



## **INITIAL CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE BERLIN CONFERENCE 14 / 15 November 2008**

The Berlin Conference “A Soul for Europe” discussed three ways in which circumstances have changed, calling for a repositioning of the Initiative:

1. The changed situation following the launching of the Commission’s cultural agenda in May 2007: So far, the agenda is being implemented through three platforms confined to the cultural sector. What is needed, though – and there was a consensus on this point at the Berlin Conference – are cooperation projects extending beyond the group of cultural players (Robert Palmer / Council of Europe: We cannot continue to act in separate, individual “silos”).
2. The current global economic and financial crisis: What is called for are new blueprints for the political, economic and social sectors, and that includes the relationship between business and culture.
3. Mobilizing citizens for Europe at levels of responsibility below that of central European institutions: in cities, regions and nations. Mobilizing Europeans to play an active role in shaping Europe’s future. To this end, the “A Soul for Europe” Initiative has set up a strategy group composed of young Europeans from more than fifteen different countries.

The following issues need to be addressed:

- (A) Mobilizing European citizens to promote Europe’s future development (a “Europe of the Europeans”)**
- (B) A joint working platform of culture and business based on the Commission’s agenda of May 2007**

### **(A) The type of civil-society initiatives Europe now needs**

1. Ján Figel’s programmatic remark about a “Europe for the Europeans” is correct and appropriate. But in order to define what the Europeans for Europe endeavour involves, a qualitatively new strategic step is needed that goes beyond citizens’ right to enjoy the accomplishments of European institutions.

It is all about a “Europe of the Europeans”, about citizens working within civil society and assuming personal responsibility for building Europe.

It is all about Europeans’ hands-on “ownership” of Europe and spreading this message.

2. Given their responsibility for civil-society matters, Commissioner Figel’ and his Directorate General have a crucial role to play in future development here. They are called upon to invite and support civil-society activities that are independently working towards the “Europeanisation” of Europe. Because Europe is not a fait accompli, an established entity on the world map; Europe is a process based on European values and experience, a process that mobilises and shapes the community of European citizens. Europe is an ongoing process of “Europeanisation”.



3. We need to swap traditional roles:

- Europe needs active citizens that contact Europe's policy-makers and administrations and seek to recruit them as partners in their own activities. Quite unlike what has so far been general practice: Europe's policy-makers and administrations seeking citizens' understanding, approval and support for their actions.

4. We must steer a different course.

A strategy group composed of some forty young Europeans from more than fifteen different countries has been constituted to implement and further develop the projects listed below.

This group will be presenting its findings and experience directly to those responsible in the European Parliament's Steering Committee and Intergroup in order to ensure its political effectiveness.

The following examples of projects conducted by the "A Soul for Europe" Initiative show what a "Europe of the citizens" could mean in practical terms.

a) "The Berlin Conference":

Civil society assumes responsibility for debating with partners from the political, economic and social sectors the importance of culture for the European integration process. As a result of this debate, partnerships are formed and projects are agreed upon with the aim of making better use of culture in the political and social sectors for the benefit of Europe.

Work on the Berlin Conference, the Initiative's flagship project, will be continued by the strategy group in preparation for the 2010 conference.

b) "Forum X":

On the initiative of local civil-society groups and in cooperation with a European civil-society initiative ("A Soul for Europe"), the culture of democracy is being practised and further strategies are being agreed upon at alternating venues (so far: Belgrade, Pécs, Skopje, Lyon ...) with reference to local and regional projects. This process takes into account Europe's democratic culture and the shared goal (see above) of enhancing the relevance of culture to ensure the success of the European project.

The Forum X ASfE Working Group is engaged in concrete preparations for forums in Belgrade, Cluj, Ferrara, Guimarães, Istanbul, Prague, Prishtina, Tbilisi, etc.

c) "Guidelines on Mobilizing Culture for Regional Development":

Based on civil-society experience in European regions, the importance of culture for sustainable development of the regions is to be documented and incorporated into a set of guidelines. These guidelines are to serve as an instrument for the EU Commission's regional policy and as a collection of ideas for those responsible in Europe's regions.

A working group set up for this purpose will prepare workshops on the topic. The first of these workshops is to be held in Sofia in April 2009.



d) “Cities and Regions Guidelines”:

Civil-society players from Europe’s cities and regions will contribute their experience to produce a set of guidelines. These guidelines will make cultural policy-makers in the cities and regions aware of their European responsibility and their role as European players.

From 2009 onwards, the ASfE office in Porto will be seeking to implement these guidelines across Europe.

e) “Alliances”

The initiative invites like-minded organisations to become partners in the “A Soul for Europe” Alliance. The Alliance partners will be asked to embrace the “A Soul for Europe” aims and to support the spirit of the initiative in their activities/projects. The alliance of equal partners is a key element of the initiative’s work. It is especially interested in winning the support of organizations that are already involved in activities of their own in this area. It is also an invitation to join forces and use such lighthouse projects expressly to pursue the common aim of creating “A Soul for Europe”.

f) “System of “A Soul for Europe” Messengers”

“A Soul for Europe” sees its function in ensuring that the spirit of the initiative retains its character as an initiative rooted in civil society. It is therefore of fundamental importance to regularly address the civil society organisations and individuals that want to take part in the ongoing debate on European and to rise awareness on these issues within the general public across Europe.

In order to achieve the above, a system of “A Soul for Europe” messengers has been established and will be developed. “A Soul for Europe” selected intellectuals, artists, politicians, journalists and cultural operators will disseminate the message of “A Soul for Europe” by adding a programme dimension to cultural events, fairs, festivals, workshops, etc. which will take place across Europe.

*The People Network* will support the messenger system providing a permanent and interactive electronic platform to provide information on the system on messengers, announce their participation in events throughout Europe and to further disseminate the message of “A Soul for Europe” among the widest possible audiences of (mainly) young people in all corners of Europe. The interactive aspects of *The People Network* will further foster the development of a “Laboratory of Ideas”.

5. The idea of activating European citizens is designed to make the European project once again more of a project “of the Europeans”. To this extent, Europeans are called upon to consciously link their social and cultural activities with the process of European integration.

Something frequently called for at the Berlin Conference is an integral commitment to Europe, not one dissolved into separate sectors and individual issues (Ján Figel’: Seeing Europeans not just as tourists in their own Europe).

## **B Towards a Platform for Culture, Business and Politics**

1. Europe’s culture is a strength of the whole of European society, including the business sector. Cultural experience reinforces the success of European companies, this being true of both the past and the future (Roland Berger);



economic processes can form the basis for cultural development, thus benefiting Europe's political development in a process of cross-fertilisation between culture and business.

The aim of this cooperation is to concretise principles and overcome the sectoral, self-involved "autonomisation of politics, culture and business" (Norbert Lammert) by closer networking for the benefit of Europe.

This entails a more conscious involvement of cultural components in economic and political planning and action and vice versa. It also means looking for concrete approaches and forms of cooperation that promote this cross-fertilisation.

At the Berlin Conference, prominent representatives of the business sector agreed to continue their active involvement in this project.

2. A joint working group is to pursue this agenda by reference to the following examples:

- a) Culture in the sense used here was a factor influencing the international forms of trade and business originating in Europe (Roland Berger). Are there ways to preserve the global relevance of European cultural practices for the future as well? What can culture, what can business, and what can cultural policy and policy-making in general do to safeguard such benefits for European companies?
- b) Economic, cultural and political developments can be mutually restrictive as well as mutually promotive, as, for example, in the course of industrialisation, de-industrialisation or globalisation (Steve Green, John Kornblum). What are the tasks facing policy-makers and what instruments are at their disposal in each case?
- c) What entrepreneurial instruments are available to make Europe's cultural diversity effective in the globalised economy (Louis Schweitzer) without either encouraging cultural homogenisation or causing confusion?
- d) The significance of "customer culture" is crucial to products' success, especially that of European products (Manfred Gentz). What we are talking about here is producers' interest in the cultural disposition of the demanders.

The question that needs to be looked into is what impact cultural work can and does have on a business's bottom line. Another question to be considered is how to enable companies to take greater account of cultural needs in their product strategies.

- e) European companies in particular offer cultural goods among their products. The market value of these cultural goods is subject to special conditions connected with the specific nature of their creation.

What can European policy-makers, what can European business do to safeguard these characteristics – the essential prerequisite for product quality? Is there any chance of protecting such features in a "free market"? Does this require efforts on the part of business, culture and politics to develop their own strategic ideas?

- f) Given Europe's exceptional cultural wealth, can business and culture develop joint strategies to comprehend and position culture as a "pioneer species" for social and economic upswing (Yuriy Vulkovsky)? Is it worthwhile talking about joint strategies such as culture-based projects and productions as a stimulus for subsequent economic prosperity and political stabilisation on a wide front?
- g) For the financial sector and the real economy, cooperating with culture and politics has various implications and each can make a different contribution (Andreas Georgi, Louis Schweitzer). What are the priority issues in such a dialogue? (see point k) below)



- h) The cooperation should also address the question of what role Europe will in future be seeking to play in the world and how it can position itself: as a player holding its own in competition with others or rather as a nerve centre (John Kornblum).
- i) Is it legitimate to demand that the economic, cultural and political sectors be viewed and treated together (Farid Tabarki, Richard von Weizsäcker) and what does this mean in practical terms? Are there approaches or models for implementing this principle?
- j) Business, culture and politics often lack common terms for what they are talking about, and the tendency seems to be towards greater dissociation rather than towards cooperation (John Kornblum, Richard von Weizsäcker). Again, each of the three sectors has its own specific problems in finding or regaining acceptance within society (Manfred Gentz).  
Can the idea of a “citizens’ Europe” be the point of departure for joint steps?

Résumé: The respective intrinsic interest of culture, business and politics in closer communication and cooperation should be incorporated into a platform’s agenda. It needs to be clarified who organises such a platform. Who should be involved in it? What are the priority joint goals and issues and what are suitable modi operandi?

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