

New century for cultural bridging

I would like to point out three significant issues for development of cultural cooperation in Europe:

- Intersectorial opening of culture
- Redefining the position of European cultural networks
- The need for guild binding of cultural practitioners

Culture, better than any other human activity, opens new spaces for cherishing creative potentials. Without it there can be no always necessary spiritual renaissance and economic develop of any society; the cooperation established with the Other in achieving these goals is a necessary value which leads to the future.

In that context, it is extremely important that cultural sector is more open to cooperation to other social sectors – monetary, economic, legal, educational, scientific, etc.

I consider the setting up of Lab for culture on the Internet an important base for the progress of the cultural production in Europe, however I believe that it is necessary to upgrade the available information and structure on the website and make it more attractive to the other sectors.

This implies active participation of the whole social structure and infrastructure in the milieu of European cultural production.

In that sense, the aim of European cultural networks is to support the awareness of artists, producers, creative workers in the field of culture and media and professionals with similar activities, who work on possibilities of cooperation in European cultural networks, in order to build trust and partnership on long term basis, and solidarity when presenting common interests.

In order to secure the achievement of these goals in the wave of EU enlargement and globalisation, the networks require new organisational schemes and redefinition in the context of challenges of cultural production.

Having this in mind, Balkankult foundation has published the third edition of directory European cultural networks in 2005.

It is obvious that European cultural production is currently binding more and more and the number of cultural practitioners involved in international projects is rising every day. In this sense, the current organisation scheme of networks is not satisfying the guild needs of practitioners, managers, researchers, coordinators and others.

For this reason, the need for creation of one or more guild associations on European level is justified.

The idea would be to create associations similar to Journalists' associations in Europe as cultural practitioners, like journalists, visit cultural events as it is their professional commitment, and cultural production benefits from it. The results of practitioners' work are commonly used by decision makers, administration, managers, those involved in market, audience, etc. Cultural institutions, artists, decision makers and consumers are bind into a chain by cultural practitioners, especially researchers.

Associations need stronger organization, not as loose as in the network. These Associations possess elements of trade unions since they promote the interests of cultural practitioners, not only in a social sense, but in the expert one as well. It should play a role in *promoting interests and rights of cultural practitioners involved in European cultural affairs*.

For the success of this activity would be significant to get acknowledgement from UNESCO and COE.

Criteria for the membership depend on the interest of the members themselves.

What would be the interest of people to become members of such association? In the first place, perks available for members should be explored (similar perks available for journalists' associations). Each member would possess a special card that would be his ID card and provide him / her with different options and possibilities (discounts, travels, free entrance to museums, free attendance to cultural events, etc).

This idea needs further examination; therefore, we are asking cultural practitioners to give comments on this idea.

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