



Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung
für Kultur und Medien

Ministers meeting – Revive Europe through culture

Frankfort book fair

Wednesday 11th October 2017

Translation of courtesy

This informal meeting is an invitation addressed to the European Ministers of Culture to discuss concrete initiatives to support the ambition of a “Citizens’ Europe” revived through culture. It is also an invitation to discuss how European policies can address the issues of artistic creativity and cultural diversity in the digital era.

I. Revive a “Citizens’ Europe” through culture.

- Europe as a space for creation and circulation of ideas

As Europe is facing a major crisis, culture and arts can contribute to bridging individuals and peoples, by fostering their involvement in cultural life and society.

We suggest a very open discussion on the initiatives that may be envisaged in this regard.

For example, artists and culture professionals’ mobility could be considered. Apart from being a single market, Europe is a privileged space for circulation of ideas, knowledge and creators. It would be interesting to discuss, in light of the existing schemes and identified needs in each member State, the launch of an “Erasmus for culture”, intended to promote mobility in the cultural sector, and integrated to Erasmus +.

The access to European culture in all its diversity, especially for young European citizens, may be considered. The “bonus cultura” that was developed in Italy may be used as an example for a similar initiative at the European scale.

Linguistic diversity, which is an extraordinary asset for Europe could also be addressed. The discussion may focus on the way European policies and funding programs take into account linguistic diversity, especially for translation.

- Cultural heritage as the core of our shared identity and future

The 2018 Year for cultural heritage is an opportunity to think about the way cultural heritage can contribute to restore the sense of common European identity, in its diversity and unity.

In this respect, a common set of European cultural works from every Member State may be agreed on, and become part of national education programs.

Since cultural heritage is fundamental for the history of humanity, it must be protected in Europe and worldwide. A suitable European mechanism may help efficiently to tackle illegal trafficking in cultural goods. The implementation of a policy framework aimed at protecting cultural heritage in crisis zones may also be considered.

II. Cultural issues at the core of European policies

- Ensure a favourable environment for copyright as a cornerstone of artistic creation's funding

As for the book and publishing sectors, European cultural and creative industries are illustrative of the exceptional creativity of the continent's artists and companies.

The fundamental principles of copyright law have efficiently ensured the compensation of creators.

The digital revolution led to the development of new economic models, practices, and new emerging actors.

These new practices' contribution is certainly positive. However, it raises issues in terms of a suitable economic, legal and competitive environment. We may also raise the question of these new actors' share in the funding of artistic production.

All creative sectors, from the book sector, and the press, to the audiovisual and theatre sectors, share the same concerns.

Hence the relevance of discussing together, in the context of the copyright law reform, what could be the strategy for the European Union to implement a favourable environment for creative industries' development in the digital era, and to ensure a fair compensation of creators.

Our discussion may concern the issue of value-gap between creators and on-line platforms as distributors; respect of the territoriality principle, which is inherent to copyright law; or the enshrinement of related rights applicable to press editors to recognize the fact that they create an additional economic value.

Finally, the discussion may concern, as in the context of the Frankfurt book fair, the level of ambition in terms of promoting access to books and reading at the European level.

- Promote in a comprehensive way a European environment favourable to artistic creation and cultural diversity

Although creation and diffusion of cultural products such as books, music, and cinema are central to European exchanges, they are not central to European policies.

Trade liberalisation, building of the internal market, taxation, framework for State Aids, financial support have all impacted the cultural sector, without having a strategy or ambition in this respect.

The digital revolution and subsequent emergence of new global economic actors make the situation even more precarious, and point out the need for a reconsideration of culture in the European policies.

In the field of international trade, cultural exception has enabled to promote cultural diversity. This topic must be discussed, in order to preserve cultural diversity in a context of digital revolution.

The competitive and fiscal framework must also be thoroughly analysed and adapted to the current digital practices of consumers and companies at the European and global level.

To ensure cultural diversity and tomorrow's European heritage, we must maintain fair rules and taxation.