



RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CULTURE CONGRESS

Forum of authors, cultural managers and organizers of cultural activities, representatives of ministries, local governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, and media from member states of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) project and the European Union (EU).

Lublin, 21-23th of October 2011

Culture is a vital factor in determining social and economic growth. Therefore, we dedicate ourselves to building the Eastern Partnership as a common cultural project, one which respects the diversity and subjectivity of all of its participants, and is based on a multidirectional cooperation between the member states of the EaP and the EU. We believe that the models and mechanisms for stimulating growth, social participation and transparency created by cultural cooperation can serve as an example to other spheres of public life in EaP countries. They could become a catalyst for changing the standards and working practices of both public and non-public institutions.

We believe that, in order to develop new models of cultural cooperation with EaP countries, the priorities are these: to involve entities from EaP countries into shaping the European Neighbourhood Policy; to build a network to support organizations and authors from the EaP countries; to create and to implement solutions for cultural development and cultural education.

In addition, we think that it is necessary to improve the current mechanisms for financing culture in EaP and EU countries through a more rational use of resources and their more effective allocation.

The following recommendations, which were formulated during the Congress, address the various institutions of the European Union, as well as central and local governments of EaP and the EU countries. In particular, they refer to the entities responsible for culture, education and its funding, together with cultural organizations, universities and the overall environment of the arts.

I. The Congress regards activities based on the principle of coexistence as crucial to European integration

1. Creating a common European cultural space, one which incorporates EaP countries and respects their diversity;
 2. Modifying the philosophy and practice of cultural projects within EaP countries to encourage long term social activism with a significant emphasis on sharing achievements;
 3. Including the principle of coexistence in the programmes of public institutions within EaP countries;
 4. Supporting cultural organizations within the Eastern Partnership in formulating and implementing projects concerned with a broadly defined notion of borderland (whether geographic, ethnic or between different disciplines and sciences).
 5. Encouraging local authorities and communities in EaP countries to use their cultural resources, cultural heritage and creative assets as a key part of their strategies for development.
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II. The Congress recommends activities that enhance the role of cultural entities in the EaP countries by:

1. Including cultural organizations in developing the programmes, which are implemented in EaP countries within the European Neighbourhood Policy;
 2. Improving the financial transparency of cultural activities in EaP countries;
 3. Formulating and implementing a relevant methodology for independent cultural managers in the EaP countries.
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III. The Congress recommends the development and professionalization of the cultural sector in EaP countries by:

1. Creating training models (in the form of courses, internships, residencies, study visits) which aim to improve the qualifications of local cultural managers, authors and organizers who see the Eastern Partnership as a cultural project;
 2. Strengthening interdisciplinary cooperation between representatives of civil society within the EaP and the EU;
 3. Improving the mobility of managers, authors and organizers of culture between the EaP and the EU countries, with a particular emphasis on liberalising visa requirements, so that collaborative intersectoral projects can flourish;
 4. Optimising the existing cultural infrastructure (such as cultural centres) and revitalising it by adapting unused spaces (for example post-industrial buildings) for innovative cultural and social activities;
 5. Prioritising projects and initiatives that promote contemporary art to overcome the stereotypes that reduce the richness of EaP countries' cultures to exoticism and folklore.
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IV. The Congress recommends a new approach to cultural education within EaP and EU countries. The Congress regards the following issues as essential:

1. The interdisciplinary character of cultural education at each level starting from early childhood education;
2. The inclusion of cultural education in teacher training courses;
3. The introduction of long-term educational and training projects on the programmes and working methods of cultural institutions;
4. The formulation and implementation of programmes that promote mutual knowledge of the cultures and languages of EaP countries within both the Eastern Partnership and the European Union.

V. The Congress recommends a programme of intensified co-operation between universities in EaP and EU countries:

1. The establishment of a database of academic institutions, scholars, and research problems relevant to the Eastern European Partnership This would be particularly helpful for intersectoral scientific projects and, in addition, would facilitate cooperation between scholars;
2. A resolution of the problem of diploma recognition between EaP and EU countries;
3. The improvement of the mobility of scholars and students from EaP countries by setting up a scholarship programme which takes into account the economic realities of home countries, and incorporates EaP countries into the existing EU scholarship programmes;
4. The formation and implementation of an evaluation system for scholarship programmes within EaP countries.

VI. The Congress recommends forming new mechanisms to support the culture of EaP countries as well as streamlining existing ones. In addition, it suggests enhancing the efficiency of the disbursement of funds through:

1. Opening a fund to support international co-operation and a programme of small grants intended for local activities;
2. Respecting EaP countries in the distribution procedures of EU funds through the inclusion of those countries in both preparatory and decision-making processes;
3. Decentralization of financing entities of EaP countries through empowering independent donors and allotting larger funds to local and regional levels.

The participants of the first Eastern Partnership Culture Congress hereby commence their long-term work in support of the activities mentioned above. They have set about creating a network that connects organizations and authors from EaP and EU countries, and organises them to act together for the common benefit of the cultural dimension of the Eastern Partnership.

The most important tasks for the network are as follows:

- To build partnerships within the EaP and between EaP and EU countries (for example an e-platform “culture map of the Eastern Partnership”);
- To support the international cooperation and professionalization of cultural personnel (workshop groups, seminars, meetings, residencies) as well as assisting at exchange and distribution of knowledge between cultural and academic centres;
- To provide representation and advocacy at local, regional, state, and EU levels;
- To formulate and implement new financial programmes for the EaP, encouraging the decision-making bodies of the EU to include EaP countries in their existing grant programmes, and decentralize the financial systems in the EaP.

Additionally, the participants hereby establish a two-year for organising subsequent Congresses that, first of all, would respect the diversity and subjectivity of its participants. Secondly, it would be based on small working groups. Finally, it would preserve its financial transparency by aspiring to the highest levels of organization and competence.