Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage

(2014/C 463/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

1. the Council conclusions of 26 November 2012 on Cultural Governance [1] that underlined the importance to make cultural governance more open, participatory, effective and coherent and invited Member States to promote a participatory approach to cultural policy-making;

2. the Council conclusions of 21 May 2014 on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe [2] that recognised that cultural heritage has a cross-sectorial policy relevance and plays a specific role in achieving the Europe 2020 strategy goals for a smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, and called on Member States to promote long-term heritage policy models that are evidence-based and society- and citizen-driven;

WELCOMING:

3. the Communication from the Commission 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe' that recognised that cultural heritage is a shared resource and a common good and that therefore looking after heritage is a common responsibility [3];

HAVING REGARD TO:

4. the increased recognition at international level of a people-centred and culture-based approach to foster sustainable development and the importance of transparent, participatory and informed systems of governance for culture in order to address the needs of all members of society [4];

5. the increased recognition at European, national, regional and local level of the social dimension of cultural heritage and the importance of activating synergies across different stakeholders to safeguard, develop and transmit cultural heritage to future generations [5];

6. the adoption of a locally rooted and people-centred approach to cultural heritage in several EU programmes, including in the research programme Horizon 2020 and the community-led local development approach supported by the European Structural and Investment Funds. This approach is also recognized by the Joint Programming Initiative 'Cultural Heritage and Global Change: a new challenge for Europe';

7. the adoption of participatory approaches in the EU actions for the European Capitals of Culture and European Heritage Label [6];

RECOGNISING THAT participatory governance of cultural heritage [7]:

8. offers opportunities to foster democratic participation, sustainability and social cohesion and to face the social, political and demographic challenges of today;

9. seeks the active involvement of relevant stakeholders in the framework of public action — i.e. public authorities and bodies, private actors, civil society organisations, NGOs, the volunteering sector and interested people — in decision-making, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of cultural heritage policies and programmes to increase accountability and transparency of public resource investments as well as to build public trust in policy decisions;

10. contributes to increasing awareness about the values of cultural heritage as a shared resource, thus reducing the risk of misuse and increasing social and economic benefits;

11. supports contemporary cultural, artistic and creative works which are tightly related to identity and values and often based on traditional know-how and intangible heritage of people, and may therefore represent the cultural heritage of generations to come;

12. helps triggering new opportunities brought by globalisation, digitisation and new technologies which are changing the way cultural heritage is created, accessed and used;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO:

13. develop multilevel and multi-stakeholder governance frameworks which recognise cultural heritage as a shared resource by strengthening the links between the local, regional, national and European levels of governance of cultural heritage, with due respect to the principle of subsidiarity, so that benefits for people are envisaged at all levels;

14. promote the involvement of relevant stakeholders by ensuring that their participation is possible at all stages of the decision-making process;

15. promote governance frameworks which recognise the importance of the interaction between tangible, intangible and digital cultural heritage and which address, respect and enhance its social, cultural, symbolic, economic and environmental values;

16. promote governance frameworks that facilitate the implementation of cross-cutting policies, enabling cultural heritage to contribute to objectives in different policy areas, including to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;

17. develop synergies between sustainable tourism strategies and the local cultural and creative sectors, also through promoting governance frameworks which actively involve local people, in order to foster sustainable quality cultural tourism offer and contribute to the revitalisation of urban and rural areas, whilst safeguarding the integrity and maintaining the cultural value of heritage and balancing economic opportunities and the well-being of citizens;

18. make appropriate use of EU as well as national funding for these purposes;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE AND WITH DUE REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, TO:

19. cooperate on the issues related to participatory governance of cultural heritage, including in the framework of the Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018 [8], in order to identify and disseminate best practices and increase the capacity of the cultural heritage sector to engage with those issues effectively;

20. promote the transmission of traditional skills and knowledge across generations as well as their innovative use and cross-fertilisation through scientific and technological developments;

21. make use of digital means in order to increase access to and participation in the governance of cultural heritage for all social groups;

22. explore the role of virtual communities in the development and implementation of cultural heritage policies, in the support to cultural heritage management, in the knowledge development and in funding (e.g. through crowd-sourcing and crowd-funding);

23. make concrete progress on the governance of Europeana [9] in order to guarantee its long-term sustainability and its development as a cultural heritage-driven project, as well as to facilitate its link with education, cultural tourism and other sectors; promote, where appropriate, the reuse of digital cultural heritage content in order to enhance cultural diversity and stimulate the use of heritage knowledge in contemporary artistic expression and by cultural and creative sectors;

24. promote civic participation in the framework of a smart development model for European cities which actively integrates cultural heritage in order to contribute to the innovation and revitalisation of European towns, connecting them to related sites and territories, promoting their attractiveness as well as attracting investments, new economic activities and enterprises;

25. follow up the Communication 'Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe' to work together on the development of a comprehensive European strategy for cultural heritage;

26. enhance cooperation with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and Unesco to promote a participatory approach to cultural heritage governance;

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

27. promote evidence-based research on the impact of participatory approaches in cultural heritage policies and governance in order to contribute to the development of strategic approaches to cultural heritage;

28. continue the dialogue with civil society organisations and platforms in cultural heritage-related policy areas and consider to present a proposal for a 'European Year of Cultural Heritage'.

([1]) OJ C 393, 19.12.2012, p. 8.

([2]) OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 36.

([3]) doc. 12150/14.

([4]) UN conference 'The Future We Want' (Rio de Janeiro, June 2012); Unesco congress 'Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies' (Hangzhou, May 2013); Unesco forum 'Culture, Creativity and Sustainable Development. Research, Innovation, Opportunities' (Florence, October 2014).

([5]) Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (Faro Convention, 2005).

([6]) OJ L 132, 3.5.2014, p. 1 and OJ L 303, 22.11.2011, p. 1.

([7]) Cultural heritage is tangible, intangible and digital as defined in the Council conclusions of 21 May 2014.

([8]) OJ C 463, 23.12.2014, p. 4.

([9]) As stated in the Council conclusions of 10 May 2012 on the digitisation and on-line accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation (OJ C 169, 15.6.2012, p. 5).