



# EUROPEAN FILE

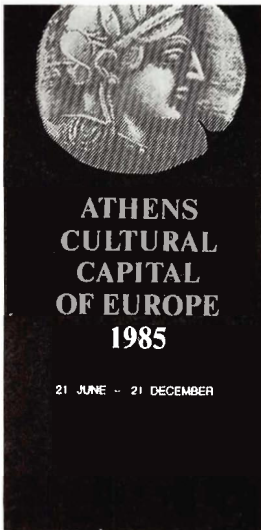
## The European Community and culture



*Preserving the heritage: among the 22 pilot projects financed by the Community in 1987 was the Convento de Cristo, Tomar (Portugal).*



*Protecting the architectural heritage: the Community gives financial support for the restoration of the Parthenon in Athens.*



*Logos for the European Cities of Culture: Athens (1985), Florence (1986), Amsterdam (1987) and Berlin (1988).*

The relaunching of a cultural European Community is both a political and a socio-economic necessity for the completion of the large internal market in 1992 and the development of the People's Europe into a European Union. This is the leitmotiv of a recent communication of the European Commission on reviving cultural activity in the Community.<sup>1</sup>

That revival comes in the nick of time. Many times the European Parliament and the Community Heads of State or Government have stressed the need for joint action in the field of culture. The first initiatives were taken on the basis of two communications from the Commission in 1977 and 1982, but the reticence of certain Member States, legal uncertainties and scant budgetary resources have in many instances prevented those initiatives from coming to fruition.

It is now necessary to go further.

- *For political reasons.* Europe's cultural dimension is there in the collective consciousness of its people: their values are a joint cultural asset, characterized by a pluralist humanism based on democracy, justice and liberty. The European Union which is being constructed cannot have economic and social objectives as its only aim, however important those objectives may be. It also involves new kinds of solidarity based on belonging to European culture and greater participation of the people in cultural life, as well as new possibilities for exchange and cooperation which enrich the diversity of our local, regional and national cultures.
- *For socio-economic reasons.* Technological progress transforms an industrial society into a society of communication, in which the interplay of the economy, technology and culture are multiplied. A conference organized in Florence in March 1987, under the aegis of the Commission, showed how this transformation poses a challenge to Europeans: they must preserve their distinct cultural assets, adapt to new means of expression (particularly audio-visual ones) and maintain their competitiveness *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world. The stakes are considerable, because cultural activities are playing an increasing role in the economy. At the same time, for the cultural sector of industry and for those who work in it, progress towards a large European market without internal frontiers carries risks which must be reduced and opportunities which must be grasped.

To relaunch Community action in the cultural sector, the European Commission proposes:

- *General orientations* to stimulate debate in depth of the objectives to be pursued and the means to be employed. Their essential purpose is to allow the Commission and the Community Member States to complement the activities of those who work in the culture sector, in close cooperation with them.

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<sup>1</sup> This file replaces our No 14/85.

- Sometimes this can be done within the Community system, based on the European treaties and their provisions in regard to free circulation, the large market, regional development, etc.
- In other instances it can be a matter of coordination or cooperation. The Commission is ready, while respecting the treaties, to join in cooperative activities undertaken by all or some of the Member States.

A permanent structure will be created in the Community to ensure the clear and effective implementation of the actions planned, whether it be within the Community system or under the heading of 'coordination' or 'cooperation'.

- *A priority action programme* covering the period 1988-92, which should serve as a framework for the revival of Community and European cultural activities. The programme contains a limited number of significant actions relating to five major areas: the creation of a European cultural area, promotion of the audio-visual industry, access to cultural resources, training for the cultural sector and dialogue with the rest of the world.

### **Creation of a European cultural area**

The world of culture clearly cannot remain outside the process of completion of the big European internal market: that process demands the formation of a true European cultural area.

- *Cultural aspects of the internal market.* Close coordination of Community policies – cultural, social, regional, industrial and technological – should ensure the integration of the cultural dimension with the Community's activities as a whole. The aim is to encourage the adjustment of the cultural sector to the demands of the creation of the internal market, taking account of technological changes. Four priorities have been set out:
  - Free circulation of cultural goods and services. In this context special measures are needed to regulate the movement of works of art: harmonization of criteria and procedures for the protection of national treasures that have artistic, historical or archaeological value; the implementation of a code of ethics, of descriptive records and of a specialized information centre, all to help combat art theft; harmonization of fiscal regimes and of VAT in particular; abolition of the temporary import deposit.
  - Better living and working conditions for artists. It often happens that artists, who have no protection either as employees or as self-employed, are vulnerable to the ups and downs of life. The European Commission will therefore initiate a study of national legal systems and the way they attempt to reconcile the special nature of artistic pursuits with the need for genuine social protection.
  - The creation of new jobs in the cultural sector, in association with regional, rural, tourism-related and technological development.

- The emergence of a cultural industry which is competitive within the Community and on a world scale, particularly in the audio-visual sector, to which a special chapter of the Commission programme is devoted. This sector requires priority treatment, because of the challenge which Europe faces in this field and the social, industrial, technological, cultural and political implications of that challenge.
- *Information on cultural Europe.* Cultural Europe is not sufficiently known and understood: the statistics and sociological studies are few and difficult to compare and exchanges of information between countries are still at a very early stage of development. To support their work, European, national and local administrations, as well as private operators and organizations, need more precise data. More advanced cooperation between the Community and the Council of Europe should enable a reference centre to be established for cultural statistics. It can also enable a survey programme to be initiated on the cultural activities and habits of European peoples, and a 'European cultural diary' to be compiled, carrying information on cultural activities throughout Europe.
- *Business sponsorship.* The European Commission and the Council of Ministers want to encourage firms to support cultural projects, on a European as well as on a national scale. The Commission proposes to concentrate efforts on small and medium-sized businesses, which are less well equipped in this area than the multinationals. Legal measures for this purpose, and fiscal provisions in particular, should be adopted at Community level. The various foundations set up at national level to match offers from the business world with requests from the cultural sector should be able to extend their activities to the whole of the Community and, gradually, to all the member countries of the Council of Europe. It seems that one of the priorities here should be to set up a European data bank to enable such foundations to exchange information and to coordinate their work.
- *A policy for publishing.* Such a policy should ensure a balance among the legitimate interests of authors, publishers, distributors and readers. The Community is already providing support for the translation of certain literary works, while the European Advisory Committee on Books is examining certain problems, such as book pricing. Other priority tasks for the Community include the protection of the rights of authors and publishers, which are infringed by practices ranging from large-scale photocopying to straightforward piracy, and encouraging cooperation between European libraries. New technology should enable the computerized catalogues of the principal libraries to be interconnected and the whole of their book stocks to be made available to the public. It will be necessary to reach agreement first on common standards for indexation and interconnection.

### **Promotion of the European audio-visual industry**

In this era of communications, while satellites are getting ready to overwhelm us with hundreds of new television channels, Europe runs the risk of seeing its own industry

squeezed out and its market taken over by American and Japanese industrialists and producers. Given the clear interaction between technical progress, the opening up of frontiers and programme content, a European response is required in three complementary areas: the adoption of common technical standards for satellite broadcasting, a legal basis for the free movement of broadcasts from one member country to another, and the promotion of the European audio-visual industry.<sup>1</sup> This has given rise to three major initiatives.

- *A proposal for a European directive* strengthens the basis for the free movement of broadcasts, but also provides that television stations reserve part of their programming time for programmes originating in other Community countries. In addition, the reserved time would have to include a certain number of programmes which have not already been televised. Furthermore, to encourage creativity and develop new sources of production, a proportion of programming budgets would have to be devoted to Community programmes made by independent producers.
  
- *The MEDIA programme* should exploit at Community level the specific qualities and the diversity of the European audio-visual industry, by creating the synergy needed to make it competitive at world level. The current phase of research and experiment covers three areas.
  - **Distribution.** The first priority is to encourage the distribution of national productions throughout the Community. A cooperative of European distributors is charged with administering a budget of advances on revenue partially financed by Community funds. In addition, because the problem of multilingualism has fundamental importance, the MEDIA programme takes account of the needs of small language areas, while at the same time developing collaboration with the technical research of the European Broadcasting Union. Such research should, in particular, help to perfect satellite television broadcasts receivable in different languages, according to the viewer's choice.
  
  - **Production and the adaptation of production to new technologies,** with pilot projects on, in particular, major fiction series and computer-assisted production.
  
  - **Financing,** which also requires a European system. Prompted by the MEDIA programme, several banking establishments have already set up a European group to provide financial backing for the cinema and audio-visual industry.
  
- *European Cinema and Television Year,* organized in 1988 in 24 European countries under the aegis of the Community and the Council of Europe, provides

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<sup>1</sup> For further details, see 'Towards a large European audio-visual market', *European File* No 4/88.

a timely opportunity to draw the public's attention to the current major issues for the audio-visual industry. The European Commission has a particular interest in two projects:

- The creation of a European cinema and audio-visual arts academy should encourage contacts between all the people working in the European audio-visual industry, by breaking down traditional barriers caused by tensions between television and cinema and by national frontiers. In addition, the annual award of European prizes for cinema and audio-visual arts should increase public interest in an initiative which could have implications for the whole sector.
- The proclamation of a European audio-visual charter is proposed by cinema and television producers, and is also of interest to many intellectuals in other fields. The aim is not to address corporate needs, but instead to emphasize the creative and democratic problems posed by the current crisis in European cinema and television, sectors threatened by external competition as well as by increased budgetary and programming constraints.

Europe has also hurled itself into a difficult race with Japan in the field of high-definition television, which offers sound and picture quality comparable to that of the cinema. The Japanese were first in the field and are proposing a world standard based on a system incompatible with all existing systems. As part of the Eureka programme, the Europeans are trying instead to perfect a compatible system, which would safeguard the future of their industry while leaving the consumer free to choose when to switch to the new standard. The European Commission intends to avail of European Cinema and Television Year to urge programme producers to make in good time the first high-definition programmes answering to European technical parameters. These could be broadcast during the demonstration and subsequent market launching of the new European system.

## **Improved access to cultural resources**

The European cultural heritage is a particularly rich one. The Community has a role to play to facilitate its exploitation in all its diversity.

- *Improved knowledge of languages.* The Community's multilingualism is one of the features of its cultural richness, but it can also act as a barrier to a better understanding between Europeans. The European Commission intends to strengthen measures already taken to develop language training in schools and to support the translation of important literary works written in minority languages. It proposes the creation of an experimental system of travel grants for young people who would like to make, as part of a multilingual group, cultural cross-border visits involving at least two Community countries.
- *Promoting culture in the regions.* The Community is already supporting various initiatives to help young artists and cultural events. The Commission intends

gradually to define principles for this policy of encouragement. It wishes to develop and decentralize this policy for three main reasons: to enable a wide public to benefit from intercultural exchanges; to support the creative activities of authors, actors, musicians – and in particular young people; to increase the contribution which cultural tourism can make to regional development. The ‘European City of Culture’, designated on an annual basis since 1985 (in 1988 the city is Berlin), could become an appropriate meeting-place for the young artists on whom the future of European culture depends.

- *Preserving and exploiting Europe’s cultural heritage.* The Community has already given many grants towards the restoration of monuments in all the Member States. Because of the limited resources available this aid must be very selective, so the Community’s efforts are concentrated each year on a priority theme, such as Roman art or industrial architecture. At the same time the Community will continue to assist research projects on the preservation of monuments against the effects of atmospheric pollution. Its efforts should be extended to the preservation of museums, libraries (of books, films, videos and records), etc., and the development of their tourism potential.
- *‘Young people’s pass’.* The Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs in the Community countries have already declared themselves in favour of the general use and mutual recognition of ‘young people’s passes’. The holders would have privileged access to cultural sites and events throughout the Community. The implementation of this principle is of great importance to the European Commission, as it is to all young travellers.

### **Better training for the cultural sector**

Training for the cultural sector must be improved, modernized and adapted to the new realities of a Europe without frontiers: this human investment is essential for the preservation of Europe’s heritage, for the development of creativity and for adjusting to new technology. The Commission is not waiting for the creation of a specific system or mechanism – well warranted by the importance of what is at stake – but is proposing immediate action in five priority areas.

- *Cultural administration.* Administrators in cultural departments need to broaden their knowledge and experience to European dimensions. The Commission proposes to organize transnational seminars for them; it will then examine the possibility of encouraging the creation of a university network for European training, which would be based on a common programme of study and exchanges for the establishments (still too few) which give specialized training of this kind.
- *Working in sound and vision.* Study and research scholarships should make it possible to develop exchanges of teaching staff and students in this sector, so as to improve training. This is essential for the development of the audio-visual industry and its enlargement to a European scale. A European cooperation network among training establishments could be the basis for action here.





*The European Community Youth Orchestra, a prestigious ensemble of young musicians from all the member countries, is supported by the Community.*



*Grants for literary translation: some of the works which have been translated with aid from the European Community.*

- Journalism and programme planning.* Training communicators in the new European realities is another priority task, in view of the political and cultural impact of the media – and of radio and television in particular. Community action should be aimed at experienced journalists and radio and television programme planners, as well as at young ones in training. It could take the form of specialized seminars and, in the longer term, of scholarships.
- Translating and interpreting.* The intensification of communication and the growth of European integration give rise to extra needs in this field. The Community is already playing a key role in the modernization of the sector, by developing systems to aid translation (software for automatic translation, terminology banks, etc.) and by its involvement in the training of conference interpreters and in the study of teaching methods. New efforts are required to disseminate the advances made, to define a multilinguistic model facilitating communication across language barriers, to adapt translator training to the needs of the market and to clarify the professional status of translators and interpreters – which could entail, in particular, the introduction of a European conference interpreter's diploma.
- Restoration work.* Urgent action is needed to keep alive certain very specific skills, which are essential for the restoration of precious items from our heritage. The Community should therefore increase its support for exchanges of students and staff among the various teaching establishments, by awarding scholarships and European prizes. Training and mobility of scientists specializing in this field should also be encouraged.

## **Dialogue with the rest of the world**

The Lomé Convention, enacted between the Community and 66 African, Caribbean and Pacific States, includes a cultural section. Other countries, however, also wish to develop their cultural dialogue with Europe: they range from Latin America, which is so close culturally to Spain and Portugal, to a number of Asian countries. The Community should project to the world an image that goes beyond economics and trade. It should also be receptive to the great cultures of the world and be enriched anew by them.

- In countries outside the Community,* cultural activities and events could be jointly organized through cooperation between national cultural centres and the diplomatic representations of the Member States. In that way, initiatives which have been taken in the past by individual Community countries could be amalgamated – and costs cut. Among the first joint activities of this kind could be joint participation in major international book fairs, an Eastern European tour by the European Community Youth Orchestra, training of African students in art restoration skills, etc.
- Within the Community,* joint action could help the organization of travelling festivals which would present in the different regions one or more aspects of the

cultural life of non-member countries. When one such country takes the initiative to organize a major cultural event in London or Paris, why not provide for it to move afterwards to other Community countries?

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This is a brief summary of the Commission's main proposals for giving new impetus to the cultural European Community. It is a development in which the people of the Community have a direct interest, one which should help design the face of Europe for the 1990s ■

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