

MANIFESTO ON CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ENLARGED EU AND ITS NEW NEIGHBOURS

This Manifesto was released at the Seminar "MOVING BORDERS: THE EU AND ITS NEW NEIGHBOURS", organised by the EUROPEAN CULTURAL FOUNDATION in cooperation with the VILLA DECIUS ASSOCIATION. It was held on 24-26 October 2003 in Villa Decius (Krakow, Poland) with the support of governmental and non-governmental participants from 21 European countries and in the presence of a representative of the EU Commission.

This seminar is part of the ECF action-line 'Enlargement of Minds'.

CONTEXT

On 1 May 2004, the European Union will take an unprecedented and historic step. Its greatest enlargement ever will have major repercussions, externally as much as internally. One of the challenges facing the enlarged European Union is to deepen and expand co-operation with its eastern neighbours. We believe that close integrative co-operation with Eastern Europe will strengthen democracy and solidarity, security and stability, and will facilitate economic development on our continent.

Cultural and educational cooperation across our common borders contributes to a European cultural space of shared values. Better communication and deeper collaboration are required, as well as new means and resources needed to address these challenges.

Expectations were expressed concerning clear European prospects for the countries concerned.

SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The enlarged EU and its new neighbours have to find ways of transforming new common challenges into benefits. The political will to achieve this objective – accompanied by sensitivity to regional and historical variations, which demand a variety of instruments of co-operation – needs to gather momentum. Common interests deserve real commitment from all sides. The evident importance of a strong civil society underlines the need for special efforts to invest in cultural and educational co-operation and exchange. With regard to new initiatives and measures for encouraging regional and cross-border cooperation in culture and education, the Commission's communications on "Wider Europe" and on "New Neighbourhood Instruments" provide a good basis for implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO VARIOUS STAKEHOLDERS

1. The European Union should show leadership in securing cultural and educational co-operation by providing the necessary mechanisms as well as financial support.
2. National Governments and EU Commission should facilitate trans-national (bilateral and multilateral) collaborative endeavours, creating legal, financial and operative frameworks to enable the European cultural space to flourish.
3. Regional and local authorities should develop specific 'bridging' and cooperation schemes in the fields of education and culture and also advocate for the needs of the region.
4. The independent sector should support and strengthen civil society on both sides of the new border and assist cross-border networking.
5. The Media should help to improve mutual understanding and contribute to an emerging pan-European public space by cooperating transnationally and within the region.

WE PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES FOR ENHANCING CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL AND MEDIA CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE EU AND ITS EASTERN NEIGHBOURS:

GENERAL PROPOSALS

- establish special EU budget lines in support of cultural and educational cooperation in order to prevent isolation
- integrate new EU neighbors in EU cultural and educational programmes
- support mobility across the new borders, and facilitate positive visa regulations
- take measures to strengthen civil society and to create an open space for mutual understanding and recognition
- create new instruments – such as a "European laboratory of cultural cooperation" – which can map, analyse, promote, and intensify cultural cooperation
- forge close cooperation between Ministries of Culture/Education and European and Foreign Affairs

ARTS AND CULTURE

- support/set up mobility schemes in order to stimulate mutual interest and cross-border cooperation; for example, study visits by cultural professionals, artists' residencies in Eastern European countries
- support the work of artists in Eastern European countries and their presence at major European artistic events
- establish (and extend existing) regional funds for cross-cultural cooperation
- foster EU support for European cultural networks and the integration of members from Eastern European countries
- support arts management training
- support restoration and the creative use of heritage sites in the border regions

EDUCATION

- support/launch special scholarship, internship and study programmes for students and young graduates from Eastern European countries
- support/launch European Studies departments and programmes in Eastern European Universities, as well as cooperation projects with EU Universities
- facilitate the training of representatives of local governments and of cultural and educational NGO's
- invest in educational reform in both the formal and non-formal sector
- support language teaching; stimulate cross-perspectives history teaching and learning; produce creative educational material and shareware, especially on multicultural issues

MEDIA

- extend/set up training and mobility schemes for young journalists and civil society actors
- monitor the independence of the media and freedom of expression
- increase the circulation of media products, making quality products mutually accessible