



*Briefing - September 2009*  
**The structured dialogue process**

## Introduction

The structured dialogue process was launched in June 2008 with the set up of two new civil society platforms ('access to culture' and 'potential of cultural and creative industries') alongside the existing Rainbow Platform (now named *Platform for Intercultural Europe*).

This policy development instrument was introduced in the field of EU cultural policy by the *European Agenda for Culture*, an important political document adopted by the European Commission in May 2007 and by the Education and Culture Council in November 2007.

The ***Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world*** proposed indeed three political priorities (cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity, and culture in external relations) to shape future EU cultural actions, but also new policy development instruments: the Open Method of Coordination and the structured dialogue with civil society.

The **Open Method of Coordination**, a flexible soft law mechanism embedded in the European Council work plan, has already been used in other fields of weak or complementary EU competence (like education, youth or social affairs). The method works in stages: Member States fix guidelines and common objectives that they regularly review through a common system of reporting. However, depending on the policy area, shorter or longer reporting periods are set and enforcement mechanisms may be harder or softer. The OMC is intergovernmental in nature in opposition to the so-called community method.

Following the Council work plan, Member States agreed to work on the following topics for the period 2008-2010:

1. the mobility of artists and other professionals;
2. the mobility of collections;
3. stronger synergies between culture and education;
4. EUROSTAT statistical working group on culture;
5. cultural and creative industries.

To implement their European agenda on Culture, EU Member States and the European Commission also recognised the importance of a **structured dialogue with civil society**, and acknowledged the role of a number of representative networks and platforms at European level in their capacity to bridge to the wider sector by ways of information and mobilisation.

On 19th February 2008 the European Commission organised an information day in Brussels to explain to cultural organisations how it intended to involve civil society in the European Agenda for Culture. In parallel to the Member States nominating experts for a range of thematic intergovernmental working groups, cultural organisations were to group together in three Platforms. Drawing on the experience of the Culture Action Europe/EFAH-ECF initiated Rainbow Platform (the Platform for Intercultural Europe), a second platform around the topic of access to culture and a third on the cultural industries were set up.

A call for expression of interest to participate in the two new platforms (access to culture and creative industries) was launched. The Commission received over 200 contributions, and selected around 30 organisations to take part in the two new platforms.



As indicated in the call for expressions of interest, the European Commission expects the structured dialogue to:

- *complement existing consultation processes (such as online consultations, public hearings etc.) or specific sectoral dialogues carried out on specific EC policy or regulatory initiatives;*
- *encourage the various components of the cultural sector to work in a more trans-sectoral way and to better structure and organise itself at EU level;*
- *help the cultural sector to formulate recommendations with a view to contributing to the development of a political Agenda for Culture in Europe;*
- *provide opportunities for these recommendations to be regularly presented to the European Commission and the Members States in the frame of the Cultural Forum.*

## Milestones

- 10 May 2007: the EC publishes its [Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a globalising world](#)
- 26-27 September 2007: [European Cultural Forum](#) in Lisbon
- 16 November 2007: [Resolution of the Council on a European Agenda for Culture](#)
- 19 February 2008: information session in Brussels – the EC announces the structure of the structured dialogue (three civil society platforms), followed by a [call for expressions of interest](#)
- 4-5-6 June 2008: Civil society platforms' plenaries (constitutive meetings for the 'Access to Culture' and 'Cultural and Creative Industries' Platforms)
- Fall 2008: first working groups' meetings
- 1 November 2008: Deadline for the Platforms to apply to Culture Programme funding (*Support for Organisations active at European Level in the Field of Culture, Operating Grants, Category d) Policy Support Structures for the Culture Agenda*)<sup>1</sup>
- 16 December 2008: first joint meeting organized by the EC of the three Platforms, and of the Platforms and the working groups of the [Open Method of Coordination](#)
- 8, 9, 10 June 2009: Civil Society Platforms' plenaries, adoption of the policy papers
- 29-30 September 2009: [European Culture Forum](#) in Brussels

<sup>1</sup> Two of the three Platforms applied for funding: the Platform for Intercultural Europe and the 'Access to Culture' Platform



## 1. The Platform on 'Access to Culture'

As 'access to Culture' is not one of the three stated objectives of the *European Agenda for Culture*, this Platform had to work both on short-term objectives (the 'education and learning' working group is the only one having a direct counterpart in the OMC process) as well as longer-term objectives (advocating for the best conditions for artistic creation and for participation in the arts to become a key objective of European policies).

From June 2008 to June 2009 working groups have developed their positions, while an overarching Platform paper was being drafted on the basis of the working groups' conclusions. The Platform paper will be presented at the European Cultural Forum in Brussels on 29-30 September 2009.

**Chair** Mercedes Giovinazzo, Director of Interarts (Barcelona) and Culture Action Europe's president

**Secretariat** European House for Culture

**Steering Group** chair, leaders of the working groups (European Festivals Association, IETM and Jamtli museum) and Culture Action Europe (for its transversal expertise)

### Working groups

**Audience Participation** – chaired by EFA, with Culture Action Europe's support

*Some issues addressed: participation in the arts is at the heart of Europe's creativity ecology and therefore needs to be put on the European agenda and be mainstreamed in European policies and programmes*

**Creativity & Creation** – chaired by IETM

*Some issues addressed: socio-economic status and social protection of artists and cultural professionals, creation/production infrastructures, models of governance, partnership models, professional training, mobility, etc.*

**Education & Learning** – chaired by Jamtli museum

*Some issues addressed: role of culture and the arts in various educational contexts (formal, informal and non-formal), qualifications and mobility, life long learning, etc.*

## 2. The Platform on 'the potential of cultural and creative industries'

Cultural and creative industries' policies (in the framework of the Lisbon strategy) have been high on the European agenda for several years (supported by a number of studies and Council conclusions), they are one of the stated objectives of the *European Agenda for Culture*, an OMC working group is devoted to the topic, 2009 is the *European Year of Innovation and Creativity*, and the EC is preparing a Green paper on the creative and cultural industries to be published in 2010.

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**Chair** European Forum for Architectural Policies

**Secretariat** European Music Office

**Steering Group** chair, secretariat and working group leaders (European Film Companies Alliance, IMPALA, Culture Action Europe/European Music Council)



## Working groups

### 1. Regulatory environment

*Some issues addressed: intellectual propriety rights protection, market access and financial viability for all cultural and creative industries, statistics, etc.*

### 2. Support for the development of SMEs

*Some issues addressed: specific status and better working conditions for cultural and creative SMEs, education and training related to the activities and management of cultural and creative SMEs, etc.*

### 3. Exchange/export, circulation of artists and cultural products

*Some issues addressed: tailored information to mobile artists, works and products; support to translation and co-production, residence schemes, international promotion, training, etc.*

### 4. The interface of artistic creation and the cultural industries

*Some issues addressed: status of artists and cultural entrepreneurs, tensions and complementarities between cultural value and market value, intellectual property rights protection, etc.*

## C. The Platform for Intercultural Europe

The [Platform for Intercultural Europe](#), co-initiated end of 2006 by Culture Action Europe and the European Cultural Foundation, focuses on the trans-sectoral aspect of interculturalism (bringing together actors from different civil societies policy fields such as arts, education, anti-discrimination, minority groups, etc.). Recognised as one of the three interlocutors of the structured dialogue – with one clear European Commission’s objective being to capitalize on the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and insure its long-lasting impact – the initiative established legally end of 2008.

### Background

- 14 November 2006: 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in Brussels
- 5 March 2007: 2<sup>nd</sup> Platform meeting
- September 2007: Rainbow Paper I consultation
- 19-21 October 2007: Rainbow Retreat in Cittadelarte (Biella, Italy)
- 7-8 January 2008: Presentation of the Rainbow Paper I at the official launch of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (Ljubljana, Slovenia)
- 4 June 2008: 3rd Platform meeting in Brussels (in the framework of the Structured Dialogue)
- October 2008: The Platform establishes legally (and applies for EU funding)
- 7 October 2008: Publication and endorsement process of the [Rainbow Paper II](#) (so far, endorsed by 344 organisations and 303 individuals)
- 11 November 2008: 4<sup>th</sup> Platform meeting in Stockholm
- 8 June 2009: 5<sup>th</sup> Platform meeting in Brussels

**Coordination:** Sabine Frank and [steering group](#)



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