibilities (and budgets) of the Ministry and the Judets. A touring network is only one example where an acceptance of joint responsibility may be needed in order to develop a relationship based on cultural policy and agreed objectives rather than financial and administrative expediency. It may be objected that the Judets and Municipalities are independent, democratically elected authorities and that once an agreement has been made to decentralise certain duties and responsibilities to them the Ministry should leave them to their work. But that flatly contradicts the paramount need for national cultural policy to be articulated, coordinated and developed at the regional and local as well as at the national level.

84. We see a continuing need for the Judets to work very closely with the Ministry in developing cultural policies that reflect and respond to regional needs and differences, ensure the integration of culture in other areas of regional development, and fully involve the local municipalities in the twin processes of policy formulation and review. Where necessary, the practice of joint funding by the Ministry and the Judets should not be ruled out. We appreciate the Ministry cannot impose policy on the counties and municipalities but we note from the National Report that it has powers to link cultural strategies at the regional and local level to economic, social and educational development programmes, and to coordinate and stimulate activities in the regions: we urge the Ministry to do so.

INTERNATIONAL LINKS

National isolation and European integration

85. In the summer of 1991, many European countries were slow to recognise Moldova's independent statehood. This factor, together with the severity of the country's subsequent internal difficulties, has contributed to a longer period of relative isolation from the rest of Europe than in some of the former soviet republics, for example the Baltic States. Remarkably in all the circumstances culture has already begun to play an important part in breaking down Moldova's isolation as the country seeks to achieve a greater integration in the wider European community. Moldova joined UNESCO in 1993 and became a signatory to the European Cultural Convention in 1994. Moldova is also a full member of *l'Agence de la Francophonie*

86. There are naturally close cultural links with Romania (whose annual cooperation programme with Moldova includes heritage restoration, support for performing arts including theatre equipment, supplies of books for public libraries and musical instruments) and it is to be hoped that these will increase in future. It is also to be hoped that the renewal of Moldova's cultural accord with neighbouring Ukraine will not be long delayed.

87. Recently, Moldova has become a most active participant in the Council of Europe's MOSAIC project. Within this framework, Moldovan cultural policy makers and administrators have taken part in multilateral seminars on the funding and sponsorship of culture, working conditions for artists and cultural diversity. They have also been invited to the national debate on cultural policy in Romania held in Bucharest in September 2000. These meetings gave them the opportunity to develop links, exchange information and share experiences with their colleagues from the other countries participating in the MOSAIC project (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Slovenia and "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"). In addition, several publications on cultural policy have been translated in the Moldovan (that is to say Romanian) language in order to foster a broader dissemination throughout the country. The MOSAIC project will end at the end of 2001; nevertheless it might be possible to follow it up with the development of activities more specifically focused on local needs, such as workshops at a national level, training sessions for cultural administrators or managers, or activities supporting the development of civil society.

88. Like the Council of Europe, the European Cultural Foundation promotes cultural and educational activities and research "of a multinational nature and of a European character". From 1997, the Foundation began to encourage projects originating in the Baltic Region and in South East Europe. It aims to develop a rapprochement between artists, governments and NGOs and organised conferences and discussions in Romania in July 2000 and in Bulgaria in January 2001. We were encouraged to learn that the Foundation hopes to establish a representative committee in Moldova in 2001.

89. We have referred elsewhere in this report to the good work of the Moldovan government *Department of National Relations and the Functioning of Languages* which has an important external as well as internal brief with regard to Moldova's multi-ethnic and multi-lingual population. We feel that it would be a natural progression from the MOSAIC programme for the Department and the Ministry to work together in contributing Moldova's experience to the international debate that has been stimulated by the publication of the Council of Europe's *Transversal Study on the Theme of Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity*.

90. The Moldovan National Opera and Ballet Companies have become successful cultural ambassadors in Western Europe: the Philharmonic is keen to follow suit and we hope will be encouraged to do so. The Soros Foundation has supported a number of influential projects involving international exchanges. For example, the Foundation invited choreographers from other European countries to lead workshops in Moldova and this initiative led to a successful festival of contemporary dance in Chisinau and to the formation of an independent Moldovan contemporary dance group. These are all valuable bridge-building activities but we feel that the time has come for the authorities to adopt a more coordinated and pro-active approach to the development of international cultural exchange programmes at the institutional and at the individual level; these programmes should involve cultural managers as well as artists.

91. In general, it is important that when the newly independent states of Eastern and Central Europe are seeking alternative policies, points of comparison and partners for cultural exchange they should not look exclusively to Western Europe but continue to share experience and ideas among themselves which has been a prime objective of the MOSAIC programme. One idea that we suggest merits investigation is the setting up of a small independent Cultural Observatory in Moldova, as one of a network of similar organizations in other countries who have been sharing their experience through their participation in the MOSAIC programme.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL LIFE

NGO development

We are at the stage when a more active involvement of the third sector in the life of society becomes more concrete and diverse.
President Lucinschi in Cartea Alba

92. Delegates from some 120 Moldovan NGOs, together with representatives of the government, foreign embassies and international organisations took part in the second Forum of NGOs held in Chisinau in November 1999. The NGOs taking part represented a broad field of activities and issues including local public administration, the economy, youth, gender, education, human rights, ecology and mass media. In his welcoming address, President Lucinschi welcomed the recent growth and evolution of NGOs in Moldova and their catalytic role in finding solutions to the country's multiple problems. The Forum itself provides an important platform for the voluntary sector by focussing on the following common objectives:

- Strengthening partnership between the state, the economy and civil society
- Identification and establishment of priorities in the voluntary sector
- Development of a strategy for participation in the settlement of community problems
- Monitoring of NGO achievements, promotion of the voluntary sector in society

93. The Examiners are impressed by this evidence of a developing partnership between the public and voluntary sectors in Moldova at both national and local level. However, the list of organisations represented at the forum suggests that the opportunity for such partnerships in the field of culture has been slower to develop than in other sectors and may consequently need more positive encouragement from the Ministry and the Judets and Municipalities in order to realise its undoubted potential. The importance of voluntary action in support of cultural activity of all kinds, and of effective networking between related NGOs, needs to be emphasised and to become an integral feature of cultural policy at every level.

94. At present, we suspect there will be a tendency among the national and regional authorities to view the important issue of participation in one of two ways: either as public attendance at professional events or as involvement in professionally led traditional music and dance activities. The pattern of amateur cultural activities that is common in western Europe, motivated and organized around the enthusiasm of small groups in the community which are so important in the development of civil society, relates to concepts of work and leisure that belong to altogether different social, cultural and political traditions and conditions. In Moldova's present economic situation there is little or no market for cultural goods and services, very few people have disposable income and audience numbers have declined. Nonetheless active participation through

voluntary initiatives in the community need to be given positive encouragement.

95. Looking to the future, it is inevitable that in Moldova, as in other Eastern European countries, culture will increasingly have to compete for people's attention and involvement in entirely new ways and will rely ultimately on their ability to create and sustain their own opportunities. As a market economy takes root, people in general will come to expect multiple choices in the ways in which they spend their leisure time and their disposable income: and this is especially true among young people. As a result, when the public authorities are no longer the principal providers and managers of cultural activities as they have been in the past, they will need to adapt and change their thinking in order to respond flexibly to many new demands for financial support as well as for new types of facilities and activities: they will need to be very clear about the framework of policy that will guide their response.

Culture and open society: the Soros Foundation in Moldova

96. The Soros Foundations are a network of independent non-governmental organisations established and supported by the financier and philanthropist George Soros to foster the development of open societies, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe and the countries of the former Soviet Union. The Soros Foundations are helping to build the infrastructure and institutions necessary for open societies by supporting a broad array of programmes in education, media and communications, human rights and humanitarian aid, science and medicine, arts and culture, economic restructuring, public administration and legal reform.

97. The Soros concept of the open society is based on the recognition that people act on imperfect knowledge and nobody is in possession of the ultimate truth. Unlike closed societies dominated by the state, open societies are characterised by a reliance on the rule of law, the existence of a democratically elected government, a diverse and vigorous civil society, respect for minorities and minority opinions, and a free market economy. Whereas a closed society expends most of its energies in preserving the existing order, an open society takes law and respect for the rights of others as its starting point and creates progress and prosperity from that base.

98. Like its counterparts in other countries, the programmes and projects supported by the Soros Foundation in Moldova embrace many of the key sectors in national life. In addition, the Open Society Institute in Budapest promotes a regional programme that includes cultural policy components aimed at supporting the development and implementation of different models for cultural action, and an autonomous and innovative arts sector. All Soros programmes typically emphasise projects that cross borders, and the deployment of new technologies in developing new ways of working.

Recent Soros programmes and projects in Moldova

99. In 1999, the Arts and Culture Programme of the Soros Foundation Moldova supported projects in theatre, literature, experimental music, contemporary dance and choreography, and the visual arts. Projects regarding the development of cultural and

artistic management, arts education, and the modernisation of teaching resources at the State University of Arts were given special consideration. The Soros Centre for Contemporary Art in Chisinau encourages the development of an active independent NGO network as well as organising an important annual programme of exhibitions, workshops, summer camps and grants for artists and maintaining a public archive and library of books and periodicals. The Foundation's characteristic working method is to consult with specific interest groups, analyse their needs and then target specific assistance in the form of project funding.

100. In the field of dance, for example, the Foundation invited choreographers from other European countries to lead workshops in Moldova an initiative that led to a successful festival of contemporary dance in Chisinau and the formation of an independent Moldovan contemporary dance group. In 2000, consultation with the national museums produced an analysis of major difficulties at regional as well as national level, such as; the incomplete nature of the information held about museum collections; skills deficits in visitor management and museum education; and the acute shortage of catalogues, promotional materials and information technology: this led to an initiative jointly funded by Soros Foundation Moldova and the Electronic Publishing programme of the Open Society Institute Budapest. In the fine arts, a project is in preparation for technical improvements at the Musée des Arts Plastiques. Applications from individual artists are considered by independent experts and bursaries are available that enable artists to work on a project for a year.

101. We are in no doubt that the work of the Soros Foundation is of the first importance for the development of cultural policy in Moldova today through its ability to make independent decisions, to initiate programmes which the public authorities may currently be unable or unwilling to introduce and, no less important, to work in partnership with the public authorities, artists and cultural managers on programmes and projects that confront the problems of transition, and contribute to policy development at local, national and international level.

102. However it is not the function of the Foundation to become a substitute for the public authorities nor does it have the resources to do so. It appeared to the Examiners that while the Foundation is demonstrating in exemplary fashion the approach needed to encourage cultural innovation, new arts projects and new ways of working, such essential components of cultural policy do not yet feature as priority objectives at the Ministry or in the Judets. In our opinion the Ministry in particular should seek to be a more regular, active and visible partner with the Soros Foundation of Moldova. In this way, human and financial resources will be optimised and the cultural life of the country will benefit accordingly. Furthermore, the Ministry itself will enhance both its credibility with artists and public perception of its openness to new ideas.

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES

As the cultural industries assume enormous economic importance there is an inevitable tension between primarily cultural goals and the logic of the market-place, between commercial interests and the desire for content that reflects diversity. UNESCO Our Creative Diversity

The media

103. The role of the media, both audio-visual and the press, as cultural communication, is decisive and needs to be developed in consultation with the cultural institutions, NGOs, and artists. One of the media's main tasks is to broadcast information and understanding about the heritage, the arts and cultural projects and policy development: in this way the media can fulfil an important function as an indicator of cultural diversity and as a catalyst of civil society. In Moldova, the technologies of communication have still to be developed; however, a minimal investment in this area would make an incalculable contribution in the field of culture and in community life in general.

Moldova TV

104. Moldova's national television (MTV) is 40 years old. At present it is a state-run company regulated by a Parliamentary Commission but legislation is in hand to transfer ownership from the state to a public corporation. MTV's brief is to be an intermediary between the state and the citizen and to be a mirror of society that is accessible to and understood by all. It has to attempt this on a budget that makes possible only 4 hours transmission a day supplemented by sponsored programmes. At present it is considered impractical to introduce a licence fee in Moldova as a means of augmenting its budget. For the time being MTV is heavily outgunned by the principal Romanian and Russian networks broadcasting from outside the country. The National Report expresses concern that it is the Russian language networks that are dominating the media.

105. Given the operating constraints it is notable that 40-50% of MTV's current output is described as broadly cultural. Each day there is a programme to promote the correct use of the Romanian language and MTV also broadcasts in Russian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Ukrainian. There are even 10 minutes in French supported by the Alliance Française and the French embassy. For a detailed analysis of the media in Moldova readers are referred to *Moldova: Media in Transition*: Hugh Poulton Article 19. 1999, produced with the assistance of the Independent Journalism Centre in Chisinau.

The Book Sector

106. The main point impressed upon us during our visit was the continuing shortage of books of all kinds available to public libraries and educational establishments, and especially books in the Moldovan (that is to say Romanian) language. In addressing this need it is important that schemes of assistance should be developed and made available by the Ministry with the aim of encouraging private publishers to undertake particular projects.

107. For a full picture of the current situation readers are referred to the *Review of national book policy in Moldova* carried out by Jean Richard under the Council of Europe Electronic Publishing, Books and Archives Project, 2000. Suffice it to highlight the following principal recommendations in the Review:

- Develop a national Book Policy for all branches of the book sector, to be incorporated in the Book Act and harmonised with other relevant legislation.
- Set up a National Book Centre, answerable to the Ministry of Culture and comprising representatives of all the public and private bodies concerned with books, to help prepare the Book Act and to monitor and supervise its implementation.

108. We also draw attention to the following statement in the Review

The Soros Foundation of Moldova is one of the leading players in the book sector and covers all aspects from literary creation and publishing to distribution and libraries. Taken together, its programmes offer a coherent framework for a national book policy. *Review of national book policy in Moldova*: Jean Richard: Electronic Publishing, Books and Archives Project: Council of Europe 2000

Cinema

109. For nine months of the year Moldova has an ideal climate for film production as well as numerous attractive locations : but the internationally famous studios in Chisinau - Moldova Film - which once employed as many as 1800 people and were capable of making up to nine feature films a year currently receive no state finance and have virtually ground to a halt. Even the invaluable film archive is in danger because of inadequate conservation measures and poor storage conditions. The film distribution network is also close to collapse, with just 15 cinemas remaining of which 8 are in Chisinau: all 15 now have low average attendances and are up for privatisation.

110. As to the studios, we were informed that they have the potential to attract international investment but the previous government apparently could not reach agreement either to privatise them or even to allow them to be leased out on favourable terms. The Examiners do not pretend to understand the politics of this paradoxical situation, in which the Ministry of Culture appears to have no voice, leaving a creative industry which clearly has a number of competitive advantages in its favour, and an evident ability to pay its way, out on a limb. What is all too clear is the absence of a national policy for cinema in Moldova in all its aspects, and the prospect of a further and terminal decline if action is not urgently taken for the future.

111. Given the large and growing importance of the cultural industries to both economic and cultural policy we recommend that the government should begin to take a more integrated approach to their development and that the Ministry of Culture should be mandated to establish a special task force to produce a coordinated policy in this area, in consultation with the other responsible Ministries and Departments of State, and to make recommendations.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Culture and society: sustainable development

1. The government should take the opportunity presented by the Review to restate its commitment to culture as a dynamic agent of social change and cohesion, of economic regeneration and development, and launch a national debate on the future of culture policy at national, regional and local level.
2. The government should establish beyond doubt that the Ministry of Culture is the entity within the state that is expected to function as the strategist of cultural development and national coordination, in order to ensure that culture plays a full part in every aspect of Moldova's reconstruction and development.
3. The government should begin to take a more integrated approach to the development of the cultural industries. The Ministry of Culture should be mandated to establish a special task force that will produce a coordinated policy in this area, in consultation with the other responsible Ministries and Departments of State, and make recommendations.

Issues for cultural policy

4. The National Report should carry a preface stating the government's commitment to culture and include an articulation and assessment of the aims, objectives, priorities and achievements of the Ministry of Culture since 1989
5. Through legislation and the national budget the government should take urgent steps to promote an ambitious and forward-looking cultural policy, including
 - a. a strategic view of capital as well as revenue funding requirements
 - b. new public money to protect and modernise the public institutions and networks
 - c. a significant real terms increase in the Ministry's budget
 - d. fiscal measures targeted to the specific needs of artists and cultural institutions in a market economy
 - e. practical incentives in the form of tax breaks to encourage business sponsors and individual donors.
 - f. in-service training provision, particularly in project management, leadership skills, and the management of change
6. The Ministry should be mandated to develop a comprehensive and forward-looking cultural policy
7. The Ministry should pursue a nationally integrated policy for Museums and Historic Monuments

8. The Ministry should review its present arrangements for policy coordination and review, in order to accommodate new policy-oriented tasks and ensure that culture is consistently identified and promoted as an integral part of the government's programme of social, economic and administrative development.

9. The Ministry should consider setting up a Cultural Policy Unit, within existing budgets and staffing levels, to assist in focusing on new tasks and new ways of working.

Cultural diversity

10. The multi-national and multi-lingual composition of the Moldovan population, embracing as it does some 100 nationalities, should be promoted as a self-evident cultural strength.

11. The Ministry and the *Department of National Relations and the Functioning of Languages* should be encouraged to collaborate in contributing Moldova's experience to the international debate that has been stimulated by the publication of the Council of Europe's *Transversal Study on the Theme of Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity*.

Plurality of objectives for cultural policy

12. The national institutions should remain at the heart of cultural policy. The Examiners support the case for the state to invest more not less in them in order to secure their future.

13. The national institutions should be encouraged (progressively but not precipitately) to become autonomous and self-governing, and wholly responsible for their internal leadership and development, and for their creative, management and employment policies. As part of this process, Parliament should allow the reform of the contract system currently in use in the state theatres and more flexible employment practices should be introduced.

14. The public investment in cultural institutions should preferably take the form of grants that are identified with creative production, and services to audiences. However, the level of state grants must be sufficient to guarantee the ability of the institutions to achieve their cultural objectives.

15. Alongside the maintenance and protection of the state institutions, the Ministry should find the means to establish a regular programme of funding specifically designed to encourage new projects and activities, and artist-led initiatives - including small drama, dance and music groups, independent galleries and the like. The Ministry should do this if necessary within existing budget levels.

16. The Ministry should affirm the value of, and national commitment to, individual as well as group and institutional artistic activity.

17. The arts funding system at national, regional and local levels should take into account essential differences in artists' patterns of work and professional career development.

18. The Ministry should regard the Soros Foundation Moldova as a key partner in developing new and more diversified ways of working with and for artists who are not employed in the major state institutions.

19. The Ministry should take steps to support, monitor and evaluate new activities in a systematic way, and to ensure that the legislative framework and taxation system are adjusted to support them, or at least do not penalise them.

20. The Ministry should establish a special task force which will report on future vocational and in-service training needs in all areas of its responsibility and make recommendations.

21. The potential contribution of local craft skills and traditions as part of sustainable employment and cultural tourism strategies should be developed. Consideration should be given to revitalising cultural centres in rural areas to provide new focal points for their communities.

Decentralisation and deconcentration

22. The Ministry should have regard to maintaining an equity of national cultural provision in the regions as well as in Chisinau.

23. The Ministry should ensure the involvement and cooperation of the Judets and Municipalities in developing and monitoring appropriate regional and local cultural strategies: these should take into account the situation of artists and craftspeople in rural areas as well as in the towns.

24. The Ministry and the Judets (County Councils) should work together in developing radical cultural policies which reflect and respond to regional needs and differences, and fully involve the local municipalities in the twin processes of policy formulation and review.

25. The Ministry should coordinate and stimulate activities in the regions and use its powers to link cultural strategies at the regional and local level to economic, social and educational development programmes.

26. The Ministry should take the lead in developing regional and local cultural policies, perhaps working with one or two Judets in the first instance in order to establish effective models and show the way forward.

27. The Ministry should commission a study to see whether some regular touring (of concerts, theatre productions and exhibitions) can be reinstated on the basis of shared responsibility and co-funding between the Ministry and the Judets.

Partnership in civil society

28. The importance of voluntary action in support of cultural activity of all kinds and of effective networking between related NGOs needs to become an integral feature of cultural policy at every level.

29. The Ministry should work with the Judets to encourage amateur participation, and especially the participation of young people, in a wide range of cultural activities of their choice, and a plurality of voluntary action in support of cultural activities

International relations

30. The Moldovan authorities should adopt a coordinated approach to the development of international cultural exchange programmes at both the institutional and individual levels and involve cultural managers as well as artists in such programmes.

31. Following Moldova's active participation in the MOSAIC programme, consideration should be given to setting up a small independent Cultural Observatory in Moldova as one of a network of similar organizations in other countries in the region.

APPENDICES

List of contacts and interview partners

Meeting at the Ministry of Culture

M. Ghenadie Ciobanu, Minister
M. Andrei Lozovan, vice-Minister
M. Alexei Colibneac, Director, Department of Heritage and Fine Arts
Mme Silvia Cibotaru, Deputy Director, Department of Heritage and Fine Arts
Mme Leahu Rodica, Advisor to the Minister
M. Vlad Melnic, Director for Cultural Action
Mme Margareta Neamtu, Director, Department of Arts Training and staffing
M. Constantin Cheianu, Director, Department of Theatre, Music and Relations with the Artists' Unions
M. Ion Balteanu, President of the Crafts Union

Meeting at the National Museum

M. Nicolae Raileanu, Director of the National History Museum
M. Mihai Ursu, Director of the National Museum of Ethnography and Natural History
Mme Raisa Aculova, Director of the national Museum of Fine Arts

Meeting at the National Opera

Mme Svetlana Bivol, Director of the National Opera
M. Mihai Coretchi, Director of the Salle d'Orgue
M. Titus Jucov, Director of the Theatre des Marionettes
M. Vasile Stratulat, Deputy Director of the Palais National and "Moldova-concert"
M. Boris Focsa, Director of the "Luceafarul" Theatre
M. Veaceslav Madan, Director of the "A.P. Cekhov" Russian Theatre
M. Vitalie Caraus, Director of the "M. Eminescu" National Theatre
M. Ion-Gheorghe Svidchi, Deputy Director of the National Centre of the Art of the Circus

Meeting with the Prime Minister

S.E. Dumitru Braghis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Moldova

Meeting with the President of the Parliamentary Commission for Culture, Education and Mass Media

M. Gheorghe Duca, President of the Commission
M. Andrei Strimbeanu, vice-President of the Commission

Meeting at the Department of National Relations and Languages

M. Valeriu Culev, Deputy Director General
M. Theodore Magder

[List of contacts and interview partners continued]

Meeting with the Directors of the artistic training institutions

M.Vlad Burlea, Director of the "Stefan Neaga "College of Music

Mme Galina Buinovschi, Director of the "George Enescu" Lycee de Musique

Meeting at Comrat

M. Ilic Stoianov, vice-President of autonomous region of Gagaouzy

Mme Maria Balova, vice-President of the Gagaouz Assembly

Mme Alexandra Molla, Director of Culture

Meeting at Taraclia

M. Kiril Darmancev, Chairman of the County Council

M.Stepan Taniv, Director of Culture

Meeting at Cahul

M.Valeriu Papazov, vice- Chairman of the County Council

M.Nicolae Haheu, Director of Culture

M.Alexandru Turcanu, Artistic Director of the "B.P.Hasdeu" Musical Drama Theatre

Meeting at the Soros Foundation, Moldova

M. Victor Ursu, Executive Director

Ms. Victoria Miron, Program Coordinator, publishing, art and culture

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