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**Cultural Policies in Europe:
A Compendium of Basic Facts and Trends**

1st Compendium Authors' Meeting

**Council of Europe, Strasbourg,
17-18 January 2002**

Room 6

REPORT

A. OPENING

The Head of the Cultural Policy and Action Department, Ms Vera Boltho, opened the meeting and welcomed the participants (Appendix 1), in particular Ms Pirkko Rainesalo, Chair of the Culture Committee, Mr Giorgio Ruffolo, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport of the European Parliament, and Mr Antonio V. Zapatero, Culture Unit, DG 10 of the European Commission. She proposed Ms Rainesalo for the Chair and asked to invert items 4. and 5. on the agenda due to other commitments of the EU representatives.

Ms Pirkko Rainesalo took the Chair and thanked the participants for their longstanding engagement for the Compendium, which had started many years ago as a data collection and had fast developed into a most efficient database and network of partners. The Culture Committee considered the Compendium as its flagship programme with a unique development potential as an instrument to monitor cultural policies in all member States of the Council of Europe.

The revised agenda was adopted (Appendix 2).

B. PRESENTATIONS

The European Union cultural observatory project

Mr Giorgio Ruffolo, referring to article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, which stressed co-operation in the cultural field, welcomed the opportunity to meet representatives actively working on a most important project in the Council of Europe framework. The European Parliament had confirmed the role of culture in furthering European unity through its Report (A5-0281/2001) and subsequent Resolution (2000/2323 (INI)) on cultural co-operation in the European Union, both adopted last year. In opening new horizons for cultural activities going beyond the 15 EU member States, the groundwork done by the Council of Europe was well recognised and close contacts for common action had been established. The convergence of values in national, regional and local cultures, which might be called 'unity of diversities', should find its expression in practical consequences. Thus, the European Parliament had suggested an action plan and the setting up of a European observatory on cultural co-operation aiming at enhanced information exchange, co-ordination, identification and promotion of best practices regarding the cultural policies of member States. The proposal found a favourable echo in numerous circles, and the European Commission was now invited to act accordingly. The door to a wider co-operation was open.

Mr Antonio V. Zapatero confirmed the impact of the 'Ruffolo Report' as a change from managing culture to developing culture through co-operation. In this light all cultural programmes of the EU would be evaluated. The Compendium, which might be considered a revolution in the field, could possibly pave the way towards practical co-operation between the two organisations. A feasibility study would be launched concerning the creation of the European observatory, followed by a call for tender.

Compendium and other presentations

Ms Danielle Cliche presented the Compendium as one of the largest online information systems on cultural policies in the world. Its system of partnership involving public bodies, independent researchers and cultural policy specialists, was a "living observatory" for cultural policies, an interactive, pan-European information resource, pooling policy trends and facts. The web version counted about 15.000 users worldwide last year. Together with Mr Joerg Torkler from Medianale, she also presented the newly designed web-based version of the Compendium, available at <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/>.

Mr Greg Baeker, Council of Europe consultant, introduced his findings on the present Compendium situation and presented his proposals as to the future development of the project.

Mr Daniel Théron presented the HEREIN project to be viewed on www.european-heritage.net.

C. DISCUSSION

The main points emerging from the discussion were:

- a) Compendium quality: the Compendium was a high quality product, ERICarts and the Council of Europe were to be complimented for its realisation, web-design and management; the authors' guide for compiling contributions proved highly useful;
- b) Cost-benefit relationship: compared to similar initiatives, the Compendium had an excellent cost-benefit relationship, which was primarily due to its networking structure and the immense amount of voluntary work that went into it. However, if the high standard and quality of the Compendium was to be maintained, then additional resources needed to be found to transfer the relationship from one based on networking alone to more professional working conditions;
- c) Compendium use: the structured approach, based on a common grid, led to a standardisation in presenting national cultural data, thus facilitating comparative reading and allowing for a learning process that should lead to the improvement of national policies;
- d) Enlargement: the Compendium should eventually cover all 48 States signatories to the European Cultural Convention;
- e) Comparability and statistics: in spite of standardised headings, national entries reflected the diversity of approaches taken by national governments in the development of their particular cultural policy models. Reliability of statistics was an important topic, which should be given further attention. Co-operation may be sought with the existing European Union 'Eurostat' group. Its forthcoming meeting in Luxembourg was an opportunity for discussion. Several authors offered participation in the development of the Compendium project and pooling their work on indicators and instruments for the benefit of the project;
- f) New subjects: in line with Council of Europe priorities and activity programmes, the Compendium should present more extensively items like cultural diversity. The results of transversal studies should be included with special emphasis on community aspects. The grid should consider better reflecting regional structures and traditions with specific attention to federal systems and policies. Subjects such as the emergence of cultural industries and the impact of new

information technologies; international co-operation (already included under 4.2.2) should have a more prominent place within the grid, as well as cultural heritage issues.

g) Text and/or web versions: although the main emphasis was to be laid on the web version and its development, in particular on links to be inserted, a printed version was still considered necessary; the Council of Europe/European Union HEREIN (Heritage Information Network) project was very useful as it could cover the heritage aspects of cultural policies; links to the HEREIN web site from the relevant section/profile in the web-based Compendium were at present created for national entries already available in both systems, a harmonisation of approaches and data was desirable; the web version offered the opportunity to give access to additional language versions of national contributions, which existed already in some cases;

h) Status of authors: the Compendium author should be a qualified researcher outside the relevant civil service, but with close links to it, e.g. a member of a national or international cultural policy observatory. He/she should present a factual and critical approach to cultural policy; his/her status should be enhanced and the Steering Committee for Culture was invited to formulate an opinion on this matter. It was suggested that a short CV be included in the Compendium.

i) Copyright: any user, including authors, should quote the Compendium reference correctly as spelled out in the web-version of the Compendium, since individual texts were part of a comprehensive exercise.

D. CONCLUSIONS

The visibility of the Compendium was yet to be enhanced (flyer, language versions), the need for more consistent and stable financing fully recognised; the Council of Europe and its Steering Committee for Culture were urged to find additional resources and ensure long term political and material support for the project.

A good balance between the ideal of comparability and the necessary individuality of country profiles was to be ensured. The grid, as a flexible instrument, was to be enlarged and adapted to changing priorities but not on an annual basis; however, the rhythm of annual updates before the summer break was confirmed, yet allowing for immediate changes in obvious cases; it should be extended towards a regular monitoring of cultural policy and practice in member States; the need for more resources and support towards continuous and high-quality updating was strongly underlined and the vision of a permanent "observatory" further developed.

Participants confirmed their wish to co-operate within the Compendium context also in the future; an annual meeting was desirable in order to guarantee the continued quality and harmonisation of the Compendium project.

With a view to the possible formal creation of a cultural observatory by the European Commission, the participants insisted on maximum exploitation/synergies of already existing institutes with a European vocation rather than the creation of yet another structure, so as to avoid duplication of work and waste of resources

The Chair thanked the participants for their excellent work and enthusiasm for this unique project, and in particular the ERICarts team, and invited those present to a group photo (Appendix 3) to mark this first meeting of the Compendium authors.

Appendix 1

List of participants

Armenia / Arménie

Mr Anahit GALESTYAN
Head of Museums Department, Ministry of Culture, Youth Affairs and Sports,
5 rue Toumanian, AM-37001 Erevan
Fax: +374 2 523 922 / E-mail:

Austria / Autriche

Ms Veronika RATZENBÖCK
Österreichische Kulturdocumentation, Schultergasse 5/15, AT-1010 Wien
Fax: +43 1 533 4989 / E-mail: veronika.ratzenboeck@kulturdocumentation.org

Mr Franz-Otto HOFHECKER
Institut für Kulturmanagement, Karlsplatz 2, AT-1010 Wien
Fax: +43 1 505 20 61 18 / E-mail: hofecker@mhsw.ac.at

Azerbaijan / Azerbaïdjan

Ms Nigar AKHUNDOVA
Chief of Cultural Policy Department, Ministry of Culture,
Government House, Room 412, AZ-370016 Baku
Fax: +994 12 935 605 / E-mail: akhundova@azeurotel.com

Belgium / Belgique

Flemish Community / Communauté flamande
Ms Els BAETEN
Vlaams Theater Instituut, Sainctelettesquare 19, BE-1000 Brussels
Fax: +32 2 203 0205 / E-mail: els@vti.be

French Community / Communauté française
Mme France LEBON
Direction générale de la culture, Ministère de la Communauté française,
44 bd Léopold II, BE-1080 Bruxelles
Fax: +32 2 413 3063 / E-mail: france.lebon@cfwb.be

Canada

Mr John FOOTE
Research Coordinator, Strategic Research and Analysis, Department of Canadian Heritage,
25 Eddy Street, 12th floor, Room 84, CA-Hull, Quebec K1A 0M5
E-mail: John_Foote@pch.gc.ca

Ms Denise HARPER
A/Manager, Content Development, Canadian Cultural Observatory
15 Eddy Street, 3rd floor, 15-3-E, CA-Hull, Quebec K1A 0M5
Fax: +1 819 997 7472 / E-mail: Denise_Harper@pch.gc.ca

Croatia / Croatie

Ms Biserka ČVJETIČANIN
Director, Culturelink (IMO), Ul. Lj.F. Vukotinovica 2, PO Box 303, HR-1000 Zagreb
Fax: +385 1 482 8361 / Email: biserka@irmo.hr

Estonia / Estonie

Mr Mikko LAGERSPETZ
Estonian Institute of Humanities, Salme 12, EE-10413 Tallinn
Fax: +372 641 6423 / E-mail: mikko@ehi.ee

Finland / Finlande

Ms Ritva MITCHELL
Arts Council of Finland, Maneesikatu 7, FI-00171 Helsinki
Fax: +358 9 1341 7060 / E-mail: ritva.mitchell@minedu.fi

France

Mme Sylvie ESCANDE
M. Jean-Cédric DELVAINQUIÈRE
Ministère de la Culture, Département des études et de la prospective,
2 rue Jean Lantier, FR-75001 Paris
Fax: +33 1 40 15 79 99 / E-mail: sylvie.escande@culture.gouv.fr / jean-
cedric.delvainquiere@culture.gouv.fr

Germany / Allemagne

Ms Lydia SASNOVSKIS
Ms Cornelia EBERT
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Auswärtiges Amt), Werderscher Markt 1, DE-10117 Berlin
Fax: +49 1888 172 264 / E-mail:

Greece / Grèce

Mr Constantinos DALLAS
Independent Expert, 20 Zephyrou Street, GR- 145 63 Kephisia
Fax: +30 10 8140 424 / E-mail: costis@criticalpublics.com

Holy See / Saint-Siège

Mr René TOMADA

Kornblumenweg 1, DE-78465 Konstanz (Germany/Allemagne)

Tel.: +49 7531 942 549 / E-mail: Rene.Tomada@uni-konstanz.de

Hungary / Hongrie

Mr Peter INKEI

Director, Regional Observatory on Financing Culture in East-Central Europe, Pf. 27, HU-1251
Budapest

Fax: +36 1 487 0162 / E-mail: bo@budobs.org

Italy / Italie

Ms Roberta ALBEROTANZA

Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Direction générale pour la promotion de la coopération culturelle
(DGPCC - Uff. III), Piazzale della Farnesina 1, IT-00197 Roma

Fax: +39 06 36 91 71 78 / E-mail : robertaalberotanza@hotmail.com

Ms Erminia SCIACCHITANO

Architetto Direttore, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali - Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e
la Documentazione, Via di San Michele 18, IT-00153 Roma

Fax: +39 06 58 33 23 13 / E-mail: sciacchitano@iccd.beniculturali.it

Latvia / Lettonie

Ms Solvita KRESE

Director, Latvian Center for Contemporary Arts, Alberta str. 13, LV-1010 Riga

Fax: +371 70 39 283 / E-mail: skrese@lcca.lv

Lithuania / Lituanie

Mr Viktoras LIUTKUS

Gelvonu str. 48-11, LT-2010 Vilnius

Fax: +370 2 790 304 / E-mail: v.liutkus@post.skynet.lt

Netherlands / Pays-Bas

Mr Cas SMITHUIJSEN

Boekman Foundation, Research and Information in Arts and Cultural Policies,
Herengracht 415, NL-1017 BP Amsterdam

Fax: +31 20 638 5239 / E-mail: C.Smithuijsen@boekman.nl

Poland / Pologne

Ms Dorota ILCZUK
16 Wesola str., PL-05-270 Marki/K.W-wy
E-mail: dilczuk@post.pl

Romania / Roumanie

Mr Vladimir SIMON
Directeur général des Relations internationales, Ministère de la Culture,
1 Piata Presei Libere, RO-71341 Bucarest
Fax: +40 1 222 6282 / E-mail: simon@eurocult.ro

Russian Federation / Fédération de Russie

Ms Tatiana FEDOROVA
Mr Kirill RAZLOGOV, Director
Russian Institute for Cultural Research, Bersenevskaya nab. 20, RU-109072 Moscow
Fax: +7 095 959 1017 / E-mail: riku@dol.ru

Slovenia / Slovénie

Ms Vesna ČOPIČ
Ministry of Culture (Ministerstvo za Kulturo), Cankarjeva 5, SI-1000 Ljubljana
Fax: 386 1 478 2518 / E-mail: vesna.copic@gov.si

Sweden / Suède

Ms Gudrun VAHLQUIST
Statens Kulturråd, Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs,
Langa Raden 4, Skeppsholmen, SE-103 98 Stockholm
Fax: 46 8 519 264 99 / E-mail: gudrun.vahlquist@kur.se

Switzerland / Suisse

Mr Christoph WECKERLE
Koordinator Forschung und Entwicklung, Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst,
Ausstellungsstraße 60, CH-8031 Zürich
Fax: +41 1 446 2122 / E-mail: weckerle@spectraweb.ch

Ms Karen WEICK
Seestrasse 113, CH-8002 Zürich
Fax: +41 1 446 2653, E-mail: karenweick@aol.com

Ukraine

Mme Tatiana CHPAKOVITCH

Chef de la Division des relations culturelles et humanitaires, Ministère des Affaires étrangères,
Mykhailivska pl. 1, UA-01018 Kyiv

Fax: +380 44 226 3169 / E-mail: ukgs@mfa.gov.ua

United Kingdom / Royaume-Uni

Mr Rod FISHER

Director, International Intelligence on Culture, 4 Baden Place, Crosby Row, UK-London SE1 1YW

Fax: +44 20 7403 2009 / E-mail: enquiry@intelculture.org

ERICarts / MEDIANALE

Ms Danielle CLICHE

Ms Margrit MÜLLER

Mr Andreas WIESAND, Secretary General

ERICarts, Dahlmannstr. 26, DE-53113 Bonn (Germany/Allemagne)

Fax: +49 228 241 318 / E-mail: cliche@ericarts.org / margrit@ericarts.org / wiesand@ericarts.org

Mr Jörg TORKLER

Medianale GROUP, Rittershausstr. 28, DE-53113 Bonn (Germany/Allemagne)

Fax: +49 228 241 318 /

EUROPEAN UNION / UNION EUROPÉENNE

European Parliament / Parlement européen

M. Giorgio RUFFOLO

Vice-Chairman of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport /

Vice-président de la Commission de la culture, de la jeunesse, de l'éducation, des médias et des sports

European Parliament, Bât. Altiero Spinelli, 15G115, Wiertzstraat 60, B-1047 Bruxelles

European Commission / Commission européenne

Mr Antonio V. ZAPATERO

Culture Unit, DG 10, European Commission,

Rue de la Loi 200, BE-1049 Bruxelles (Belgium/Belgique)

Fax: +32 2 299 9283 / E-mail:

OTHER PARTICIPANTS / AUTRES PARTICIPANTS

Mr Greg BAEKER

Arts & Cultural Planning, 43 Queen's Park Cresc, East, Suite 306, CA-Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C3
(Canada)

Fax: +1 416 979 7947 / E-mail: gbaeker@culturalplanning.ca

Ms Pirkko RAINESALO
Chair of the Steering Committee for Culture
Counsellor for Cultural Affairs, Department for Culture Policy, Sport and Youth Policy,
Ministry of Education, PO Box 29, FI-00023 Helsinki (Finland/Finlande)
Fax: +358 9 13 41 79 44 / E-mail: pirkko.rainesalo@minedu.fi

COUNCIL OF EUROPE SECRETARIAT / SECRÉTARIAT DU CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Mr Bendik RUGAAS
Director General of Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport /
Directeur général de l'éducation, de la culture et du patrimoine, de la jeunesse et du sport
Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 50 / E-mail: bendik.rugaas@coe.int

Mr José-Maria BALLESTER
Director of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage /
Directeur de la culture et du patrimoine culturel et naturel
Tel: +33 3 88 41 22 50 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 27 55 / E-mail: jose-maria.ballester@coe.int

Cultural Policy and Action Department / Service des politiques et actions culturelles

Ms Vera BOLTHO
Head of the Department / Chef du Service
Tel: +33 3 88 41 21 73 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: vera.boltho@coe.int

Mr Wolfdietrich ELBERT
Head of the Cultural Policy Division / Chef de la Division des politiques culturelles
Tel: +33 3 88 41 24 06 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: wolfdietrich.elbert@coe.int

Ms Sandrine MAROLLEAU
Assistant / Assistante
Tel: +33 3 88 41 37 97 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: sandrine.marolleau@coe.int

Cultural Policies Research and Development Unit / Unité de recherche et de développement sur les politiques culturelles

Ms Kathrin MERKLE
Head of the Unit / Chef de l'Unité
Tel: +33 3 88 41 28 84 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: kathrin.merkle@coe.int

Ms Gesa BÜTTNER
Information Manager / Information et documentation
Tel: +33 3 88 41 26 421 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: gesa.buttner@coe.int

Ms Evelyne PORRI-BILLU
Assistant / Assistante
Tel: +33 3 88 41 26 48 / Fax: +33 3 88 41 37 82 / E-mail: evelyne.porri@coe.int