

PRESS RELEASE

6390/93 (Presse 80)

1661st meeting of the Council

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Brussels, 17 May 1993

President: Mrs Jytte HILDEN
Minister for Culture
of the Kingdom of Denmark

The Governments of the Member States and the Commission of the European Communities were represented as follows:

Belgium:

Mr Hugo WECKX

Minister for Culture and Brussels Affairs
(Flemish Community)

Mr Eric TOMAS

Minister for the Budget, Culture and Sport
(French-speaking Community)

Mr Bernd GENTGES

Minister for Education, Culture and Youth
Affairs (Executive of the German-speaking
Community)Denmark:

Mrs Jytte HILDEN

Minister for Culture

Mr Erik JACOBSEN

State Secretary for Cultural Affairs

Germany:

Mrs Ursula SEILER-ALBRING

Minister of State, Foreign Affairs

Mr Hans ZEHETMAIR

Minister for Education, Science and the Arts,
BavariaGreece:

Mrs Theodora BAKOYANNIS

Minister for Culture

Spain:

Mr Jordi SOLE TURA

Minister for Culture

France:

Mr Jacques TOUBON

Minister for Culture and the French-speaking
WorldIreland:

Mr Michael D. HIGGINS

Minister for Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht

Italy:

Mr Rocco Antonio CANGELOSI

Deputy Permanent Representative

Luxembourg:

Mrs Marie-Josée JACOBS

Minister with responsibility for Cultural
AffairsNetherlands:

Mrs Hedy D'ANCONA

Minister for Welfare, Health and Cultural
AffairsPortugal:

Mr Pedro Miguel SANTANA LOPES

State Secretary for Culture

United Kingdom:

Mr Peter BROOKE

Secretary of State for National Heritage

Commission:

Mr João de DEUS PINHEIRO

Member

PROMOTION OF BOOKS AND READING

On the basis of a note from the Presidency and of information supplied by the Commission, the Council and the Ministers for Culture meeting within the Council held a discussion on the promotion of books and reading in the Community further to the ministerial symposium held in Copenhagen on 22 April 1993, at which the Europe-wide "Reading for Pleasure" campaign was launched.

The discussion revealed agreement among the delegations on the need to concentrate Community efforts in the following areas:

- reading by children and adolescents
- translation of literary works and the training of translators
- publishing houses and book prices
- studies and comparable statistics relating to books.

The Belgian delegation, which was to hold the next Presidency, announced that, with the Commission's help, it intended to study the question of book prices during the second half of the year.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMME FOR EXCHANGES OF ARTISTS

The Council and the Ministers for Culture meeting within the Council held an exchange of views on a Presidency proposal for the setting up of a Community programme for exchanges of artists, particularly young artists.

At the close of their debate, they invited the Commission, after further discussion of the subject in the Committee on Cultural Affairs, to submit a communication listing existing measures and possibly appropriate proposals in this area, taking into account current

co-operation between the Member States, the Presidency note and their discussion on the subject.

PROMOTION OF THE TRANSLATION OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN DRAMATIC WORKS - RESOLUTION

"The Council and the Ministers for Culture meeting within the Council,

Recognizing, as part of the improvement of the dissemination of the culture of the European peoples, the need for wider circulation of contemporary dramatic works within the European Community so as to enable decision-makers in theatres and the broadcasting sector to present a more varied repertoire of drama from the Member States to the public of the other Member States;

Noting that potential producers of dramatic works may need to read these works in their own language before taking a decision on production, particularly when the original language of the work is a lesser spoken language in Europe;

Recalling the importance attached to the promotion of translation of dramatic works in the Ministers' Resolution of 7 June 1991 on the development of the theatre in Europe;

AGREE to promote the translation of contemporary dramatic works by playwrights of the Member States which have been successful in their country of origin; this should be organized within the pilot scheme for the translation of contemporary literary works established by their Resolution of 9 November 1987, as an addition to it;

INVITE the Commission to assess any necessary steps for putting into practice such a scheme on the translation of dramatic works, including proposals for appropriate financing, and to propose an appropriate number of translations, preferably into at least two languages, each year; the whole to be evaluated within the review of the main scheme for the

translation of contemporary literary works, due at the end of 1994. They invite the Commission, in so doing, to take account of the ideas contained in a separate Presidency proposal to promote translation of dramatic works."

MEDIA PROGRAMME

Ministers discussed the MEDIA programme relating to the promotion of audiovisual production in Europe, which was adopted in December 1990.

Mr DEUS PINHEIRO, Member of the Commission, informed the Council that the Commission would shortly be submitting the first evaluation report on the programme, following an audit by an independent firm.

The report will be discussed at the next meeting of the Council in November 1993.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The Council and the Ministers for Culture meeting within the Council welcomed the fact that the Commission had submitted a preliminary work programme in the cultural field for 1993 and a report on activities in the cultural field in 1992.

The submission of the preliminary programme corresponds to the annual outline requested in the guidelines for Community cultural action adopted on 12 November 1992.

OTHER COMMUNITY POLICIES OF CULTURAL INTEREST

On the basis of a note from the Presidency, the Council held a discussion of developments in other Community policies of cultural interest, including questions relating to copyright, high definition television and tax.

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO (ROUTE OF ST JAMES)

At the Spanish delegation's instigation, and in view of the fact that 1993 is the Year of St James, the Ministers welcomed the initiatives taken by several Member States to contribute to the identification, restoration and preservation of the historical and artistic heritage of the Camino de Santiago.

They further welcomed the action taken by several Member States for improving the knowledge of the Camino, which forms part of Europe's cultural heritage, and their initiatives to encourage participation in this work by citizens and by cultural associations and bodies.

The declaration adopted emphasizes the leading role of the Council of Europe in the promotion of the Camino de Santiago as a "cultural itinerary of the Council of Europe" and the part played by that Institution in celebrations for the Year of St James.

MISCELLANEOUS DECISIONSAgriculture

The Council adopted Regulations:

- amending Regulation No 2390/89 laying down general rules for the import of wines, grape juice and grape must. The aim of the Regulation is to extend for one year, until 30 April 1994, the derogating rules relaxing the requirements relating to certificates of origin and analysis reports to be supplied by the United States, on condition that the United States provide special guarantees accepted by the Community;
- amending Regulation No 1873/84 authorizing the offer or disposal for direct human consumption of certain imported wines which may have undergone oenological processes not provided for in Regulation No 822/87. The aim of the Regulation is to extend for one year, until 30 April 1994, the derogation granted for wine originating in the United States as regards the application of certain oenological practices not allowed in the Community.

Fisheries

The Council adopted a Decision permitting the provisional application of the Protocol defining for the period 18 January 1993 to 17 January 1996 the fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for by the 1987 Agreement between the Community and the Republic of Seychelles.

The technical and financial conditions of the new Protocol are the same as those applying to the previous Protocol, which expired on 17 January 1993.

Specifically, licences to fish simultaneously in Seychelles waters will continue to be granted to forty Community tuna seiners. In addition, fishing licences may be granted to tuna liners and surface longliners not exceeding 18 metres in length.

Community financial compensation for the period of the Protocol amounts to ECU 9,9 million, including ECU 2,7 million towards the financing of scientific programmes in the Seychelles to gain greater knowledge of fish stocks developing in the region of the Indian Ocean surrounding the Seychelles islands.

The Council also adopted a Regulation applying within the Community the measures adopted by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) at its annual meeting held in Hobart from 26 October to 6 November 1992.

These measures, which chiefly concern the waters off South Georgia,

provide for TACs to be set for certain species, as well as closed seasons for fishing and a ban on directed fishing for certain stocks.

The text adopted amends Regulation No 2245/85 on technical measures for the conservation of fish stocks in the Antarctic.

Environment

The Council adopted a Decision on the accession of the Community to the Protocol to the 1979 Geneva Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution on the reduction of emissions of nitrogen oxides or their transboundary fluxes.

The Protocol, which is based on the principle of correction at source, sets an overall aim for the stabilization of total nitrogen oxide emissions and provides for the application of emission standards and the adoption of pollution control measures, while leaving the matter of any reinforcement of obligations to be settled in future negotiations.

In adopting this Decision, the Council considers that the stabilization of total nitrogen oxide emissions constitutes an important first step and that it is necessary significantly to reduce the current level of emissions, not only of nitrogen oxide, but of all nitrogenous pollutants throughout the Community.

Tropical timber

The Council adopted a Decision concerning Community participation in the negotiations for the conclusion of a new International Timber Agreement on the basis of negotiating directives established in that Decision.

Berlin "Partners in Progress" Fair

The Council adopted a Regulation applying supplementary generalized tariff preferences in respect of certain products originating in countries benefiting from generalized preferences and sold at the Berlin "Partners in Progress" Fair, an event concentrating on products exported by developing countries.

Coal industry

The Council took note of a Commission report on the application of the Community rules for State aid to the coal industry in 1991.

Bruxelles, le 14 mai 1993

NOTE BIO (93) 135 AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
cc. aux Membres du Service du Porte-Parole

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Préparation du Conseil Culture du 17 mai 1993 (Paula FIGUEIREDO-LAISSY):

Peu de décisions marquantes sont prévues pour ce Conseil compte tenu notamment de la période transitoire qui précède la ratification du Traité de Maastricht qui comprend un article Culture (article 128).

1. Campagne sur le "plaisir de lire"

Suite au Conseil Informel des Ministres le 21 et 22 avril à Copenhague, la Commission a reçu mandat de rédiger un non-paper reprenant les diverses suggestions concernant notamment les thèmes susceptibles d'être les fils directeurs de la campagne de sensibilisation au livre et à la lecture. Les thèmes proposés que la Présidence entend plus particulièrement approfondir à l'occasion du débat général sont les suivants: lecture pour enfants, traduction, édition et librairie, études et statistiques.

2. Programme "Artemis" visant l'échange d'artistes

La Présidence danoise propose d'établir au niveau communautaire un programme d'échange en vue de promouvoir la mobilité des artistes et notamment des jeunes talents. La Commission ainsi que les délégations ont accueilli favorablement le principe de cette initiative. Celle-ci doit néanmoins encore être approfondie et affinée. Les ministres envisagent d'inviter la Commission à poursuivre la réflexion en vue de présenter une communication assortie d'une proposition de programme en la matière. Celle-ci devra notamment tenir compte des actions existantes aux niveaux régionaux, nationaux et bilatéraux en matière de mobilité des artistes.

3. Promotion de la traduction d'oeuvres dramatiques

Les ministres se prononceront sur un projet de résolution de la Présidence visant à promouvoir l'aide à la traduction d'oeuvres dramatiques contemporaines. L'ensemble des délégations ainsi que la Commission sont favorables au principe d'une telle initiative. La Commission entend à titre expérimental consacrer en 1994 une somme limitée (70.000 Ecus) au lancement de cette initiative et ce dans le cadre du projet-pilote d'aide à la traduction littéraire. L'ensemble de la question de l'aide à la traduction sera revue fin 1994 à l'occasion de l'évaluation du projet-pilote existant. Il convient de noter que les délégations FR et B ont insisté pour que les traductions soient effectuées dans au moins deux langues.

4. Mois culturel européen

Les ministres auront à se prononcer sur le Mois Culturel de 1995. Les villes candidates sont: Aarhus, Lubijana et Nicosie (Prague ayant retiré sa candidature). Il est vraisemblable que Aarhus soit la ville retenue, précédant ainsi Copenhague qui sera la Ville Européenne de la Culture en 1996.

5. Débat général sur le programme Media

Le Conseil n'est pas appelé à se prononcer sur ce dossier en attendant le rapport d'évaluation que la Commission remettra conformément à la procédure, avant la fin du mois de juin. La Présidence prévoit de souligner les effets positifs du programme Media notamment du point de vue culturel.

6. Autres politiques d'intérêt culturel

La Présidence informera les ministres de l'état des travaux dans d'autres Conseils sur des dossiers d'intérêt culturel (droit d'auteur, télévision à haute définition et questions fiscales).

7. Chemin de Saint-Jacques de Compostelle

Dans le cadre des célébrations de l'année Jacobéenne en 1993, l'Espagne a soumis un projet de déclaration par laquelle le Conseil apporterait son appui aux initiatives entreprises par certains Etats-membres afin de protéger et de valoriser ce chemin de pèlerinage. Les délégations ont marqué un intérêt pour cette initiative.

8. Divers

La délégation belge évoquera le problème du prix fixe du livre, question qui suscite en ce moment un débat interne. En effet un projet de loi a été soumis en Belgique francophone instaurant un prix fixe sur le modèle français, ce qui est contesté par les professionnels. La Commission n'a pas modifié sa position depuis 1985 et considère qu'elle n'a pas à intervenir dans les choix de politique culturelle des Etats-membres pourvu que ceux-ci n'impliquent pas des dispositions contraires au droit communautaire. La Commission souligne qu'elle n'a d'objection de principe qu'à l'égard des systèmes de prix imposés qui faussent les échanges intra-communautaires en particulier au sein des mêmes zones linguistiques.


Amitiés,
X. PRATS

Bruxelles, le 17 mai 1993

NOTE BIO (93) 135-SUITE AUX BUREAUX NATIONAUX
CC. AUX MEMBRES DU SERVICE DU PORTE-PAROLE

Conseil Culture du 17 mai 1993 - conclusions (Paula FIGUEIREDO-LAISSY):

Campagne "plaisir de lire"

La Commission a bien pris note des suggestions faites par le Conseil en ce qui concerne les divers thèmes à retenir dans le cadre de cette campagne. Le Commissaire João de Deus Pinheiro a énuméré les quelques thèmes à développer:

- promotion du livre auprès des jeunes enfants et adolescents,
- promotion de la connaissance des diverses littératures européennes,
- liaison et coopération entre bibliothèques et autres services qui s'occupent de la lecture,
- rencontres entre éditeurs indépendants,
- utilisation des moyens audiovisuels dans la promotion du livre et de la lecture.

Ces suggestions seront analysées plus en profondeur par le Comité des Affaires Culturelles avant d'être à nouveau traitées par les ministres.

Artemis - échange de jeunes talents

La Commission poursuivra sa réflexion et élaborera tel que le Conseil vient de lui demander un document contenant le repertoire des initiatives existantes au niveau européen en matière de mobilité des artistes.

Traduction d'oeuvres théâtrales

La Commission intégrera déjà à partir de l'année prochaine un volet concernant la traduction d'oeuvres théâtrales dans le cadre du projet-pilote existant concernant la traduction des oeuvres littéraires. Les Etats-membres ont invité la Commission à mettre en pratique ce projet de traduction d'oeuvres dramatiques, dans deux langues au moins.

Mois culturel européen

Il n'y a pas eu de décision sur la ville choisie, le débat étant renvoyé à l'automne.

Rapport d'activité et schéma de travail pour l'année en cours

Suite à la demande formulée par le Conseil dans ses conclusions de 1992 la Commission a présenté un rapport d'activité pour le secteur culturel en 1992 ainsi qu'un programme de travail pour 1993. Le Conseil s'est félicité de ces deux documents permettant de mieux faire jouer la nécessaire transparence et mobilité de l'action entreprise et à entreprendre. De l'avis du Conseil cette pratique devra être continuée et le Conseil devra de plus en plus se pencher sur ce type de discussion notamment après la ratification du Traité de Maastricht.

Divers

Tous les autres points prévus à l'ordre du jour ont fait l'objet de brèves présentations orales renvoyant à des décisions à une date postérieure.

La délégation belge a pour sa part annoncé les thèmes qu'elle considérait mériter une attention particulière pendant sa présidence, notamment: prix fixe du livre, programme Media, l'action "plaisir de lire". La première réunion informelle des ministres de la Culture sous Présidence belge aura lieu à Anvers en septembre 1993.



Amitiés,
B. DETHOMAS