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

3rd COUNCIL OF EUROPE PLATFORM EXCHANGE
ON THE IMPACT OF DIGITIZATION ON CULTURE
Tallinn, 29-30 September 2016

For information and action

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Democratic Governance
Democratic Institutions and Governance Department

Introduction

In the framework of the Estonian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (May-November 2016), the Estonian Government hosted the 3rd Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitization in Tallinn on 29-30 September 2016. The event entitled "Culture 4D: Digitization, Data, Disruptions, Diversity" brought together some 200 policy makers, media practitioners, cultural/arts specialists, artists, researchers/students and representatives of civil society bodies. It was held in two consecutive sessions stretching over 1 ½ days at the Tallinn University. The Platform Exchange was meant to generate a fruitful exchange and identify challenges and opportunities related to (1) Big data in the cultural field and (2) means to empower and participate in digital culture, overcome cultural barriers and close digital gaps in society.

A short film has been produced that offers a vibrant insight in the nature of the Platform Exchange and promotes some of its highlights.

The conference website is available on the website of the University of Tallinn (www.tlu.ee/c4d) and linked to the Council of Europe's website (www.http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/digitisation/Default_en.asp).

Summary of debates

As for the first session, the Platform Exchange underlined specifically:

- The policy work towards creating a common market for digital cultural goods and services needs to be balanced with work towards using culture as a tool for building identities, both national as well as European.

- Europe needs much more public sector engagement with cultural big data in service of the common good. New institutional frameworks, functions and pan-European cooperation networks need to be developed.

- Public cultural institutions need to foster the digital commons, by institutions working together with the audience not only regarding the content, but also the regarding the vision for the future.

- The public have a right to be inscrutable, and not to have their behaviour predicted by algorithms. This should become the new policy goal.

- Best practices should be shared and guidelines drawn up for making algorithms for cultural mediation transparent to users.

- The logic, rationale and practices of international trade in cultural data and how these may affect the nature of the dominant information and cultural services need to be made more transparent.

- The algorithms used to create news automatically from Big data need to be transparent to the broader society.

- Content filtering by public institutions through Big data analytics should be primarily about enabling audiences to discover new content. Best practices should be developed in this regard, enabling people to discover content that they may want to know, but don't know about it yet.

- Both public and private institutions that manage cultural Big data should be called on to use open metadata standards and to share metadata. Dominant social media platforms are also archives of personal data, and their users need to be consulted on the use made of their data and have full access to these archives.

- Best practices need to be sought on how the different kinds of public and private cultural institutions could work together in ways beneficial for the public good (sharing API, data for academic analysis).

As for the second session, the Platform Exchange underlined specifically:

- A lack of cultural and digital skills may create divides – whilst both skills are important. Teaching media and information literacy and enhancing people's digital skills must be accompanied by enhancing their cultural skills.

- The digital gap impacts also the young: mere access to content without digital literacy skills is not sufficient. Critical information processing, analysis and creative self-realisation in the new media environment must become the target for all Internet users. A new teaching and learning paradigm must be developed on promoting technical computer skills only in combination with critical thinking so as to enable people to face the challenges posed by current technological and socio-political-economic trends. Therefore, critical Internet literacy needs to be established and incorporated to media and information literacy programmes.

- The enhancement of a culture of critical thinking is therefore key and may be forcefully enabled by creativity training, including through non-formal education.

- The digital era offers unseen opportunities for the inclusion of minorities, newcomers, migrants and refugees and for intercultural relations. However, meaningful projects with sustainable impact should include these target groups already in the design and planning of the activity.

- Media representation often perpetuates stereotypes and reinforces (positive or negative) self-image while reliable information on minorities, newcomers, refugees and migrants remains scarce. Digital initiatives, in combination with educational ones, may counterbalance this. Media and information literacy could also be about fighting radicalisation, spotting propaganda and deconstructing plot theories while providing tools for debunking stereotypes (about gender, migrants, minorities).

- Digital means should be widely used to unlock cultural identities and heritage, and allow stories to be told. Apps can be used for intercultural mediation. The full exploitation of digital means for empowering everyone, overcoming cultural barriers and contributing to societal inclusion is required.

- Digitization also produces disruptions in cultural works and professional careers. Globalization and compartmentalisation happen simultaneously. Partnerships between artists and businesses are key for culture and creativity, but carry risks since new professions and conditions of digital cultural production do not necessarily correspond to existing legal/policy frameworks any more. Small businesses fail to represent their interests and large businesses resist certain types of regulation. Work is needed on how to protect the workers that participate in the global digital creative industries value chain.

- A European Charter on the Internet of Citizens may be of interest that would bring together insights of Council of Europe Platform Exchanges on Culture and Digitisation as well as other relevant materials to enhance the existing Recommendation CM/Rec (2016)2 on the Internet of Citizens and its feasibility should be studied.

Next steps

Given the richness of ideas and proposals emanating from the Platform it would seem advisable to analyse them more in detail through a small expert working group (composition to be decided). A meeting could still take place in early December, possibly chaired by the Chair of the CDCPP.

The group could make proposals for consideration by the Bureau (through written consultations or at its next meeting) with a view to drawing up policy guidelines that could be encapsulated in a Committee of Ministers recommendation.

The possibility of drawing up also a European Charter on the Internet of Citizens could also be explored by the Secretariat. Interdepartmental consultations would be necessary before taking any decisions on it.

Action required

The Bureau is invited to:

➢ note that the 3rd Council of Europe Platform Exchange on Culture and Digitization was successfully held in Tallinn on 29-30 September 2016 and thank the Estonian authorities for hosting the event in the framework of the Estonian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe;
➢ agree on the setting up of a working party (and on its composition) entrusted with drawing up policy guidelines and

➢ request the Secretariat to further investigate the interest for and possibilities of a Council of Europe Charter on the Internet of Citizens.