

# The Decisive Deal

Access to Culture, Access to Europe





# ACCESS TO CULTURE



**A fundamental right of all citizens**



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## Audience Participation Working Group

# Introduction

Culture and active participation in our community are the key elements that bind us together, giving Europe and citizenship its “soul.” The cultures of Europe’s citizens are an integral part of a process that will mark the shift from un-synchronized and sometimes schizophrenic national solutions to European solutions to the complex issues affecting our contemporary life.

By recognizing culture as one of the keystones of the European project, we can develop a new balance of power between the citizens and the European Union. Europe’s cultural diversity and the power of its cultural activity are invaluable resources and should form the engine that drives the engagement between Europe and its citizens.

What Europe needs is imagination and creativity and that is where art and artists come in. It is their responsibility to be proactive and to develop cultural links that question, challenge, and support the discussion on our collective future. Only by developing a thoughtful framework that supports and nourishes cultural collaborations can we stimulate communities’ self-respect, stimulate their knowledge about the other, and stimulate a consciousness of shared values. It is time we come together to reach a decisive deal for Europe, establishing a Europe of citizens, by citizens, for citizens!

Through the Access to Culture Platform, the Audience Participation/Cultural Component of Citizenship Working Group is striving to inspire citizens to exercise their cultural rights through active participation in the shaping of Europe. It is important that participation in culture is recognised as a fundamental right and a stepping stone to gaining political and social objectives such as creative societies, a strong educational system, flourishing cultural industries, intercultural dialogue and democracy. Active citizenship requires that all levels of policy making take citizens’ concerns into account.

The following articles discuss the role that culture play in citizenship across Europe and envision the mutual responsibility that culture and Europe bear towards one another as we move towards these historic 2014 European elections. We hope that these essays from various opinion-makers and civil-society leaders in Europe inspire you to actively participate in Europe and culture throughout 2014 and beyond. The essays contribute to the reflections and discussions taking part in the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe and

will serve as food for thought in the Berlin Conference 2014 and the new cycle of the European Parliament that will follow the May 2014 elections.

A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe, initiated by "A Soul for Europe", invites citizens to work together with their elected representatives in a collaborative work process towards a European Resolution on Culture for Values, Democracy and Citizenship. This text is included in this publication and the concepts from the various essays can be taken up in the process's post-election efforts.

The Access to Culture Platform and its partners the European House of Culture and the European Festivals Association, chair of the platform working group on Audience Participation, consider the publication the start of a series of articles and exchanges which will lead to more research and reflection on the topic.

In the frame of the 2014 European Elections, the Access to Culture Platform will present the publication in various public occasions and discuss its contents with the broader public during the whole year and beyond. Partnering with the 'Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe', the Access to Culture Platform is glad to position its work in a broader framework, and join forces with initiatives that work in this field to come all together to a better understanding of citizenship and its cultural dimension for the benefit of European citizens.

The Audience Participation Working Group would like to thank all authors and contributors to this publication.

Steve Green

## **2020: Towards a Cultural European Union**

I'm writing this in February 2014, perhaps not the most auspicious time to look forward to "Europe in 2020". Media headlines, commentators from right and left, opinion polls all lean in one direction. Trust and support for the European project, let alone the various EU institutions, is declining. It's faster in some countries than others, starting from different baselines, but inexorably downwards. In many countries the trust in the EU is often mirroring the decline in trust in national government.

May 2014 sees the periodic election for the European Parliament. It is the one opportunity where citizens can directly exercise their own views on EU affairs without the intermediary of national parliaments.

The view from February is profoundly worrying. It seems that the clear winner in the May 2014 elections will be an "alliance" of those who are not interested and won't bother to turn out to vote (probably the majority of citizens) and of those who oppose the EU (for markedly different reasons). "Don't care" and "don't like" are not firm foundations for the forthcoming years.

Here are a few of my hopes for 2020.

Let's be very clear: there is no turning back to 2007/8. We are not facing a few years of "austerity" and "re-balancing" and then everything will be back to "normal". Whatever those "golden days" were, they are not returning. Enabled by weak political oversight the European financial sector fuelled a debt overdrive. Sometimes in the public sector, sometimes in the private sector (that's you and me, or at least our neighbours). The inexorable logic of the economic zeitgeist meant we have already spent too much of the futures' money.

Culture, the arts, did well out of this "dash for growth". Public sector budgets for the arts expanded. Foundations were generous; box offices and sales grew year on year. We saw a significant increase in new cultural buildings, innovative renovations, more organisations supported, more opportunities, a significant increase in audience, in employment, in training, in consultants, in curators, in technicians, in training and academic courses and students.

February 2014. The brakes are on across most of Europe. The latest Eurobarometer poll points out that cultural participation is declining in most member states (although the scope of the poll raises more questions than it

answers). Creatives in all sectors are finding it harder to attract subsidy or investment or to earn a decent income. Jobs are temporary as we move to a freelance based workforce; there is a massive increase in interns, often unpaid. Residencies offer little or no financial rewards. Paradoxically and contra the Eurobarometer poll visitor numbers in many places are increasing as tourism keeps the cultural wheels turning but increasingly to the exclusion of the local residents. Surveys of cultural participation reinforce the view that those art forms most supported by public subsidy attract the higher income earners, higher educated members of society; the lower paid and with lower qualifications veer more towards the “commercial” arts. Film audiences, book sales, exhibition visitors seem stable, taking into account the occasional and unpredictable blockbuster from Skyfall to Fifty Shades of Grey.

Those at the super-top in each art form may be exempt: the global stars, those with dealers, back catalogues and agents with an entrée into the new global mega rich. These are the artists, in many art forms, who dominate the popular imagination and media. Politicians fall over themselves to be associated with them, at Davos, at awards ceremonies, at festivals and conferences. Let’s not be misled. Give due credit to their success but they are not representative of the cultural world. 95% of the songs on Spotify had fewer than 100 downloads in a year.

The arts today, the “cultural sector” is deeper and wider than traditional cultural policy frameworks allow or envisage. There is far more interaction between the taxpayer funded arenas and the commercial markets. Artists engage in more transversal activity, “the arts and social cohesion, arts and health, arts and climate change” etc. The cultural sector, or rather sectors, is resilient, and adapts to change. Sometimes rapidly for those who take advantage of digital opportunities, sometimes slower for those who see digital change as a challenge and a threat. Sometimes the cultural sector is in the vanguard of change; often it is not. It has its own vested interests as any other sector.

Resilient, yes, but it’s harder work. It is getting tough for artists, from writers, poets, actors, dancers, video artists, visual artists, film makers, participatory artists, the list goes on. It is worse for budding new entrants, those seeking a start; the artists of the future. Even worse news comes in of reductions in the arts in schools, perhaps the most serious impact of the new regime.

In recent months reports in France, Italy and the UK have all highlighted that the cultural and creative sectors contribute over 5% of their GDP and are

major employers. (As an aside, a similar report shows that 5% of Africa's economy also comes from the cultural and creative sectors). Collectively the artistic, cultural and creative sectors have greater impact than sectors more commonly seen as drivers of our societies such as the car industry, pharmaceuticals, agriculture etc. Every citizen comes into contact with the cultural, artistic and creative sectors output as soon as they get up in the morning. Passive participation is at 100%.

The cultural sectors lobby at regional, national and European levels. Conferences, seminars, academic and research papers abound as the creative, artistic and cultural sectors seek to find their way in the scramble for public taxpayer funding or corporate support. Lobbying at the European Parliament level is under way with Culture Action Europe and a grouping around the European Cultural Foundation putting their ideas forward for candidates.

Yet the lobbying impact and influence of the artistic, cultural and creative sectors nowhere near matches those smaller sectors of agriculture, pharmaceuticals, the car industry etc.

### **Reframe your lobbying!**

So my first hope for 2020 is aimed at the creative and cultural sectors: get your lobbying sorted! It may mean burying the hatchet on the endless discussions on inherent versus economic (how about both!), on taxpayer funded versus commercial (how about both complementing one another), on integrity versus instrumentality (they are not exclusive). A new narrative is needed, based far more on the benefits to citizens, to society and not only to the benefit of the arts producers. Lobbying efforts needs to be simplified, to address the listener and not the speaker in ways the listener understands and not only those with degrees in cultural policy and years working in the sector. It means mobilising politically the millions who enjoy the arts, who use the output of the creative and cultural sectors. It means working at national level first.

At a European level it means watching all new proposals, whether from the Commission or in the Parliament and ensuring the authors and rapporteurs are aware of the cultural impact of the proposal or policy. Not just those in the direct cultural field but in business, in research, in trade, in the single market, in external relations, in fact in all areas of European competence. Brussels is full of lobbyists for sectors far smaller than the cultural sectors; they seem to be more effective. It's time for change.

At local level it means making sure your audiences know the state of the arts. Let their voice be heard, often and always.

There is a *quid pro quo*. Those in receipt of taxpayer funding need to accept they have a responsibility back to those taxpayers beyond providing the high quality of artistic endeavour. Audience development may be a clumsy term but all arts organisations with public funding have a social contract to reach out to new audiences and break away from only serving their comfort zone.

Culture, as we are constantly reminded and of course always forget quite deliberately, has two broad definitions. The arts (see above) and the type of society we live in. This is where I suggest the greatest change is needed in the next decade.

In European discussions debates on “culture” often tend to fall into the field of history and heritage. We have a “common culture”, itself a most contestable concept, marked by diversity. Unity in diversity sits comfortably alongside chaos in diversity.

It is easy for euro-politicians to talk about heritage. It is, especially the built and ruined heritage, a major component in many countries, regions and cities, a tourist offer. For many cities tourism based on heritage attractions is the magic bullet for future employment and prosperity, notwithstanding the risks of being overwhelmed as a short stop theme park. However important heritage is it is no substitute for contemporary artistic and creative creation.

### **Reframe your narrative!**

My second hope for 2020 is that the discussions on culture in Europe take a different turn. We need to talk about the broader culture of today and the future. The old adage that all art was contemporary applies to culture: all tangible and intangible heritage was once contemporary. Much of it was controversial and went against the dominant culture of the time. It was not conservative.

What type of society, within which cultural memes, do we want to live in? This turns the debate into one of cultural values. Values are enshrined in many European Union documents as fixed entities. Of course we value democracy. But are we being democratic when global business interests have such a dominant position in shaping our society. I don't mean individual companies but the nature of international commerce which leads the justice and political systems in our countries to favour big business over the individual and the collective. Those big businesses can be European; this is not the knee jerk anti-American so beloved of many in the cultural world.

The dominant cultural dynamic for the last 20-30 years has been one of a neo-liberal version of the market and society. It goes beyond liberalism with its attention to the freedom of the individual. The inexorable trend of neo-liberal economics is the triumph of the big who continue expanding whilst the small shrinks. "Too big to fail" becomes the mantra, not just in the financial sectors. Left to its own devices and unhindered at national and European levels the impact on the arts sector will be clear. With declining public sector budgets (in real terms if not in actual) the big players will survive. The national and city museums, theatres, major publishers become "too big to fail" and potentially end up taking a greater share of a declining or static public investment. The larger cities will benefit over the smaller. Support for SMEs will come to naught unless rules on the market and the public sector are changed. Adventurous, risky, small organisations will suffer as will the artists associated with them. The total "output" may indeed rise but from far fewer full timers with a lower annual income. In many cases, as we are already seeing, entry into the artistic and creative fields will be increasingly restricted to those with contacts and those with support from parents.

The next decade will see, if unchecked, this trend towards larger dominants within the economic sphere coinciding with the technological revolution. This will lead to fewer jobs being required. Many cities have just survived the end of the heavy industry age as smokestack industries closed down. They have rebuilt themselves in the service sector. A new change is on the near horizon as technology will replace jobs in the service sectors. The risk of a workforce split between the high earning "creative class", from lawyers, accountants, engineers to designers and IT professionals alongside a low wage, low prospects, low job satisfaction workforce will cause significant social problems. Recent scenario reports from the European Commission have painted a worrying picture of a decline in jobs, most marked in the periphery of the Union.

Gartner, the major US business forecaster, sees social unrest as a high possibility in the next five years. The World Economic Forum at Davos sees income inequality as a major risk. It is a global issue; authoritative reports from China also put the risk of social unrest high on their future scenarios. These are not problems to be squashed by adopting an increasing authoritarian anti civil liberties agenda. The status quo is not an option.

A core contemporary European cultural value is represented in the following: "The EU has 7% of the world's population; 25% of global trade and 50% of the global welfare spending". In my estimation that demonstrates a clear and unique European value; how we value our citizens instead of leaving the

vulnerable (and we all are likely to be vulnerable at some stage in our lives) at the mercy of the market. Those politicians who see this welfare spending as evidence of Europe's weakness, compared to say China, India and other emerging market countries, have lost the cultural values plot. It is not a race to the bottom.

My hope is that within Europe we can move to a high level debate on the moral compass we want to live by. Is it one dominated by the unrestricted markets at the exclusion of everything else? Or one where we take a values driven approach. One where economic growth is not seen as the sole objective. Our quality of life, of our culture needs to be brought into strategic and tactical decision making. It is a rejection of neo-liberalism's version of a market. Youth unemployment is a major problem, but so are jobs with little prospect, where the dignity of work is reduced. A moral alternative is not the same as a return to full state funding in places where that did exist. It's where decisions are taken, including by arts and heritage managers, on the nature of their employment (e.g. on contracts, on diversity), on whether it is moral to go for funding even if it is possible. It calls for far more active participation by citizens in decisions, at local level. In the arts it calls for far more engagement by cultural institutions with their audiences and possible future audiences. Calls for more participatory politics start at home.

### **Reframe a strong engagement from the arts sectors**

My third hope comes back to the cultural core of the European Union. For many the Nobel Peace Prize represented the apex of the aspirations of the EU's founding fathers (no women in the 1950s). The solidity of those aspirations may be put sorely to the test in the next few years.

The period to 2020 encompasses the commemorations of the Great War. These present a major challenge to a cultural Europe. The catastrophe of the First World War reminds us of the history of violence in Europe, a key part of our heritage. The heartfelt message "lest we forget" those who died or had their lives ruined needs to be partnered with "never again". We are already seeing nationalistic stories being highlighted under the guise of the various commemoration programmes. The blame game has started. We saw unhealthy cultural antagonisms emerge during the euro crisis with references to the Second World War. It will be a test of Europeans, those who have a united Europe at heart, to ensure the commemorations are not used by those seeking, in seemingly many countries, a return to a fragmented Europe of nation states loosely trading. It will need active intervention.

My hope for 2020 is that a new contemporary culture emerges, with a strong engagement from the arts sectors. I'm writing this shortly after news came of the death of Pete Seeger, the American musician: a lifelong campaigner, for civil rights, for environmental causes, for equality, for peace. He used his music to influence, to inform, to bring people together. He was clear: music, like the other art forms, cannot change society, only people can do that. Artists can bring them together; can encourage them to challenge the status quo and the dominant themes of the day. Not every artist wishes to do this, they are under no obligation either to be "European" or progressive. But enough want to change society. There are many positive examples across the Union. Sometimes they are effective, sometimes not. Few interventions last for long. That does not matter. These are the days not of a single mass movement but a mass of movements. Change, from the "bottom up" is on the agenda.

### **Reframe a new cultural paradigm**

My final hope?

Do we need a "new narrative" for Europe? Yes, as quite simply the European sphere in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is markedly different from that of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which led to the Treaty of Rome. Not totally different as the rise of nationalism, xenophobia, racism and populism still needs to be contained and reduced. I see no need to change the objectives, the "ever deepening and widening of Europe to bring the peoples of Europe closer together". Not a popular position in February 2014 but good enough for me.

Note the key word in that objective: "peoples". Not economies or banks or armies but people.

The many "new narrative" projects and conferences seem to include "culture" within their frameworks as part of their solution. Some seem to imply or hope that means simply more money for the arts; useful of course but not much traction there.

OK, that is slightly better than those who want to re-engineer the structures but not by much.

(Although I dream that the new President of the European Commission will create a senior "vice-president for citizens" responsible across the board for everything the EU does which engages with citizens with transversal authority to delve into every proposed policy from every directorate, a role well beyond mere "citizenship").

Even worse, some seem to think it is a matter of that tired old last refuge “we need better communication; if only they understood”.

The problem is simple: “they” do understand and they don’t like it. Change has to start with policies not with more advertising or propaganda. And those policies need to start with a new cultural paradigm.

My hope is that by 2020 we can see a radical change in the current dominant cultures of our societies; an end to increasing inequality, an end to increasing nationalism, an end to the assaults on those least able to withstand them, an end to prioritising short term profits over the environment and over our moral compass. That is a cultural Europe.

Mahir Namur

## **The World Needs a Good Guy.**

### **Money or Happiness?**

What do we live for? What is our ultimate goal? The majority's common answer to this very basic question of life would probably be "happiness". Everything we do to achieve our goals and desires we actually do in order to be happy. But it seems that we often forget this answer. We lose ourselves in the process of achieving, forgetting about the ultimate goal. Sometimes we are obsessed with money, forgetting about why we earn it. And so do our societies. The world of politics seems to have completely forgotten the ultimate goal of living. It is obsessed with the concept of economic growth, investing billions into marketing, creating artificial needs, supporting the production of poor quality goods and unhealthy over-consumption and, on top of that, ignoring the huge price we have to pay for it. The over-consumption of the world's resources and their unjust distribution leads to the shortage of the basic elements of living for all creatures. Already, as a consequence we have to face wars and natural disasters. This way money becomes the goal itself, destroying happiness.

### **The Short Story of How Money Wins.**

First it was privatization and then the increase of business mergers which led to the birth of giant enterprises; and these gradually deprived the state of power. In the process most of these companies lost their national character and became "global". Who owns the power sets the rules of the game. Consequently big business, having gained power over the national state, started setting the rules of politics. The global economy assumed control of the national state instead of the state leading its economy. The state adopted the principles of business management for public administration and politics. Hence, maximizing the economic profit and minimizing costs became the dominant ideology also of the public. Health, education and culture progressively became considered "unnecessary costs to be cut" whereas these are the fundamental "services" a state should provide its people.

### **The Business-Public Cooperation against the Civil Society.**

The only way to sustain a huge economic growth is to consume the existing natural resources and cultural values for short-term financial profits. Using the argument of prosperity governments tend more and more to allow the abuse

of public space and public goods for the sake of a faster growing economy without taking in consideration the price that has to be paid by the environment and the society. A large range of different projects from shopping malls on public parks to nuclear power plants in residential areas are contracted by governments to the private sector, using the public space for the benefit of only a small group of businesses or individuals, sometimes even risking the lives of humans, animals and plants. In most of these cases government collaborates with the businesses - which are in deep conflict with the interests of national society, sometimes even illegally. We have recently experienced such political decisions and actions subsequently leading to conflicts between the government and the civil society at Gezi Park Project in Turkey, the Roşia Montană Project in Romania, and The V for Vinegar Movement in Brasil. Desperate governments tend to react with disproportional violence. In my opinion it is quite clear that the consecutive civic reactions all around the world are the symptoms of a global system illness and it will spread out and grow if it is not cured.

### **The New Information Technologies and the Change of Power Relations.**

The new communication technologies have shifted the power relations between the civil society, the government and the business sector.

Before the common use of internet, the state institutions had more control over the information channels and therefore had more power to design the public opinion than today. Through the internet a new level of communication appeared: the communication at civil society level.

The fast circulation and dissemination of information facilitates a process of public opinion building at all levels and in a considerable variety of subjects. Today it is not easy anymore to hide or manipulate realities, as the internet technology provides access to all kind of information which formerly would not have been open to the public (e.g. Wikileaks). The filter mechanism between power and the masses is temporarily malfunctioning as the power does not exactly know how to deal with the consequences of the rapid changes fueled by the new information technologies.

Power struggles to recognize that through the immense development in the internet field **civil society all around the world gains a much better insight and is much more aware of global politics, of what is going wrong, the reasons and their consequences than before.**

Internet technology led to a wide and strong network amongst civil society at local, national and global level. This gave additional power to the civil society in relation to the state institutions, since such networks of individuals have the advantage to react much faster and in a more spontaneous way than any institution. This enables the very fast mobilization of civil society and **therefore creates global solidarity**. The behavior of civil society nourished by the new information media cannot be predicted by the governmental bodies. The rather rigid governmental bodies cannot keep up with the pace of civil society. So the new forms of power shift from the traditional power center, namely government, to the civil society without borders or boundaries.

We therefore can say that today there are two levels of international relations: one at the political level and another one at the civil society level.

### **The Global Civil Society Reacts.**

The difficulty in hiding or manipulating information on one side and the potential of the civil society to mobilize so fast on the other side bear a substantial threat to the misbehavior of the power. Unfortunately in most of the cases we see that this threat instead of avoiding inappropriate behavior leads to even more reckless actions. If the obsession with economic growth goes on, the tension between power and mass will probably grow too and this might result in civil disturbance - unless civil society will be suppressed by authoritarian regimes or even dictatorships. Democracy and human rights are under threat. In this direction the world is going.

### **Europe: Peace or Euro?**

The initial idea of the European project was to create interdependencies among the European states by building economic cooperation and to thus ensure future peace. Today Europe seems to forget that economy once was just a tool for a better life. Europe's vision was to become an attractive place to live. Humanity was in the centre. Today, rather economy seems to be the priority.

European politicians do not appear to any longer see an updated argument for the role of European integration in sustaining peace among its member states. What seems to be the priority of politics is to protect the economic power Europe possesses today. This is a reactionary approach. To be reactionary in a negative environment however, is like leaving oneself to the current of a river flowing towards a waterfall. In my opinion Europe will only be able to survive among the new world powers by leaving this economy-protective approach and taking the lead into a newly created field of power instead. Unlike the rest

of the world, Europe should focus preferably on “a better life” than on “economic interests”.

### **Europe needs a future world vision.**

Europe’s problem is not a lack of vision but having too many. The pro-Europe politicians are reluctant to open discussions on this subject fearing the reactions and possible conflicts. On one hand this might avoid conflicts but on the other hand the lack of a common vision for the future prevents the citizens’ support and participation.

Europe needs to build up one single future vision. A virtuous, strong, sincere vision which moves, convinces and connects everybody in Europe.

Having witnessed the reality of the last decade, the former “getting richer” claim is no longer a more relevant and convincing one for the citizens of Europe. The point of “common financial interests” is regardless not the most ideal, because – as expressed before – it created a bad image of the European Union and lead to excessive expectations amongst the citizens. Sharing existing wealth can connect people only short-term until the resources run out, whereas collective effort put into a common goal makes a team strong. Therefore, citizens must be genuinely invited to take part and furthermore must take over responsibility in building up their common future.

Europe’s vision should be a world-vision rather than a vision limited to Europe. In a world of a globalized and connected civil society, a self-centered Europe is no acceptable identity for Europeans. The questions that should be asked are: “how do I imagine the world in which I wish to live?” and “what would Europe’s responsibility be in making this dream a reality?” What should be my responsibilities as a citizen? What are the responsibilities as a city, as a region, as a country?

### **It Is Not Possible to Create Heaven with Borders to Hell.**

In today’s globalized world it is no longer appropriate to isolate your territory from the rest of the world by building high walls; just as diseases can not be cured by covering up the symptoms. Most of the main problems at local level are the extension or symptoms of global problems.

We are living in a world where approximately 80% of the resources are consumed by 20% of the population. Can I simply close my eyes to this reality, because I am on the lucky side? Who should I blame for it? Do I have no responsibility to change this situation?

## **Strong Power Requires Strong Responsibility.**

The world is in a desperate situation. There is no other choice than to concentrate on changing it. Whoever has the awareness, the knowledge and the political power has the responsibility to take the lead.

I see The European Union as a working group trying both to set quality standards for a collective prosperous life and to implement them. These quality standards have to be based on *democracy*, human rights, and the rule of law. *A working group striving to create a system in which resources are shared, social justice and environmental sustainability are achieved and democracy is improved by including the citizens into the decision-taking process. It strives for a system which sees cultural diversity as a prosperity for the society. Who on earth would not like to be in such a system?*

*I think the skills gained from the experience of collective thinking, social reconciliation and collectively putting decisions into action are very valuable for mankind. But, the focus has to be set and communicated clearly. Does Europe want to act as one player of the present dirty game or does it want to change the game into a better one and set the rules? Does Europe want to have the focus on economic growth or on a prosperous, sustainable living of the society? Does Europe want to work for the own interests or for the interests of mankind and nature? Will Europe be able to act in a true global manner or not?*

*The world is desperately in need of a “good guy”. As there seems nobody else on earth to take this role, Europe should become the “good guy”.*

Europe needs a very simple and easy to understand motto to communicate with its citizens and the rest of the world.

European culture should be a culture of production, not a culture of consumption. It should be a culture of taking responsibilities. Europe can only grow by caring. By caring for the rest of the world. Europe can only grow by sharing. By sharing in a fair way with the rest of the world. Europe can only grow by taking and sharing responsibilities.

Europe’s civil society, politics and business should build a coalition lead by the civil society to develop a common cultural policy based on a culture of taking responsibilities.

*If the earth must lose that great portion of its pleasantness which it owes to things that the unlimited increase of wealth and population would extirpate from it, for the mere purpose of enabling it to support a larger, but not a better*

*or a happier population, I sincerely hope, for the sake of posterity, that they will be content to be stationary, long before necessity compels them to it.*

—John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy*, 1848

Kathrin Deventer with Zachery Bishop

## **The Decisive Deal: Fighting for Europe, Fighting for our Future**

In times dominated by crises - from the global and European financial crises to the lack of vision for Europe's very *raison d'être* - there is a need for bringing (new) visions of Europe's common values and common future to the fore. The current generation of young Europeans is rapidly forgetting; or has never known, what it means to live in a fractured and divided Europe.

Why Europe? We must work to strengthen, or make known, the bonds that bind us and the values that make this project worthy of a Nobel peace prize.

This is exactly our problem; we do not know what these bonds are. If we do not know them, how can we value them, strengthen them? We are not collaborating enough, we are not looking for friendship, we not fighting for their survival, but instead looking to further highlight divisions. We are currently facing a rapid increase in nationalism in Member States, growing anti-immigration sentiment, and resentment towards Europe for the age of public sector austerity: everyone wants the biggest piece of the pie. Europe is not seen as a solution but is often blamed and serves as an underserving scapegoat. If we see low levels of European engagement in broad parts of society across Europe, no care for or emotional attachment to the European project, no concept of solidarity, then where is Europe? From North to South, East to West: at times it seems that the European political establishment just stares while its citizens are shouting back.

To truly be a democratic society, we need citizens to be awakened, become informed, and open yet critical. Mobilizing every single individual to assume responsibility for a citizen-led Europe is a task that is both in the hands of our political decision-makers and in their direct interest. We need to create new and inventive relationships between citizens, politicians and economy: a new culture of democracy! We cannot take for granted the freedoms that we have achieved over the course of time. On the contrary, we have to build on them, to think and to act for the greater good, for ourselves and for the future generations.

### **Why do I feel European?**

I can discuss European citizenship in abstract terms until friends, colleagues, and family are ready to outlaw any discussion of the topic. But, what traveling

across Europe for work and pleasure and meeting citizens from all walks of life has taught me is that citizens, a term that connects individuals to some larger constructed community, are people, everyday people going about their lives. What do people connect with? People! Other humans and their human stories, real life accounts. Abstract theory and jargon are meaningless when they lack real life connections.

So I constantly ask myself is: on a human, real-life, experiential level, what makes me European?

It is a very difficult question to answer because it is nearly impossible to have a reply that speaks to everyone. That is the beauty of the European narrative - it is open, inclusive, welcoming. The values that are represented by the European project, pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, equality between women and men, peace and the well-being of its peoples can and should be experienced anytime, anywhere, and in multiple forms.

Looking to specific moments in time, a dinner here, a performance there, we remember friendships, and the values that are at the core of the European project. Remembering the human values that Europe is built on is the first step to solving our crisis.

### **What European values would I fight to defend?**

It is easy to fight against something, but it is much harder to build something together. This is what we must do and what fascinates me most about Europe: the diverse people, languages, food, music, architecture, affiliations, stories, and friendships, the cultures enriching each other and building this Union together.

But, we must remember- building something together against what seem to be insurmountable odds is a fight. If we first remember our values, what makes us European, we must next think of fighting for these values. If we had to give up all the advantages of European citizenship, which single benefit would we fight to defend?

These days people are overwhelmed by news of the European Union, tending to fall prey to a lot of negative propaganda that is circulated in the media. You know the sort: if there is something wrong, it is the fault of the European Union, and if something actually goes right, the European Union as a whole gets the credit. This must be changed. We must remember that in democracy everyone has the responsibility of making the project work and taking action for its success.

I want to stop speaking about the EU as a concept and start speaking about the EU as a tool, as actions, as a process to better the lives of its citizens. As the artist Michelangelo Pistoletto said in a recent meeting we both attended, “Europe is an instrument of peace, a tool to make the world a better place.”

If we have collectively and individually established why we are European, and what values we are willing to fight for, we must come together and ask ourselves how can we, how can I, make Europe a better place?

A sense of belonging and willingness to build this future together is only possible if Europeans know their neighbours and care about their joint narrative – a joint narrative that is based on interaction, and which views the knowledge and experience of new cultures as something that brings added value to one’s own background. This is what our policies should foster.

We need a new policy that supports civil society exchange and engagement in order to make citizens stop asking what Europe can do for them but instead what can we do together for Europe.

### **What role does Europe play?**

If we settle on what we want to fight for and how we want to fight for it, we can look towards the future to paint our mental image of what we want our future to look like. We can ask ourselves, what role does Europe play?

Europe is not a scientific concept with an absolute truth so it will not be so easy to reply to this question. Europe is a belief, a dream of a new form of democracy and citizenship. Europe is testament to diversity, diversity that enriches who we are as individuals, who we are as a community. The more variation and diversity exists around us, the more it can enrich us.

The European project is also an incredible opportunity, a task, a process to create a new form of public space bringing together 500 million voices from various cultures, nationalities, cities, and regions all across Europe to discuss and debate in a European agora. New forms of democratic participation in a digital world, bridging cultures and nations, are being built right here. It will be a reality for 500 million European citizens.

Above all, Europe is peace project – and it positions itself against a real threat: war! Europe is not a status which can be taken for granted; it has a responsibility in the world. Nothing justifies the existence of Europe if it does not have a function in the world at large. That is a big responsibility.

Volker Hassemer

## European Cultural Policy

Topics such as the financial, economic, and Euro crisis are dominating the European debate today, deeply affecting the image and perception of Europe.

Europe's common values, which brought Europeans together in the first place, are living in the shadows. Multiple human, cultural and social treasures that make every day Europe what it is are living in the shadows. These treasures are not hidden in safes in Brussels or Luxembourg – they are found in the cities and regions of Europe, versatile, antithetic at times, but always full of energy and appeal.

The EU must find ways to make culture a driving force in European integration. So far efforts in this direction have been tentative at most and pursued under a “different flag” (e.g. Erasmus as an effective means to promote student mobility).

It is true that centralized cultural policy in particular – like that of the EU – has a fundamental interest in the freedom and independence of decentralized cultural and artistic activity. If we endanger this decentralized sovereignty, the vibrancy of cultural work is called into question. On the other hand, European cultural policy must ensure that the European project is also understood and experienced as a cultural project. That must be our aim. What is needed now is the step from reflection to action. Only by acting will we be able to help move things in the right direction. Here are five thoughts on the subject:

### **Subsidiarity: Cultural projects engender a sense of community**

“Subsidiarity” is an acknowledged principle of political action in the EU. But practically the only area in which it is applied is the relationship between European policy and national and regional policies. It must also be applied to the question of what must necessarily be achieved by political means and what might be achieved more effectively by the means of civil society.

This is true for one of the big challenges Europe is facing today: the feeling of belonging, of being part of a community.

Culture is a good example here. It addresses (in areas such as education, dealing with art, experiences and events) the reality of people's lives and is created in this reality. Cultural projects have an impact that goes beyond

“enjoying culture”. They engender a sense of community, stimulate new ideas, give us access to and facilitate understanding.

It is difficult for direct political action to produce this sort of practised community. But European cultural policy can ensure that culturally defined events and projects help make European community tangible and experiential. And by people adopting a “European” perspective in their perception of one another – and in the perception of commonality and diversity – provide new stimuli.

### **Europe is alive at grassroots level**

The Commission’s duties must include being attentive to how and where Europe is created and evolves in the cities and regions. To where Europeanness is played out. To where the European idea and the European vision are alive in the vibrancy of its citizens’ everyday lives.

Here, culture is a particularly prominent playing field and stage. I can list plenty of examples here – from Berlin alone. There are plenty of cases where, if you look carefully, you can see people coming and working together productively in the spirit of European development – and, as Europe, making contact with the rest of the world. There are examples of people helping to prepare the world for a shared future – equipped with the cultural experience of this Europe of ours.

If a bank causes difficulties somewhere in Europe, that is perceived as a problem in and for Europe. If Europe demonstrates its own distinctive form of cultural vibrancy, it goes unnoticed by the European public, the EU and the European Commission. It’s no wonder that Europe has such a bad name.

Now you might say that all sounds too general. My answer would be: then let’s be more specific. Why isn’t it also the job of the Commissioner responsible for culture to concretize this in consultation with the cities and regions and using the proper search criteria? And to do so by working together with experts who are capable of such concretization?

### **Involving artists and intellectuals in preparing political decisions at EU level**

The fundamental values on which the EU is built constitute an essential – if not existential – element of the European project. More than nations and cities, which take their own existence for granted, values and the pursuit of an ideal are the key rationale for the EU for its creation and continuing existence. But in that case the EU needs methods to measure its practical action against these values.

Cultural policy within the EU may be the art of reflecting the activities of the Commission and the Council of Ministers – but also of the European Parliament – in terms of the fundamental goals, values and ideals of a united Europe.

What, for example, would be the objection to “official” (public) debates and clarification exercises – organized by the Culture Commissioner on behalf of the Commission as a whole – between intellectuals and policy-makers on fundamental (non-culture-related) issues in the daily European policy? These meetings should be just as official as the meetings of the European Commission and European Council and sessions of the European Parliament. This would create a visible platform for representatives of culture and society to comment and bring their influence to bear on decision-making processes within the EU. It would make it clear that policy-making – in particular European policy-making – is not the sole role of politicians.

Within the European Commission, cultural policy is the right place to accomplish this. Make no mistake, cultural policy is not the limited space where these principles are upheld; it is the place from which – permanently and reliably – the relevance of these principles must be made credibly visible or infused into the policy-making of the European Commission as a whole.

### **Artists and intellectuals do a better job**

What is needed is the direct participation of artists in the work of the European Commission. One example: there is on the one hand a growing consensus that Europe needs “images” to ensure the European project’s vividness and attractiveness; on the other hand, the European Commission’s representations in the EU countries’ capitals are, almost without exception, prime examples of bureaucratic and unimaginative communication.

Why isn’t it possible to put the organization and operation of these EU information agencies in the hands of cultural workers and artists? Why can’t these prominent sites of European self-presentation be used to show the “images” of Europe rather than the reproductions of European policy-making? This would be an example of “social subsidiarity”, with policy-makers leaving the field to social actors whenever the latter are able to do a better job. Then we speak of a real shift in responsibility.

### **Making European culture tangible**

Art and culture that is created anywhere in Europe is also European art and culture. Prizes (like the European Film Award) and institutions (like the

European Festivals Association) are in positions to make this manifest. They provide opportunities to reflect on and improve the reality of European culture and the conditions under which it evolves. They create European community without encroaching on the freedom and autonomy of any cultural contribution made anywhere in Europe.

What we need to do then is to identify and establish such European formats systematically across all areas of culture.

A few weeks ago, the European Commission held the European Culture Forum again. An article on the event in a Berlin newspaper ended with the sentence: “Brussels remains an island”. That’s true in the sense that European policy-making must become integrated in its everyday work with “the continent Europe”. Only then can a convention of this sort become a milestone in jointly assessing the progress made so far and also in reaching a consensus on how to move forward – towards a common goal: Europe.

Only then can such a convention also become a benchmark in the process of composing a common narrative about Europe. Because that is a narrative Europe needs: the story of Europeans’ common action, of their shared responsibility for their own future. It is a story about people in Europe and their commitment to this common Europe of ours.

## **Access to Culture Platform (ACP)**

Participation in culture and arts including freedom of artistic expression are both individual and collective human rights, guaranteed by numerous national, European and international treaties. The general public, policymakers, the arts and the human rights sectors all need to be more aware of how they can guarantee these rights and defend the rights-holders, to the benefit of all of our societies.

The platform works in three thematic working groups:

### **Audience Participation/Cultural Component of Citizenship Working Group**

Citizens exercise their cultural rights through active participation in the shaping of Europe. It is important that this participation in culture is recognized as a fundamental right and a stepping stone to gaining political and social objectives such as creative societies, a strong educational system, flourishing cultural industries, intercultural dialogue and democracy. Active citizenship requires that all levels of policy making take citizens' concerns into account.

### **Arts, Human Rights and Social Justice Working Group**

Artist and culture workers are increasingly expressing their reactions to a world in which economic values have come to dominate over humanistic values. However, their human and cultural rights are abused in EU and EU partner countries when their work comes close to that normally associated with political activists. Active citizenship and the democratic process require reflection, reaction and dialogue on local and global issues. Arts and cultural participation is a key driver for these essential processes.

### **Education & Learning Working Group**

Lifelong learning can broaden perspectives in situations where learning seems no longer a possibility but where cultural activities can still open access to participation. We need more people, organisations and institutions to be aware of the potential for lifelong learning opportunities through cultural engagement. By developing and using this potential, culture contributes to the shaping of sustainable citizenship. The European Union, whose strength and character is defined by the democratic process, mutual understanding and cooperation in a context of diversity, must recognize and support cultural participation as a key pillar to achieving its objectives.

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## **A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe**

Europe cannot be a mere political framework for the convenience of governments. It must be made clear that the purpose of European integration is primarily to enhance the quality of life for its citizens. The active involvement of citizens is unthinkable without participation that is taken seriously.

A Citizens' Europe implies participation beyond the dry confines of bureaucratic regulation and job creation programmes. It involves all the activities necessary for real social justice and dialogue. It requires the political structures to provide citizens with the mobility, freedom and resources to make the most of the opportunities of our time.

At its very core, a Citizens' Europe is a cultural concept. It has to encompass the wealth of languages, traditions, cultural knowledge and experiences of people in Europe, regardless of where they are originally from. The Coalition believes in the catalyst role that culture – in all its diverse forms – can play in the development of society. Culture and the arts are a vital element of Europe's social and democratic fabric. Culture shapes our common value system and at the same time helps to establish a sense of self in an increasingly fast-paced and fragmented world. Culture and the arts can simultaneously strengthen social bonds, enable communication and stimulate out-of-the-box thinking across European borders in a unique and “avant-garde” way.

A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe proposes this basic and activating role of culture to politics and business. It expresses a demand for supporting the development of Europe from the bottom up: as a coalition based on the creative force of culture and in continuous dialogue with all strands of society. The Cultural Coalition thus brings together those whom political institutions will need in order to deliver European integration that has real meaning for citizens. Without such a coalition the current level of indifference, hostility to and alienation from the European project will continue to undermine it, strengthening the hand of those who wish to revert to narrow nationalism.

Developing and implementing a new understanding of the cultural component of citizenship will give the Coalition its guiding line. Building Europe means integrating national histories, value systems and world views, and fostering intercultural dialogue. Citizenship includes the right to participate in diverse

cultural life, not limited to the majority culture of any nation state or linguistic group. It also includes the willingness to learn about and be aware of the cultural traditions of the community within which citizens reside and draw conclusions for their own active responsibility for the development of society (the community). This should not just be a nation state, but also a region, city or community – and it should include all residents living in that common “Union” space.

### **European Year of Citizens 2013**

The European Year of Citizens 2013 will give the “Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe” its time frame. The Year is an opportunity to make European policy and European citizens aware of their rights and responsibilities as Europeans: we want to give the European Year of Citizens its urgency.

A Cultural Coalition is the expression of the hearts and minds of Europe’s citizens: active in debate, innovative in thinking and creative in their activities. This Coalition provides the political and official institutions (whether local, regional, national, European or global) with the interlocutors they need to help them develop. That is what drives the Coalition’s work: to develop a new understanding of cultural citizenship and cultural rights in order to create a democratic Europe from the bottom up.

Join, follow and contribute to the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe at [www.asoulforeurope.eu](http://www.asoulforeurope.eu)

### **“A Soul for Europe”**

Since 2004, “A Soul for Europe” brings together citizens, reputable NGOs and foundations, world re-known artists, high-level politicians, business representatives and public intellectuals from all over Europe. Towards 2014, Year of European elections, and 10 years since its set up, “A Soul for Europe”’s main aim is to increase its coalition in order to activate more citizens from all strands of society to shape a joint understanding of responsibilities: Europe: That’s us!

“A Soul for Europe” and the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe

## **Towards a European Resolution on Culture: Supporting Culture as an Instrument for Values, Democracy and Citizenship**

“A Soul for Europe” invites citizens to work together with elected representatives in its programme A Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe to raise awareness of Europe as a cultural project. This proposal will be discussed at the Berlin Conference 2014, co-produced with the European Parliament, with the leaders of the main political parties of Europe, artists, and intellectuals. We envision that these concepts will be developed as a resolution in the European Parliament and will eventually inspire action at the European Council and in the Member States and at the local level. We are inviting citizens and civil society organization across Europe to take part in this discussion through the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe: all concrete proposals or concrete actions are welcome. We are also eager to hear how this text and the project behind it can be part of other existing actions targeting the European Parliament.

**“A Soul for Europe” and the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens’ Europe propose developing 3 core concepts:**

### **From Engaged Citizenship to Community Development**

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen’s Europe urges all political and civic leaders to endorse culture as a tool to develop active citizenship and community involvement.

Long-term policy visions should highlight that culture provides strong mechanisms for the development of civic values. Cultural actors, artists and their creations should be seen as essential partners of political and civic leaders to maximize community participation and relations.

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen’s Europe asks the European Union and the European Parliament to formally recognize that access to culture develops community relations and a sense of belonging. We ask that during the next legislative period of the European Parliament, MEPs agree that the dimension of culture be added to all sectors of legislation

on citizenship where it is currently lacking, including external affairs. In addition, we ask that the European Parliament recommend that the European Union further negotiate this process through the legislation of Member States, guaranteeing impact on the regions and cities of Europe.

### **Ensuring a Fundamental Commitment to Culture**

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen's Europe urges all political and civic leaders to promote the cultural dimension of the European project as a necessary, integral and urgent complement to the political, social and economic dimensions.

Long-term policy visions should include a provision for a dialogue between the European Union and the Member States about the creation and implementation of a basic level of commitment to culture and the arts at the Member State level, as a natural extension of the Cultural Coalition for a Citizens' Europe other recommendations.

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen's Europe recommends that this dialogue generates a proposal for an agreement on the minimum percentage of the budget allocated to cultural programs by the Member States as a percentage of GDP, reflecting the similar and equal responsibility they bear towards culture.

### **Streamlining Cultural Competence**

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen's Europe urges all political and civic leaders to take part in the development of a streamlined cultural policy for Europe.

The long-term policy vision should work towards making culture a shared competence between the European Union and the Member States. The European Union, the Member States, regions, and cities should develop a more globally-connected cultural policy with clear stages of collaboration and implementation.

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen's Europe asks the European Parliament to advise the European Union to take part in a mutual exchange with Member States, regions, and cities in order to establish a European model for a cultural policy that streamlines and acts as a guiding principle across all levels of governance: a model for positive civic values, citizenship through culture, access to culture, cultural participation and artistic creation.

The Cultural Coalition for a Citizen's Europe asks the European Union, Member States, regions, and cities to ensure that the cultural implications of any policy are taken in account alongside any environmental, diversity, and socio-economic considerations.

# Colophon

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ACCESS TO CULTURE



A fundamental right of all citizens