

# Mandagmorgen

## Improving Europe's cultural capital in times of crisis

### PROLOGUE: STATE OF THE UNION

EUROPE has had a lot of bad press these days. Unemployment and populism are on the rise across the continent. Politicians are arguing over Greek debts, and governments are spending billions to save fragile banks.

Large populations are suffering under the economic depression and many blame the European Union, Brussels and the euro for all of these ills. Political leaders like Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron are realizing that status quo is no longer an option. Germany and France are pushing for deeper integration and most of the other EU countries are following, except for Great Britain which has opted out.

At the same time new global powers like China, India and Brazil are about to turn the world economy upside down with their upcoming middle class of an extra three billion consumers over the next two decades. It will change the world completely. This globalization process is a great opportunity for Europe and European exporters, but it is also a historic transformation that involves a lot of systemic risks. The way we consume and produce in a world with seven billion people is not sustainable, as climate change clearly shows, but with an extra three billion world citizens we are under extreme pressure to change our societies, our consumption models and energy systems with high speed. We simply have to find new, innovative ways to human and economic growth that are sustainable in a low carbon economy. Europe has to take leadership in this process.

But in order to succeed we need to mobilize all our human creativity, talents and capacity for innovation to create smarter, more sustainable and more inclusive growth. Artists, cultural institutions and creative businesses will have crucial roles in this task. There is nothing like art and culture to mobilize the minds, imaginations and passions of the people, and in this field Europe has a great tradition and many cultural resources to build upon. Europe is in need of as much positive and creative energy as possible that can contribute to this effort.

Many cultural institutions have experienced financial cuts during the crisis, as have many other sectors in society, but instead of ending up feeling like beaten victims of the crisis, artists and cultural institutions should see themselves as an important part of the solution. If artists and cultural institutions take co-responsibility in finding

new solutions and asking the critical questions needed in this difficult period, they should also be able to inspire a new political mindset in nation states and in Europe. Indeed, the crisis is also a great opportunity to realign our European community and reinvent ourselves in a better and more sustainable way.

Culture has for many years been a marginal area in European Union politics and in the common EU budget. The main resources for culture, education, research, innovation and media are still national budgets, corporate and private funding, but in the future EU Member States could do better in pooling resources for new cross-border cultural activities. Culture should also be given a greater role in all kinds of political initiatives, and politicians need to find new ways to integrate cultural initiatives and communication in their agendas.

We need to rethink the role of art and culture in society. Culture is also business and it should play a proactive role in the societal development. Supporting culture and creative industries is indeed good business for society. Culture and creative industries will definitely have stronger importance for growth and innovation in the future.

### 10 challenges for cultural innovation in Europe:

#### 1. MORE UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The English language has won the linguistic battle as it has become the common platform of communication within Europe and the rest of the world. But large proportions of Europe's cultural production are not accessible to huge parts of the European public because they are being created in other languages. Languages are undeniably part of Europe's cultural wealth, but all of these linguistic differences also make it harder to create a common cultural sphere.

Europe's cultural DNA is based on this linguistic plurality and the mixture of intercultural differences that enriches our common heritage and cooperation. The design of future European programs needs to build on the plurality and complexity of the different nations, regions and cultural institutions that will in turn develop and be inspired by an interdependent process of common understanding. Any intent to simplify and reduce European spirits and cultures in to one well-defined unity is impossible, but

art often articulates itself through a universal meta-language that people can share across borders. Europe and European culture is defined by a certain element of chaos, intercultural interchange and a complex plurality, but that is indeed what makes Europe such an exciting project. As Vaclav Havel once said in a speech, the intellectual and spiritual basis of European civilization is that “we respect the notion of unity in diversity and share a determination to foster creative cooperation among the different nations, ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, and spheres of civilization that exist in Europe.”

Europe is full of examples of film, literature and theatre that have successfully been translated, adapted and circulated across borders in Europe and to wider global audiences. But still, as Europeans watch the news, talk to their friends and their colleagues in their native languages their perception of the world often tends to become a mixture of what is happening on their own nation’s cultural scene and what comes in from the powerful English language media. This sometimes creates a flawed picture of what is happening in the world, and one could argue that the slogan ‘united in diversity’ is a hoax. Real European cultural exchange will not happen before a new common language is being spoken across the continent. It should not be forgotten that only half of Europe’s population is comfortable having a conversation in English. This ought to be different, and in the future all European citizens will have to learn to speak fluently in English in addition to their mother tongue. This would make it much easier to move across borders and for artists and cultural actors to inspire each other, share ideas and contribute to the ever closer common European public sphere and a richer cultural life.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. English has become the de facto common language in Europe. What should be done to facilitate the ability of all Europeans to communicate in English? And how do we secure that cultural specificities are not lost in translation?
- b. Are cultural productions within individual European nations mostly national affairs, with only a few successes breaking through to an international audience? What kinds of new initiatives could the EU take in order to strengthen a common European public sphere?

#### 2. A MORE COSMOPOLITAN CULTURE

All traditional identities will be transformed in the 21st Century, and it no longer makes any sense for a modern European citizen simply to define oneself by a national identity and a national culture. If Europeans continue as prisoners of the nation state and national culture, they will not be capable of solving the global crisis or playing a proactive role in the globalization process. In the future Europeans must learn to handle multiple identities in a constant reflexive process. National identity and the cultural fabric will continue to have great importance for many citizens in Europe, and people might even feel very proud about this. But they will also increasingly define themselves through overlapping identities and biographies like cultural, social, political, economic, intellectual, virtual, personal and sexual identities. In that sense European citizens will in practice start to live in a more and more cos-

mopolitan culture which does not betray national culture, but also becomes open to other identities and cultures. “Each person is both a citizen of the world and a citizen of the city; each has both roots and wings,” writes German sociologist Ulrich Beck.

The new European cosmopolitanism is not an abstract ideological fantasy, but practical and realistic in nature. The great majority of Europeans live in cities, and these are increasingly multicultural cities with a great diversity of people, art, music, films, literature, food and technologies from many countries and cultures. Traditional lifestyles are constantly challenged by an ever more cosmopolitan culture and consumption pattern. Cultural purity in this process ends up as an oxymoron, as people acquire cultural influences from many places during their lives and modern Europeans have become tourists all over the world.

Some citizens feel threatened by the increasing “invasion” of otherness and foreign cultures and they tend to stick to their national and ethnic roots, but in practice they cannot stop this development because as consumers they are inevitable a part of globalization. Their personal biographies are being fundamentally transformed in this process, whether in their corporal or virtual life. Many individuals are using personal biographies as a strategy to handle complex systemic contradictions, but personal biographies are being universalized on the Internet through Facebook, LinkedIn and other social media platforms. This development is filled with paradoxes on the personal and systemic level, and these paradoxes challenge artists and cultural producers to find a new language and create new imaginary landscapes that are able to capture this transformation.

Many of the best European artists in history have used the broad cultural fountain of differences and the ability to travel across borders to gain new inspiration. Cosmopolitan culture with all its mixtures and new combinations is much more exciting and inspiring than closed cultures behind closed frontiers. Even behind the strongest national cultures you will find many different streams of cosmopolitan ideas and sources that are changing the language, art and popular culture in the European nation states. Culture cannot be rooted; it flows, and at its most inspiring it can even get wings.

Novelist Salman Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homelands* “celebrates hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas, politics, movies, songs. It rejoices in mongrelization and fears the absolutism of the Pure. *Mélange*, hotchpotch, a bit of this and a bit of that is how newness enters the world. It is the great possibility that mass migration gives the world.”

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. How can art and culture contribute to creating a more cosmopolitan and open culture in Europe? Examples please!
- b. Do we need to pool a greater share of the cultural budgets in the Member States for cross-border EU initiatives in order to strengthen a cosmopolitan identity in Europe?

### 3. INCLUSIVENESS IN AN ERA OF MOBILITY AND MIGRATION

Europe has since World War II become a continent of immigration, but it is still a long way from becoming a real melting pot like the USA. Foreign populations from the Middle East, Africa and South Asia have become more and more marginalised in poorer parts of Europe's big cities, and tensions have arisen between them and parts of the majority populations of European origin. These tensions are being exploited by political movements, and governments all over Europe have started to emphasise the need of these immigrant populations to adopt what is called 'European culture' and 'values'. In France, Germany, the UK and other countries the very concept of a multicultural society has been questioned even though demographic developments do not leave any doubt: Europe's original population is ageing, and without mass immigration the very core of the European social market economy will not be sustainable.

The most recent Eurostat account of immigration within the 27 EU Member States shows that in 2008 3.8 million new citizens settled in one of these countries. Two million were other Europeans, mainly Romanians, Poles and Bulgarians, while Moroccans constituted the largest proportion of the very diverse group of 1.8 million citizens coming from outside the EU. A greater number of people are moving from Eastern Europe to Western Europe than there are from the global south to the rich European continent. The growing human mobility across borders is a great challenge to the European welfare model and traditional national cultures, but is also a great opportunity to develop a new inclusive and more cosmopolitan culture.

Culture, education and creativity are main drivers in the process of promoting inclusiveness. And this inclusiveness is no longer only a moral obligation – it has become a strategic economic necessity even though unemployment as a result of the crisis will remain high across Europe for as long as economic growth does not take off. In French-speaking Europe the integration of North African immigrants has come some way with quite a number of these immigrants doing well in film, literature, sport and politics. But many of the immigrants from both North Africa and from the south of the continent are still living marginalised and vulnerable lives. In Scandinavia and Germany many Turks and Pakistanis have found new homes, and young women in particular from these two groups are making impressive results in higher education becoming doctors, lawyers and empowered citizens of Europe. These young women of immigrant origin relatively outnumbered young women of Danish origin in higher education in 2010. The presence of a growing number of Muslims in Europe and their wishes to build mosques do create tensions at a time when Christian churches are losing audiences in great numbers and when nonbelievers seem to be the fastest growing part of the 'original' population.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. Many European politicians have over the last decade emphasised Europe's Christian roots. Is this necessary? Do you see religion as a barrier to inclusion and integration? Or could the different European religions – including Euro-Islam – play an important role in creating a more inclusive culture?

- b. Do you see culture and artists as having a special role or obligation in fostering inclusiveness? Examples please!

### 4. CULTURE AS A GREAT EUROPEANIZER

Popular European events like Champions League Football and the Eurovision Song Contest, where millions of Europeans are spectators of a shared competition, have done more for the creation of a common European public and cultural space than Article 167 on Culture in the Union Treaty. It is of crucial importance to the development of a stronger common cultural understanding across borders that Europe promotes more transnational competitions and television shows that capture the minds and views of citizens across borders. More than 100 million people watch the Champions League final in football and the games between European clubs are a conversation matter for millions of Europeans during a year, and in this sense they are contributing to a common European public space.

Fine literature, opera, theatre and classical music also play an important role in defining the meaning of Europe in all its plurality, and their tales, images and sounds have inspired many generations of Europeans, but they do not have the same instant and massive appeal among citizens across borders. Art is a civilizing force for Europe, but in many cases artists are not reaching beyond visitors to museums and galleries, and in this sense the capacity of art as Europeanizer has – with few exceptions – been rather limited. Popular mass culture is commercialized, sold and exchanged at a much faster speed than classical cultural production, where slowness and quality often go hand in hand.

The whole idea of memory is also transformed in this process, or as the Italian semiologist, Umberto Eco, says, "culture is essentially the graveyard for books and other lost subjects."

European cultural policies should still give support the classical arts and its proliferation because it enriches the quality of our personal lives and cultural life in Europe. But in the coming years the EU's cultural programmes should consider diversifying their support to include even more popular events and competitions. Europe-wide mass-cultural initiatives with a great exposure to the broader public through television and social media sites are needed to create a stronger common European sentiment and a stronger cosmopolitan culture.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. Should the EU and its Member States promote new or existing transnational cultural events in arts and culture – like the Champions League or the Eurovision Song Contest – in order to strengthen the creation of a common European cultural playing field?
- b. Can you give some good examples of new innovative initiatives among young artists, cultural actors and small creative companies that need Pan-European exposure and could benefit from more support from EU and Member States?

### 5. EUROPE'S DIGITAL CHALLENGE

Most art and cultural productions will be digitized in the coming years, and it might even end up as a luxury not to

go digital. The digitalization of culture seems unstoppable and will expand to every part of cultural life. More than 225 million Europeans are already on Facebook, which is rapidly approaching one billion digital users worldwide. Each day YouTube streams four billion videos and 60 hours of video is uploaded every minute in a social media revolution which is changing the way people are consuming, sharing and creating culture. Google has become the new global marketplace of reputation, and as Wired magazine editor Chris Anderson has said, their currency is measured in Page Rank algorithms. Europeans are the most intense users of digital media, but Americans are still dominating the digital revolution as platform producers and owners. The USA's new digital hegemony has profound consequences for cultural life and creative companies in Europe. European media publishers, for instance, are witnessing a historical watershed in an add-revenue stream that is moving away from Europe to the new American-owned digital superpowers. Europe is at risk of being left behind in this competition. Traditional business models are in urgent need of being redefined.

But instead of seeing Facebook, Google and YouTube as fundamental threats to the traditional cultural industries and their business models, one has to understand that these new media companies will become important partners in the transformation to new communicative platforms. Sharing among citizens on social media platforms will experience a boom in coming years, and people will become co-producers of information and culture. Traditional cultural institutions have to become a part of the social media revolution and communicate and share content much more intensively with citizens and customers on the new platforms.

On the same hand it is important that political decision makers create new open platforms and meeting places where artists, hackers, designers and creative companies can experiment more freely with new ideas and technologies without a strict focus on future commercialization. Europe needs a strong and flourishing milieu of creative meeting places in all of the urban hotspots on the continent. Furthermore, Europe lacks a stronger participation of venture capitalist, funds and investors willing to support the new upcoming ideas and companies from the creative clusters. The Swedish upstart company Spotify is a good example of a fast-moving European player that is trying to create a new music universe where users can share their music collections on the Internet. But the sharing culture also is a new challenge to the music industry and it contributes to transforming the way Europeans listen to music.

Patent and copyright rules are still important incentives for businesses to invest in the creative industry, but political decision makers in Europe have to launch an open public debate on how to handle the real dilemmas between classical business interests and the proliferation of creative processes that have to be more open, free and sharing in nature. Who owns an idea? Could rethinking the concept of copyright in this digital age also become part of a common strategy to promote creativity? The fast digitalization of culture underlines that this debate is greatly needed. New ways to administrate and improve the sharing of creative commons should be considered in this process. Europe could take the lead in facilitating a new and more

open platform: On the one hand it will give incentives for investments in creative ideas, and on the other hand it will use public institutions, infrastructure, meeting places and policies to improve conditions for the creative workers and clusters in Europe.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. The digital shift marks a revolution in the sharing of knowledge and creativity. Please give us your best examples of artists and cultural entrepreneurs who have exploited the new digital reality.
- b. Some European Member States are considering introducing new taxes and regulations to redirect income generated on digital platforms to creative artists. Is this a way forward or is it a cul-de-sac?

#### 6. CULTURAL SOLUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL CRISIS

In the 21st century Europe must globalize and help to find innovative solutions for the World's biggest challenges or the EU will not survive. Art and culture will play a crucial role in this transformation because they have a strong capacity to change people's mindsets. We need a new mindset to understand that the greatest challenges for society today are global by nature, and there are no Walls left to protect Europe from the global and interconnected challenges of climate change, financial deleveraging, the resource crisis, food security, mass migrations, and global poverty. Traditional political initiatives are often insufficient in handling this interconnected crisis. All European states, cities, companies and citizens are facing a completely new global risk landscape where they have to navigate differently and move beyond business-as-usual scenarios.

Turbulence and increased vulnerability will in the coming years be a fundamental condition for even the most powerful players in the global arena. The national economies have shown themselves to be more vulnerable than ever before. In 2007 and 2008, the global financial system experienced a rapid meltdown that pitched the world economy into recession, and until today it has had a hugely negative impact on the stability and cohesion of the eurozone. European artists and cultural institutions have also experienced the consequences of the crisis. But nobody should expect that economic and financial conditions will become much easier in the coming years. All states are under a huge market pressure to strengthen finances and cut public debt. And even though citizens are expected to consume an even higher share of the total household income on culture, one should not expect that the total amount of money for cultural institutions will increase substantially. Culture was a part of the financial bubble economy and it is now part of a new era of moderation. This new era will not be an era of boredom and restraint. The need for innovation, new creative ideas and experimentation has never been bigger. There is nothing like global climate change to make the need for a new and smarter design of society more important.

Global emissions are still accelerating and, according to the international energy agency, IEA, the world perhaps only has five years to avoid reaching a tipping point of irreversible climate changes.

All European societies have to speed up the transition to a fossil free energy system and low carbon economy, but the traditional business models and economic incentives

are still not adapted to this task.

The time pressure is huge, and we can only succeed in the transformation if European artists, cultural institutions and creative companies engage in finding new creative and innovative solutions. European societies are not able to make it if culture is not a part of the solution.

A deeper interchange of ideas between cultural institutions and creative companies in Europe will be needed in this process and a stronger transnational cultural partnership will help societies develop a faster and more innovative response to the global challenges. The good news is that the Internet, new social media platforms and an explosive use of communication technologies 24-7 offer good conditions to facilitate transnational cooperation and partnerships. The possibilities to develop new innovative solutions across borders have never been better. Now it is up to artists, cultural institutions and creative companies to use this possibility and take co-responsibility in finding those solutions, in designing new sustainable cities and in articulating a new mindset.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. How can artists and cultural institutions take a more active part in the development of new creative solutions to speed up the transition towards a more sustainable society and low carbon economy?
- b. Please mention examples of cultural projects that have contributed to increased social and environmental sustainability.

#### 7. INNOVATING THROUGH CULTURE

Future European growth depends more on a strengthening of cultural and creative industries than on continued rescue packages for the financial sector. Further state subsidies for the financial sector are only short term measures, and it is uncertain whether they will fuel investments in innovative companies that are able to create the next wave of growth in Europe. The cultural and creative industries are two of the most important industries in Europe and they have a big growth potential. They represent about 4.5 percent of GDP in EU-27 and last decade they delivered greater growth in jobs and turnover than many other industries. We still lack international statistics to measure the full and broader impact of the cultural and creative industries, but without doubt they will have an increasing importance. Many successful international companies have started to involve artists and a new creative generation of designers in their innovation processes, and they have increased their market share. In the next phase of global competition the cultural and creative industries can help Europe to develop new unique products and services, which are not easily copied by China, and other upcoming economic challengers to the global market. Europe's cultural and creative capital gives it an important competitive advantage. It is not only the commercial successes of European music, movies and literature, but the whole range of design, architecture, creative concept-making, software development and research that has to be brought into play.

As the Richard Florida has said: "We are heading towards a new creative economy, where values, knowledge and wealth are developed through creative activities, but still we haven't got a social contract able to handle this change. Politicians should take a leadership on this, but

the problem is that they too often are backward looking."

The whole understanding of innovation needs to be reformulated in order to maximize Europe's creative potential. Where innovation has formerly been an important battlefield for economists, managers and companies, it will in the coming years be formed and improved by ideas and concepts developed by artists, cultural institutions and creative businesses.

Innovation in Europe will become dependent on the crossover activities and cross-border creativity that is produced by artists and cultural institutions. Europe has to improve the possibilities and multiply the platforms and common spaces where artists and creative companies can share experiences, test and experiment with new ideas and creations to improve the dynamism of the European societies. It is in the crossover experiments between art, design, software, new technologies and innovative companies that many of the most exciting new ideas and concepts will be developed in the coming years.

#### QUESTIONS:

- a. How can creative entrepreneurship and innovation be promoted in Europe?
- b. Please give us examples of business corporations and cultural institutions who have successfully integrated young innovative artists and cultural entrepreneurs.

#### 8. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND EXPERIENCES AS DRIVERS FOR GROWTH

Europeans great cultural heritage has a large growth potential that often remains hidden or underutilized. In the coming years cultural heritage and the experience economy will play a much greater role in European economies and it can become an important growth driver. Prestigious museums in London, Paris and other cities are already attracting millions of tourists and are exporting their creative content remarkably through digital platforms and through new concepts of merchandizing. Tourism is already behind nine percent of global GDP, but European culture and heritage is a magnet for tourists from all over the world. At the same time cultural values and heritage are drivers for a broader range of businesses and brands. World class companies like the French luxury group LVMH are exporting high added value products based on Europe's cultural heritage, while Europe's poorer regions are discovering that active marketing of local cultural heritage in cooperation with tourist industries can also generate new income. As mentioned in the EU Commission Green paper "Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries" from 2010, Europe's cultural heritage can be exploited commercially and creatively in many ways from selling reproductions of masterpieces and conducting tours of heritage sites to more indirect uses such as artistic, industrial and gastronomic products. What is needed for this purpose is a highly commercial approach of putting cultural heritage at the center of commercially sustainable economic activity. This is being done with great success in the USA and Canada and, according to the EU Commission, custodians of Europe's cultural heritage can learn a lot from the American and Canadian way of establishing new players in the cultural service industry. In Denmark and Scandinavia New Nordic Cuisine has become a major attraction for gourmands from both

Europe and the rest of the world. This highly creative and very modern gastronomic adventure is drawing massively on regional cultural heritage and it has had major positive effects on smaller local producers of high quality foods. But this still is a very small niche. On a larger scale, Denmark's cultural institutions and tourism industry are currently working on initiatives to exploit, for instance, the great international interest in the Vikings. France and Italy have for decades been the masters of Europe with regards to cultural tourism, and they will surely still attract many of the new wealthy citizens from emerging economies who are showing an ever increasing interest in discovering the charms of old Europe. From 2009 to 2010 the number of tourists from Brazil, China and Russia grew by 46, 19 and 18 percent. In the coming decades the expected boom in global tourism is a huge opportunity for European museums and heritage institutions that should be brought into the center of the EU and its Member States' cultural policies.

#### QUESTIONS:

- What are the biggest barriers to a successful artistic and commercial exploitation of Europe's cultural heritage?
- Please give us examples of artistic and cultural institutions, businesses, regions and individuals who have succeeded in exploiting the market opportunities.

#### 9. EDUCATION AND CREATIVITY WILL CHANGE THE WORLD

Education is the basis of European creativity. Europe is home to some of the world's most prestigious universities, and European Member States are increasingly aware of the strategic importance of adopting innovative educational methods from the early childhood. Music teaching and arts programs can improve a school's environment and facilitate better student achievements in both kindergartens and schools. Music and arts should not be perceived as alternatives to the skills taught in language, mathematics and science classes, but they can contribute to creating a better and more innovative school system. Allowing more time for project-based learning in different classes under good guidance from teachers is also important to develop a new generation of more innovative education that extends from early childhood to the university level. Without the development of more innovative education systems Europe will have a serious problem with future competitiveness.

Education, research and innovation have already been put at the top of the common 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. According to the Commission, Europe suffers from a number of critical weaknesses in its science and innovation system. And compared to its competitors, Europe's patenting performance is weak and it lags behind in developing new products, new processes and new services. To boost productivity and growth it is critically important to generate breakthrough technologies and translate them into new products, processes and services. Europe has taken an early lead in many key areas of technology, but in the face of growing competition its advantage is tenuous and has not translated into an innovative and competitive lead. A renewal of the education system that can improve fundamental skills and help stimulate creativity and innovative thinking among students is crucial for Europe to take the lead again in the global in-

novation race.

Furthermore, it is important to stimulate cross-border cooperation and exchange of ideas because many innovative ideas are created in open networks across borders. The EU can play an important role in this field. A concrete success story is the Erasmus program that will, by the end of 2012, make it possible for three million young Europeans to study in other European countries. The Erasmus program is going to be expanded massively in the next EU budget running from 2014-2020. The overall goal in Europe is to create a European Higher Education Area that will increase European mobility of students, professors and researchers considerably by 2020. Vast areas of education in Europe are still being run by national authorities under national guidelines, and students, professors, researchers and companies are still not benefitting from the free sharing of knowledge and talent that, for instance, gives the USA a huge competitive edge compared to Europe. To develop a more innovative education system cannot be brought forward without a stronger will to change at the national level.

#### QUESTIONS:

- Do arts and culture facilitate learning from primary education and onwards? And is this being apprehended by educational authorities around Europe?
- Please give us examples!

#### 10. COMMUNICATING EUROPE'S CULTURAL CAPITAL

Never miss a great opportunity. The current crisis is a great opportunity, as is every other crisis in human history. Every crisis is a moment of creative destruction and a moment for renewal. This crisis is a unique opportunity to realign and strengthen the European community, and it is necessary for our societies to find new innovative solutions to the growing global challenges that will appear in the coming years. We simply have to reinvent the role of culture and creative industries in the European context. Instead of being marginalized by economics and political negotiations, culture and creative industries should now move to the center of the European cooperation and the European economy. The creative industries and Europe's best and brightest talents will play a crucial role in developing a new innovation model of European companies as a response to growing competition from China and other ambitious new comers exporting high value and designed products.

There are still many obstacles in this process. There are many myths and misunderstandings between artists and companies, but we need to create a new constructive and creative partnership between art and business. We need to develop a new language for Europe's creative economy to succeed in this process and turn the historic misunderstandings into new innovative solutions. Several Member States from Great Britain to the Netherlands and Finland have formulated strategies for the creative industries, and their experiences show it is possible to create new, exciting linkages and partnerships between the different actors.

Many of these best practice examples can be helpful for other European countries, but at the same time the vision has to be broadened out in order to include more frontrunners from artists to game developers. And the whole approach to the role of creativity in society has to be re-

considered.

Creativity and design in themselves do not guarantee that we will have better solutions in the future. A lot of the financial engineering during the last speculative bubble was a result of creativity and radical innovation in the financial sector, and the development of new, highly sophisticated financial instruments contributed to the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Therefore creativity and creative processes have to be reconceptualised as something that also has a certain ethical and moral dimension, i.e. something that helps to make society a better place to live.

It is important to develop a positive and concrete vision of a more creative Europe helping to improve life and build a more sustainable society. Hopefully it will also inspire new generations of young Europeans to be engaged and take part in this new journey. We need to develop radically new and effective forms of communication and media platforms in order to reach the young generations of Europeans. But a more positive and constructive vision of how art, culture and creative industries can be a part of the solution will be a good starting point.

**QUESTIONS:**

- a. What role can arts and culture play in creating new optimism and growth in Europe?
- b. What do crises like those in the 1940s, 1950s and 1980s teach us in regard to the roles of arts and culture? Can the anger and despair created by the crisis become a launching pad for a new era of European creativity?