



**INTERNATIONAL
CULTURAL
CENTRE**



Culture and development 20 years after the fall of communism in Europe

Kraków, 4th - 6th June 2009

the soul of democracy



Upon the invitation of the Council of Europe in the framework of its CultureWatchEurope initiative and the International Cultural Centre, Krakow, 50 researchers, practitioners and administrators in culture from 22 countries came together to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the first free parliamentary elections in postwar Poland and the collapse of Communism, which evoked the beginning of a series of historical changes that created an entirely new environment – among others – for culture. The conference, which enjoyed the patronage of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage of Poland and of the Mayor of Krakow, reviewed and discussed the developments of the past twenty years, and identified the major achievements in culture in countries which were within the communist bloc; acknowledged the common features and also the differences and divisions of circumstances.

There was a broad agreement that in spite of the momentous progress, large differences and imbalances remain. It was strongly voiced that culture and cultural policies must be used more systematically in the efforts to overcome the gaps in development and inequalities between the various regions of Europe.

Based on a detailed analysis of weaknesses and challenges, which served as a working document for the deliberations, the participants reflected upon what is necessary to stimulate progress, with due regard to the important differences and diversities of the various countries in Europe.

Participants discussed and agreed on the following key principles:

- Culture must be given a more central position in the policy and development strategies on every level: national, regional and to local authorities
- The ongoing development of cultural policies requires new guidelines and orientations, firmly based on the European principles of human rights, and drawing on independent research expertise and mechanisms
- The cultural needs, conditions of access and participation of all groups of citizens should be monitored and the findings used to determine cultural policy goals
- The processes of planning and implementing cultural policy decisions require a broad alliance of different sectors of society, ranging from artists and other cultural professionals as important agents of change and innovation, through other public sectors, the media, the business community and civil society organisations.
- Ways should be explored to ensure that global influences are used positively and constructively to enhance cultural policies and ensure their relevance.
- It is key for cultural operators and political bodies to recognise the importance of mobility and integration - in all directions across and beyond Europe.
- The implementation of cultural policy requires improved professional skills, in particular with regard to governance at all levels, and ensuring maximum transparency in decision-making.
- Investment in excellence is a key principle that requires special attention and actions.

These principles are addressed to all stakeholders, including cultural operators in all sectors: public, civic or private, and above all to public authorities at various levels, national, regional, local, and also international. They may function as points of reference in the activities of the CultureWatchEurope initiative of the Council of Europe. Towards achieving progress, the following topics were identified as warranting particular and timely action by the multiple stakeholders identified above:

- *Introducing and applying preferential visa policies and regulations*
- *Widespread provision of arts and heritage education*
- *Increased attention to and shared responsibility for the common -tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the nation, region or municipality*
- *Enhancing the convergence of action between public, independent and private bodies*
- *Monitoring cultural achievement in all sectors*
- *Dissemination of success stories in innovative cultural policies*