



## **Consultation on the future "EU2020" Strategy**

This submission is on behalf of the network of **European Union National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC)** which has members operating at arms length from governments in the fields of international cultural relations and co-operation. EUNIC has members in 23 of the member states who operate in all member states and in over 100 countries outside the EU.

EUNIC welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Commission's working document. The challenges of the next decade, from economic to the ecological, are significant and EUNIC welcomes the call for the closer inter-action of the national and European agendas. This approach mirrors the concept of EUNIC where organisations in member states come together to work together and for a European outcome.

We have five comments to make.

### **Transversal nature of social and cultural change**

The working document focuses on economics and employment. In our view the EU2020 strategy needs to put a greater emphasis on the social and the cultural than the working document currently posits. These are the essential underpinnings of the economy. EUNIC suggests that in all areas within the strategy there is explicit recognition of the social and cultural impact of programme objectives with appropriate measures incorporated from the start. This inter-dependency of and recognition of the transversal nature of societal and cultural implications will increase the possibility for successful outcomes. This is a component of the radical changes the EC seeks.

## **Social Cohesion; the society we live in**

The working document recognises the challenges and likely radical changes in the next decade. The decade is starting with economic instability, and as we see in the media, an increase in social tensions in various countries against the “other”: whether migrants from other countries or EU citizens exercising the free movement of labour.

With an increasingly diverse society in cities and in rural areas across the EU, “people to people” programmes need expansion and greater prominence to create a cohesive European citizenship built for today’s society. In our opinion the objectives in these areas will be achieved if there is a concurrent increase in the EU’s engagement in people-to-people programmes across Europe. The Year of Intercultural Dialogue increased awareness of many of the issues and energised many in the civil society sector. However the momentum needs maintaining and indeed increasing. As an element of the changes existing programmes need review to ensure they are reaching a wider section of communities; with greater adaptability to ensure all citizens can benefit. People to people programmes and the arts are key to this and need greater attention.

## **Languages**

A knowledge based economy successfully competing in the world, needs a workforce far better skilled in languages. This applies to both European and the world’s major languages. EUNIC is the chair of the Civil Society Platform for Multilingualism and a member of the business platform. In both platforms we will be seeking ways to increase the provision of language acquisition and, as importantly, language use. This extends further than the school systems into lifelong learning. The decade is likely to lead to an increase in the working age and so mid career language learning will become a key factor. The increase in workforce mobility itself necessitates greater language abilities both for the person moving and in the receiving country.

## **A greener economy**

The working document refers to the move to a greener economy. Several EUNIC members, including the Danish Cultural Institute, the Goethe Institute and the British Council, have already adopted programmes linking culture to the move to a more resource efficient and ecologically sustainable future. The move to this lower carbon future means cultural change as well as changes to legislation etc. The EU2020 strategy needs to take note and include measures to facilitate these cultural changes. The arts, education and youth sectors are key vectors to raise awareness and accommodate these cultural changes which will be a pre-requisite if Europe is to reach its targets.

## **The international dimension**

One area appears missing in the working document: the external dimension. Europe's prosperity and in some respects its social cohesion, will depend on its international success. Enhanced people to people programmes, in education, in research and science, in youth and in the arts play a key role in the brand of Europe: as an open and engaged partner which is equally interested in understanding and engaging with the rest of the world as it is with trading. Such programmes need to be seen as integral to success within Europe as well as their international relations impact.

## **Conclusion**

EUNIC members work in the sectors of international education, of languages and the arts. These are sectors which play a major role, not just in the economy of Europe and in their own right, but as key vectors in facilitating behavioural and cultural change.

People to people contacts enable a greater sense of Europeanness, in full recognition of its diversity but not its fragmentation. The EU2020 working document seeks radical changes to meet the radically different landscape of the next decade. The sectors where EUNIC works provide an important means to underpin those changes at the people to people level.

The working document underestimates the personal impact of the radical changes in the next decade. A new approach is called for and these sectors, often overlooked or relegated to the bottom of the table, will be critical in ensuring the active engagement of citizens.

Finn Andersen

President EUNIC

Det Danske Kulturinstitut  
Farvergade 27L, 2 sal  
DK-1463 København K  
Danmark  
Tlf.: +45 33 13 54 48  
Fax: +45 33 15 10 91  
[dankultur@dankultur.dk](mailto:dankultur@dankultur.dk)

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Contact

Steve Green

10 Spring Gardens

London

SW1A 2BN

[Steve.Green@eunic-europe.eu](mailto:Steve.Green@eunic-europe.eu)

