

European Commission

17. Januar 2010

## Consultation on the future "EU 2020" Strategy By Europa Cantat – European Federation of Young Choirs

The vision of Europa Cantat is to be the leading pan-European non-profit organisation dedicated to education and cultural exchange among singers of all ages, especially among children and young people in the field of vocal music. Europa Cantat directly represents more than one million and reaches out to more than 20 million singers, conductors and composers in over 40 European countries including new and future members of the European Union. Mission: Europa Cantat exists to encourage and increase greater understanding and cooperation between Europeans and world citizens by bringing them together in the common activity of singing, promoting the exchange and development of cultural heritage and education. – It is our differences that unite, not divide us.

Europa Cantat welcomes the Consultation on the EU 2020 strategy by the European Commission and would like to contribute to this important process. It is essential for the European Union and its member states to adopt a new vision and plan for its future development, taking stock of the lessons of the past, refocusing on European values of equality, solidarity and openness and preparing the way for future societies where quality of life and inclusion are essential elements.

Europa Cantat hopes that this consultation is only the beginning of the debate on the EU 2020 strategy and that there will be **further opportunities to input ideas and suggestions** in the coming months, in order to be able to go more into depth on specific points and the priorities of the strategy.

Defending **the right for each and every citizen to access culture** and especially music and vocal music, promoting freedom of artistic expression, and promoting the intercultural dialogue, Europa Cantat believes in the powerful role of arts and culture in personal and societal development.

The Commission states that Europe should prosper as knowledge-based, connected, greener and more inclusive economy, creating high levels of employment and social progress. To achieve this, Europe needs a strengthened and competitive industrial base, a modern service sector and a thriving agriculture, rural economy and maritime sector, as stated in the Commission working document on the future EU 2020 Strategy. However, we believe that in order to achieve this, Europe will also need a strong focus on culture and education. The capacity of arts and culture actors to contribute to European social and economic development has also gained increased political recognition in the last years, and has been endorsed by the EU in several declarations and actions. **Arts and Culture as well as Arts Education should therefore also be clear priorities in the EU 2010 strategy.**

The **protection and promotion of cultural and musical diversity** is one important objective of Europa Cantat as member of the European and International Music Council and the International Federation for Choral Music. We believe in diversity and as we say in our strategy paper, it is our differences that unite, not divide us. Diversity in culture is also a huge source for innovation and inclusion.

Cultural activities such as active music-making and singing in groups can help to **address major challenges such as social exclusion, integration and inter-generational communication**. Cultural activities and arts education are thus an important key to empowering people in inclusive societies of the future. Europe wide coordination and collaboration is crucial to support arts and culture as a key element in the development of European societies; carrying values of respect, tolerance, and solidarity. Supporting social inclusion, with a special focus on intercultural action with migrants and cultural minorities, the arts contribute to our living together in a culturally diverse Europe.

**Creativity and innovation** in culture and music contribute to a sustainable and innovative knowledge from which the society and the economy can profit. We therefore welcome the importance given to the concept of creativity in the EU 2020 outline, as presented in the consultation paper. We hope that arts and culture actors will be given the opportunity to participate in the drafting of future European creativity policies. Recognition of culture as a resource for creativity and innovation should also take place at different levels. Cultural indicators should be integrated into innovation indexes, and creative partnerships between culture, education, research and the private sector should be encouraged.

Artists and other cultural professionals must be given sufficient means to participate in the development of a creative Europe. A **well-functioning, fair intellectual property rights system** shall ensure a diversity of expressions as well as stimulate innovation and artistic creation.

As a youth organization active in the field of arts education, Europa Cantat very much welcomes that the EU 2020 strategy values **the importance of education and research**. The Commission working document emphasizes that strengthening education is one of the most effective ways of fighting inequality and poverty and that the high number of low achievers in basic skills (reading, mathematics and science) needs to be addressed urgently to enhance the employability of young people and to bring them into the world of work after school.

However, education should not be limited to languages, mathematics and science. Research has shown that achievements in the "basic skills" are improved through arts and music education and a strategy for the future should thus emphasize the vital role of arts education and specifically music education. **The importance of arts education should be formally recognized** and integrated in all education frameworks, formal and non-formal, acknowledging the need for life-long learning. This should be among the priorities of the EU 2010 strategy. Also, research in the field of arts education such as research on its effects on the physical, psychological and social development of children and young people should be promoted and supported.

The commitment from all partners called for in the EU 2020 consultation paper should also translate into more **concrete forms of co-operation of the local, regional, national and European levels**, as well as benchmarking and evaluation tools. The EU must take a leadership role in this process by strengthening the governance of EU strategies and of the various Open Method of Coordination processes used in different policy fields, including arts and culture.

Arts and culture need a supportive operating environment especially in the fields of mobility, employment and social protection, intellectual property, funding schemes and in integration in social and economic policies. Support to arts and culture should be envisaged as participating in the development of democratic, open and inclusive societies. This should be reflected in the budgetary policies. **Investing in arts and culture also means investing in the future.**

Some issues of this contribution have been inspired by the contributions of the European Music Council and Culture Action Europe to the EU 2020 consultation. Europa Cantat supports these contributions

Europa Cantat, c/o Haus der Kultur, Weberstr. 59a, 53113 Bonn, Germany, [www.EuropaCantat.org](http://www.EuropaCantat.org)  
 Contact: Sonja Greiner, Secretary General, [info@EuropaCantat.org](mailto:info@EuropaCantat.org)