



EUROPEAN  
CULTURAL  
FOUNDATION



Final Report

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### *Preface*

One of the ways in which foundations contribute to society is by helping to produce social and cultural capital. Foundations are private bodies acting within the public sphere, and as such they have an obligation to society to be responsible in what they try to achieve. That said, they also have a freedom which is less available to public bodies: the freedom to take risks. Unhindered by cumbersome bureaucracy, foundations can invest in undertakings that are not a 'sure thing', but which have exciting prospects. They can look beyond day-to-day operations to explore uncharted territory and anticipate new directions.

Yet reality can often be a barrier to reflection, organisational demands prevent risk-taking, and individual shortcomings limit the potential to explore. A self-referential language develops, immunising foundations against direct and meaningful communication.

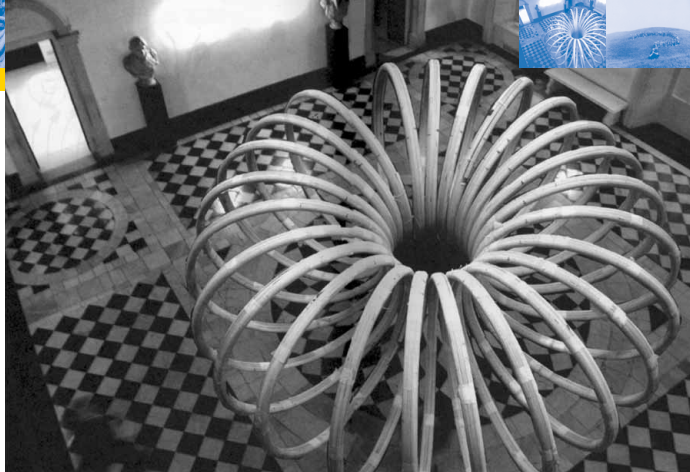
This is where intellectuals come in. Gaining radical insight into the why, what and how of foundations depends on the kind of sceptical, provocative, restless, and - yes - irritating thinking of men and women of intellectual prowess and wide-ranging experience.

For the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), exposure to 'other' voices is something of a tradition: after all, a philosopher founded it, and it has been consulting intellectuals and launching experimental platforms ever since. Yet the ECF navigates in highly ideological waters, where different notions about Europe abound: a temptation is to lose oneself in sheer practice, as a remedy against nausea; another is to sail off buoyed up by grand ideals, but lacking any anchor in the real.

The Europe that inspired the ECF's founding fathers as well as the Europe of the 'Eurocrats' are substantially different from the European experience of the coming generation. Continuing the nautical metaphor, one might say that the ECF, quite an elderly vessel, sails between prestigious traditions and prospective shores. Having taken upon itself a wide cultural remit, from policy development to the promotion of artistic projects, the ECF as an admittedly small foundation runs the risk of getting 'lost in translation' unless it remains constantly open and self-critical.

All the more reason, then, to invite intellectuals, artists, media figures, policy and business experts to re-conceptualize the challenges facing Europe and, consequently, the ECF. Within these pages you will encounter the deliberations of the Reflection Group as summarized by the Group's moderator, as well as separate short contributions by some of the Group's members. As a whole, the Reflection Group has undoubtedly sharpened the ECF's sense of public responsibility, and driven home the need to operate on the basis of clear assumptions and explicit goals, while not shying away from exposure to criticism. It has empowered us to take (in Plato's words) 'noble risks'. The fact that no organisational pressure for immediate operational 'output' was imposed allowed the Reflection Group experience to be, from the ECF's perspective, very much a learning one. Against the detrimental forces that we face in our cultural work, it emboldened us to resist:

- Resist the mantra of subsidiarity (but analyse the need for a complementary cultural policy for Europe)
- Resist the short-sighted bias against policy at European level by partisans of a solely bottom-up approach



Conrad Shawcross, *Circadium*, 2004

(but, in place of partisanship, build alliances)

- Resist the grand designs (but encourage informed vision)
- Resist the polarising of the local, national, and global (but explore 'inclusive oppositions' and a new cosmopolitanism)
- Resist the sterility of habitual complaint (but dare to act instead)
- Resist a disabling self-perception of being too small or too special a foundation (but grow to face the challenges we can realistically tackle)

When our Reflection Group met for the first time, 9/11 had already happened, and the EU was preparing its unprecedented enlargement. With the war in Iraq, 'le nouveau désordre mondial' has seduced such intellectuals as Tsvetan Todorov to write apologies for a 'soft power' Europe. (My 16-year-old daughter asked me what this strange European foundation could possibly do amid this fog of confusion, threat, fear and hopes.)

At a time when intercultural dialogue is absolutely

crucial, the ECF was taking its advocacy of a place for culture in the European Constitution directly to the Convention. Now, at the end of this Reflection Group period, in a troubled era still, the new EU Parliament and the new Commission must steer a course somewhere between a 'federation in the making' and a 'gathering of nations assembled to face the world'. They won't find their way without a strong European civil society capable of European debate, or without a sufficiently open and public space in which to conduct such debate. Culture matters.

We owe our thanks to the members (and other invited experts) of the Reflection Group, and to Dragan Klaić, its restlessly inspiring moderator and pen. And to Lieke Schuitmaker, our youngest colleague, who facilitated the whole process.

**Gottfried Wagner**

Director of the European Cultural Foundation

### Executive Summary

The Reflection Group of the ECF explored the cultural dimension of the European integration, with particular reference to enlargement, and developed recommendations in the area of cultural policy, engagement of cultural operators, their networks and private foundations, and cultural research. We argue for a substantially stronger EU cultural programme for the period 2007-2013, based on Article 151, now inscribed in the draft Constitution, which aims to stimulate multilateral cultural cooperation and the mobility of artists and cultural goods, and reduce the enormous ignorance of the European citizens about each other. In analyzing some negative cultural consequences of the economic globalization, the Group reaffirms the value of cultural diversity against the homogenizing pressures of the cultural industry and especially emerging media oligopolies, suppressing local cultural practices. A counterweight should come from the cultural policies on all government levels, as part of public policies. That culture is a part of public policy is a unique European accomplishment and distinction, inspiring the rest of the world. Through their cultural and education policies European governments are strengthening European competitiveness in knowledge and creativity. The cultural and educational dimensions of European integration are further stimulated by the Bologna Declaration process of higher education in Europe. Harmonization of the cultural systems of the member states remains in principle excluded in the name of subsidiarity, yet they need to undergo adjustment and modernization in order to become more capable of enhancing intercultural competence and stimulating bilateral and multilateral cultural cooperation, within the EU and with the third countries. The drawing of the new Schengen borders of an enlarged Union should not adversely affect

ongoing and future regional cultural cooperation and the traditional relationships of cultural proximity, especially in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The success of cultural integration of Turkey will be a pilot case for more engaged cultural relations of the EU with its Mediterranean neighbours. In order to encourage the emergence of a strong civil society in the region and a climate of cultural development, we propose the establishment of Houses of European Cultures, in Istanbul and Cairo in the first instance. As the EU develops its own foreign and security policy, it is becoming obvious to what extent it needs to encompass a dynamic cultural dimension. Culture is today a security consideration *par excellence* and cultural ties can nurture trust and dialogue where, at the moment, hatred and prejudice reign. The emerging European public sphere displays homogenizing tendencies and at the same time the multiplication of specialist niches, many of which have an international echo. The explosive growth of the internet and other communication technologies encourages grass-roots communication, with more cross-border reflection and debate. The factual primacy of the English language needs to be recognized despite all sentimental concerns and patriotic pride and English could be a pragmatic option for more inclusive European debates if conscious policies of multilingualism are simultaneously nurtured on all levels, especially in education, publishing and the media, in place of mechanical translation of institutional debates and documents. National cultural policies, once developed for the sake of forging a national identity and the promotion of national prestige, need to incorporate a marked European dimension and to sustain an emerging European citizenship, together with the EU institutions, NGOs and the private sector.



Julius Koller, *Universal Futurological Question Mark (U.F.O.)*, 1978



**Content**

**8 Final Report of the Reflection Group of the European Cultural Foundation (2002-2004)**

1	A dynamic political context	9
2	Working method	10
3	Culture in the institutional framework of the EU	11
4	The cultural consequences of economic globalization	13
5	Cultural policies as an emanation of European values	14
6	Advocacy of cultural diversity	15
7	Cultural heritage and contentious memories	17
8	Cultural perspectives of EU enlargement	19
9	Turkey's EU candidacy: a cultural issue?	21
10	The Mediterranean as a cultural realm	23
11	The cultural dimension of the EU foreign and security policy	25
12	Europe as a public space	26
13	Conclusions: a complex constellation with multiple players	29
14	Recommendations	33
	References	38
	Appendices (members, meetings, papers of the Reflection Group)	40

**42 Ten ways of looking at Europe**

Members of the Reflection Group share their individual perspectives on the cultural challenges facing Europe today

Future History - Otto von der Gablentz	43
Nostalgia and Hope - Andrei Pleşu	46
Four Snapshots and a Commentary - Želimir Žilnik	49
No Europe Without a European Coffee House - Geert Mak	53
Weighing Culture by the Tonne - Michael Naumann	57
Europe as a Supranational Reality - Krzysztof Pomian	60
Provocations - Sonja Licht	63
The Example of the Hijab - Nasr Abu Zayd	66
Culture's Crisis of Attention - Maarten van Veen	69
A Plea for Some Transatlantic Solidarity - Dragan Klaić	72



# Final Report of the Reflection Group of the European Cultural Foundation (2002-2004)

8

In spring 2002, the European Cultural Foundation set up a Reflection Group of external experts whose mandate was to consider the cultural dimension of European integration and the EU enlargement process, and to develop and deepen an innovative understanding of culture and cultural policies at the European level. The ECF was at the time preparing to engage in cultural policy advocacy and develop and implement new programme lines and consequently the Reflection Group's task was to support the Foundation with analysis, ideas, approaches and arguments.

The Reflection Group had to consider the uncertain position of culture in a future European Constitution, and the growing implications of economic globalization on cultural diversity.

The position of European cultures worldwide, their impact and influence were reviewed by the Reflection Group in relation to the ongoing liberalization of trade and services regime in the WTO and within the tense political context, shaped by the shock of 11 September and its aftermath. The Reflection Group was expected to refresh the discourse on the position of culture and cultural policy in Europe and to make it more effective by reaching out to the media, politics and business; to propose visible and effective advocacy actions that would eventually supersede the national framework of most of the European debates and cultural polemics and enhance a European public debating space through the interconnectedness of various European media and platforms.

## 1 A dynamic political content

### 1.1

During the two-year-long proceedings of the Reflection Group, the European Constitution was adopted by the European Convention in July 2003 and amended by the European Council in June 2004. The Constitution has defined culture as one of the auxiliary competencies of the EU, allowing the Commission to undertake 'supportive measures' if the member states agree. The cultural article of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 (Article 128, later 151) has been practically inscribed in the Constitution and decision-making in cultural matters, previously requiring unanimity, has been replaced with the qualified majority vote (55% of the member states and 65% of the EU population), as in all other matters that demand the so-called co-decision procedure. Moreover, the Constitution has integrated the European Charter of the Human Rights, making its culture-related articles binding. But the Constitution is still subject to ratification by national parliaments and in several countries by additional referenda, the outcomes of which are uncertain. There is at this point no visible strategy on how to advance the Constitution if it fails to receive the confidence of voters in one or more member states. In that likely case, the impetus will be lost and the institutional development of the EU will be stalled.

### 1.2

The enlargement of the EU became a fact on 1 May 2004 with ten new member states joining. Romania, Bulgaria and recently also Croatia are candidates for the next round, sometime in 2007. Whether and when negotiations with Turkey may begin will be decided at the EU summit in December 2004, but the European Commission's

recommendation of October 2004 makes the second half of 2005 a possible date. Negotiations with Turkey could last for years, according to some as long as 15 years. The EU's energy for absorption of new member states could slacken. Recent elections for the European Parliament have demonstrated considerable voter apathy and scepticism towards the European institutions, resulting in some countries in a turnout of less than 20%. Quite a few Eurosceptics and opponents of European integration have taken seats in the European Parliament. The Parliament asserted its power by blocking the initial proposal of President Barroso for the European Commission. Moreover, the Union is engulfed in a dispute about its budgetary framework for 2007-13, with net payers seeking to limit the maximum percentage of GNP that the member states contribute and the net receivers of subsidies arguing for the augmentation of this ceiling to 1.15% or even 1.20% of the GNP. The resolution of this issue will affect the budgetary space that a new EC programme for culture could expect to gain.

### 1.3

The EU is often reproached for its slowness of action and vagueness of response in matters of international politics and order, security and acute crises. Terrorist assaults, Iraq, nuclear proliferation, explosive Middle East conflicts, migration pressures and slow economic recovery have all tested the operational efficiency of the EU and pointed up its weaknesses and institutional entanglements. Against these, culture is often invoked as a rhetorical blanket, a repository of European distinctions, a colourful decoration, hiding some

9



Hala Nammur, photo taken from *Amkenah* magazine, *Tamass 2, Contemporary Arab Representations*, 2004



### 3 Culture in the institutional framework of the EU

*We created Europe.  
Now we need to create Europeans*  
an apocryphal quotation

**3.1** Inspired by a desire to achieve post-war reconciliation and ensure peace, the initiators of European integration defined their mission chiefly in economic terms, starting with such essential practicalities as coal and steel production and trade. European institutions were gradually developed to ensure the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour. Political, monetary and, to some extent, social elements were added to a complex construction that integrates states, regions and citizens. The civic dimension of Europe has found expression in the interlocking platforms of the NGOs that fuse local and European and even global concerns, specific and broader issues. But the cultural dimension of European integration has remained modest and guarded. Consequently, Europe can hardly be perceived as a *cultural project*, especially in the actions and programmes undertaken by the European Commission. Despite frequent rhetorical invocations of a common European cultural heritage and common cultural traditions, the perception of culture remains framed mainly in terms of national culture, seen as a pillar of the national state and as a source of national identity. Hence a political reluctance to embark on the articulation of a cultural policy on the EU level and instead a modest formulation of the task in terms of cultural action programmes only.

**3.2** Nevertheless, in a speed-up of integrative ambitions within the EU, released by the abrupt ending of the Cold War, culture was acknowledged as a common concern and interest of the EU in the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the role of the Commission in furthering international cultural cooperation was carefully articulated in Article 128. This article, later renumbered as 151 in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, contains two restrictive clauses: unanimity of the ministerial vote in decision-making and the exclusion of any harmonization of national cultural systems. Even with those provisions, the article set the legal basis for several programmes that the EC has run for more than a decade. Those programmes were developed with great difficulty, against the resentment of some national governments which steadily invoked the *subsidiarity* principle in order to defend their own cultural competences and curb the EU's cultural engagement.

**3.3** Along the way, the enhancement of cultural cooperation among the member states was frequently enmeshed with the EU's own concerns for proper public relations, with demands for visibility and emblematic characters of action, reiterated by the European Parliament and national governments. Since Melina Mercouri, as the Greek Minister of Culture, inaugurated Athens in 1985 as the first in the yearly parade of officially designated European Capitals of Culture, the political taste for large symbolic events has favoured the *manifestational and representative* aspects of culture over the intricacies of cultural production and grass-

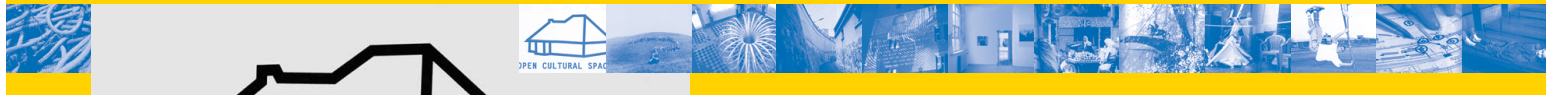
10 purist and essentialist assumptions about the nature of European culture and idealistic notions that culture is some sort of an absolute good. And yet, all these international turbulences have

confirmed culture as a field of tensions and conflict, a realm of rivalry, heterogeneity more than harmony, hegemony more than equality, monopolistic pressures more than diversity (Galtung 2002).

## 2 Working method

**2.1** The Reflection Group held six meetings between June 2002 and September 2004, sometimes inviting guest experts to join the discussion. In two instances, the Reflection Group held public sessions in Amsterdam, in collaboration with Felix Meritis and the University of Amsterdam European Studies programme. Meetings were prepared on the basis of the working papers written by the moderator and sometimes

amended after the debate or followed by another paper. These working papers were made public on the ECF website. The proceedings were assisted by ECF staff members and the content of the deliberations was linked to the other activities of the Foundation. This final report has been written by the moderator and discussed at the last session of the Reflection Group in Amsterdam, on 27 September 2004.



## OPEN CULTURAL SPACE 2004

Truc Sphérique, Zilina, Slovakia, 2004

roots collaboration (Palmer & Rae 2004). The much-expected 'added European value' that EU subsidies aimed to create was never defined in a satisfactory manner (Danish Presidency 2002) and it was often noted with frustration that some subsidized projects remain purely local events - even if they include participants from at least three member states.

### 3-4

Cultural operators complained repeatedly about the miniscule budgets made available, the lack of a transparent selection procedure, administrative complications and bureaucratic insensitivity for the rhythm and modes of multilateral cultural cooperation across the borders (EFAH inventory). The current Culture 2000 programme, originally envisaged to run for five years and extended for 2005 and 2006, with its annual € 34 million budget available, represents around 0.03% of the EU budget and has been from the beginning the subject of fierce criticism by those whom it was supposed to serve. Tall on objectives, complex in criteria, and technically cumbersome, this programme nevertheless supported hundreds of collaborative projects with modest single grants and some three-year collaborative ventures as well. In preparation for a replacement programme for 2007-2013, there has been much signalling of needs, priorities and

expectations from the cultural field (Kaufmann & Raunig 2003; Arkio et al. 2003) to which the Commission sought to respond with an intricately composed initial proposal (EU Programs, 2004). As for the budgets available, a recent appeal by the ECF's 'Sharing Cultures' conference, endorsed by hundreds of cultural organizations, called for 70 eurocents per citizen per year (ECF 2004).

### 3-5

Indirectly, however, the European Commission has been influencing culture through many of its regulations coming from other fields of competence and thus affecting working conditions in culture in terms of job safety, public occupancy standards at venues etc., often in an unexpected fashion, especially since paragraph 4 of Article 151, stipulating that the EU will consider the cultural implications of all its legislation, has remained a dead letter. A more direct form of influence has been exercised by the *structural funds* of the EU, geared towards regional development and aiming to harmonize the socio-economic conditions in which citizens of the EU live. Some of those funds have been channelled into the improvement of the cultural infrastructure, with job creation or tourism as a rationale and with material cultural heritage as a frequent direct recipient.

## 4 Cultural consequences of economic globalization

### 4-1

Much of the current critical discourse about economic globalization highlights the inequalities that globalization consolidates and exacerbates and its negative cultural consequences (Rischar 2002, Stieglitz 2002, Soros 2002, Ziegler 2002). A great part of cultural production today occurs not in the realm of cultural heritage or artistic creativity but in the cultural industry, endowed with a capacity to mass-produce cultural products and disseminate them worldwide. These mass products are marked by standardization and homogenization; with their market dominance they tend to suffocate autonomous local artistic practices and impose steady sets of expectations, conventions, genres and themes (Smiers 2003).

### 4-2

Within both the cultural and communication industries there is a clear emergence of *oligopolies* that integrate various media and control many outlets of information and *entertainment* in any local, regional and national market, thus becoming able to impose their own products, popularize them, advertise them, offer background information and even a critique of them and on a large scale maintain a stranglehold on public attention through a steady creation of hypes, fashions, hits and bestsellers, imposed by advertising campaigns and ubiquitous merchandizing and cross-marketing. Most of those oligopolies originate in the US but operate globally, as some European counterparts, such as Bertelsmann, do as well. The overwhelming presence of oligopolies has not been adequately resisted by the anti-monopoly regulatory agencies,

neither in the US nor in the EU, so that they have acquired additional ground and influence on the collective imagination (Riffkin 2000) and since the end of the Cold War expanded their market to Central and Eastern Europe.

### 4-3

The dominance of US-made products of the cultural industry on the European market has caused various forms of concern, resentment and resistance, chiefly in academic, intellectual and NGO circles; in parallel, national governments have sought ways, sometimes rather clumsily, to protect their national cultural products on the domestic market and enhance their propensity on the global market. Together, member states of the EU have articulated a common policy to aid European film production and distribution. France has been in the forefront of this type of government intervention through the doctrine of *exception culturelle*, positioning cultural products as a value apart from all other industrial products on the market. The complex argument and the ensuing government programmes have in practice been endorsed by the EU but have not acquired a universal legal validation. On the contrary, in the complex negotiations within the WTO that aim to eliminate barriers to the international trade in goods and services, the EU did not take a very firm stance, being itself much in agreement with the neo-liberal ideology that is the driving force of the WTO process (Regourd 2002). In the 1990s, the French Socialist government was a decisive force in blocking the progress of 'Multilateral Agreement on

Investment\* in the WTO, sensing that it could prevent national governments extending subsidies to any field of activity, including culture. As a market arrangement and an economic project, the EU tends to favour cultural industries in their expansion; as a political project, the EU needs to favour culture in its artistic and heritage aspects. The relationship between the industrial and artistic cultures, between for-profit and non-profit cultural production is, however, not bipolar but interconnected and interdependent (Castells 1996-8).



Micol Assaël, *Sleeplessness*, 2004

to a government disbursement of some subsidies to cultural heritage because it benefits nation-building, educates youth or boosts tourism. Outside Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand seek to adjust the European model of cultural policy to their own notions of multiculturalism.

**5.3** Meanwhile, in Europe public commitment to cultural policy is weakening through the dismantling of the welfare state during the last 15 years and the growing influence of neo-liberal ideas that welcome the impact of market mechanisms on cultural production and distribution and count increasingly on the contribution of private benefactors and foundations to the cultural infrastructure, to ease the burden on public finances. Under the pressure of shrinking public finances, the cultural sector has

come up with a range of additional arguments as to why public authorities should keep investing in culture, invoking economic benefits (consumption, jobs, tourism) and societal ones (strengthening social cohesion).

To those an additional rationale could be added, connected to the EU striving to increase its worldwide competitiveness by creating a leading knowledge-driven economy ('Lisbon agenda'): knowledge needs creativity and thus a comprehensive and inclusive cultural context that could be developed and advanced only through public finances. Recently, a role for public policy has been enlarged by the notion of governance of creativity which implies some shared responsibilities between public authorities and the private sector but presumes the primary role of the former (*Creative Europe*).

## 5 Cultural policies as an emanation of European values

**5.1** Behind the disagreement whether cultural goods are to be regulated by the same rules and standards as other goods or services, or treated as something special and more delicate, looms another essential disagreement about the role of culture in the society and the responsibility of public authorities. On one side, there is the notion of culture as entertainment and, consequently, a belief that cultural products are just merchandise like anything else, whose position is to be settled on the market, uninfluenced by public authorities and, accordingly, an assumption that authors' rights could be traded just like any other patent. On the other side are the ideas of culture as an essential element of national identity, a set of collective values that need to be protected and stimulated by public authorities and, consequently, a notion of copyright that presumes some inalienable

moral rights of the author above the commercial value of authorship. In Europe - unlike the US - public policies have been developed on the basis of the latter conviction and articulated, especially after World War Two, as a set of national, regional and even municipal cultural policies.

**5.2** Cultural policy as a part of public policy remains a European invention and results in a system of infrastructural interventions, with a rich scale of instruments and considerable public subsidy, made available on the basis of complex political arguments and distribution mechanisms (D'Angelo & Vespérin 1998). Outside Europe, cultural policy hardly exists as a coherent and systematic government commitment and amounts at the most

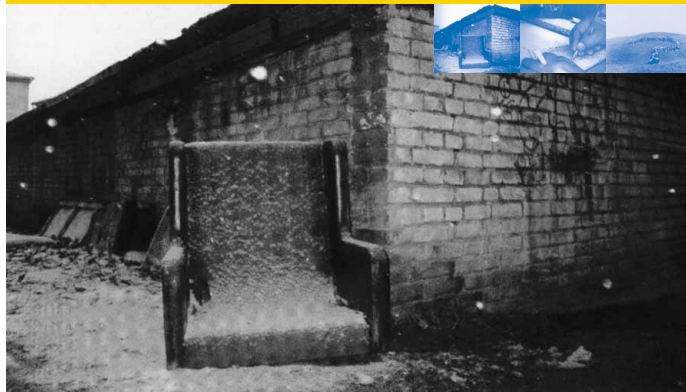
## 6 Advocacy of cultural diversity

**6.1** In recent years, criticism of globalization has focused on the value of *cultural diversity* and strategies for its protection and enhancement. The expectation that a round of negotiation on cultural industry might come to the WTO agenda in the near future added some urgency to those efforts. International Network for Cultural Diversity emerged as a bulwark of political advocacy, acquiring the tacit support of some national governments and ultimately securing the agreement of UNESCO to develop an *international convention* on cultural diversity that is currently being drafted. The European Commission, in a communication to the European Parliament, took a rather positive

attitude towards this process (*Towards an international instrument*, 2003) but to shape a convention and have it signed and ratified by a majority of UNESCO members will be a long process with an uncertain outcome.

**6.2** The EU commitment to cultural diversity has so far been by and large a rhetorical one. Actions and programmes undertaken by the EU to make its citizens learn more about each other and their respective cultures have been limited, deprived of strong political will and substantial funds, hindered by the invocation of *subsidiarity* that actually served





Tiina Täht, *Snow Chair*, 2002

as a shield for the prevailing ideology of a national culture with its traditional homogenizing impact. The EU budget for the enhancement of multilingualism, for instance, had only € 2.5 million per year available, buried in the provisions of the Socrates programme.

National and regional governments and prominent cultural institutions have mainly been paying lip service to the notion. With the recent turbulence in transatlantic political relations, outcries against intrusive 'Hollywood culture' are being heard in Europe, while in a large part of the Muslim, and especially Arab, world anti-Western rhetoric and rejection of the entire Western culture as immoral and lewd makes no subtle distinction between the American and European models of cultural systems. They are being rejected together, with resentment and anger.

### 6.3

Since its affirmation on the international political scene in the De Cuellar Report (De Cuellar 1995-6), cultural diversity has become a symbolic concept serving various agendas and interests. For some, this is a notion to oppose the flattening and homogenizing cultural consequences of globalization.

To others, it is a handy concept to borrow for the protection of their own audiovisual industry instead of *l'exception culturelle* which failed to gain any internationally recognized juridical standing. But the term could also be used as a convenient concept to insist on the distinctiveness of each culture, to promote an essentialist, static and self-enclosed notion of culture, whereby cultural diversity is supposed to manifest itself in a panoply of separate, unconnected cultural realms.

Ultimately, communication and entertainment monopolies or oligopolies - American, European or Asian by origin but global in outreach - hinder rather than advance cultural diversity and yet possess a market force that overwhelms governments, international agencies and civic movements for alternative globalization. Analogies drawn between biodiversity and cultural diversity remain unconvincing. Protection of vulnerable cultural forms should not lead to the formation of cultural ghettos and reservations that would prevent the dynamic of intercultural engagement and interaction among various cultural forms and realms.

Parity and equality of opportunities are easier to provide through public policies on a local and regional level than on a national or global scale.

## 7 Cultural heritage and contentious memories

### 7.1

Cultural diversity becomes even more problematic in a diachronic perspective, in view of the systematic and massive destruction of cultural heritage worldwide. Much material and immaterial cultural heritage has been irrevocably lost, and not only in the remote past but very recently as well. National governments are often unable or unwilling to take proper care of their cultural heritage and even when its emblematic objects are placed on the UNESCO list of common cultural heritage of humankind, this designation guarantees no special regime of care. Moreover, pilfering and smuggling continue despite many conventions and treaties, exacerbated by wars and civil strife, outbreaks of religious and xenophobic fanaticism, manifesting itself in the wilful destruction of material cultural heritage - not only in Afghanistan, India, Africa and most recently Iraq, but also in Europe (Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo) as well.

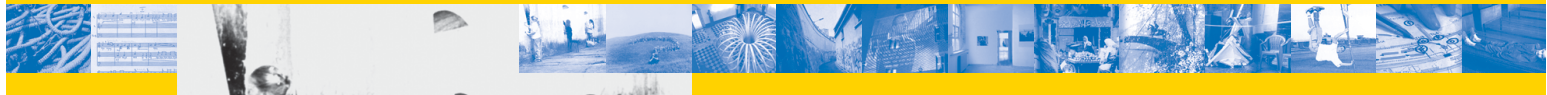
### 7.2

*Immaterial* cultural heritage is especially vulnerable to globalization's impact. It concerns skills and cultural artefacts sustained in memory and thus prone to fall out of use and disappear through collective amnesia. For Europe to make sense as a political, civil and cultural project, capable of ensuring peace and welfare to its citizens, their disconnected and often *contentious memories* need to be recognized, validated and interconnected. What tends to unite Europeans emotionally is their common remembrance of catastrophes, wars, destruction and mass suffering; paradoxically, the same memories divide them with their negative and divergent loading. What Europeans could try to derive from this collective corpus of memory is a

common project of sharing decency, respect and welfare among themselves and with their neighbours, an idea of Europe, oriented towards the future, not as a rigid ideological concept but as a set of common aspirations and hopes. What alienates many ordinary citizens from the EU is the perception of conflicting and competing interests, narrow-mindedness and constant petty arguments about national prestige and small advantages, extorted by one member state or one particular interest from the others.

### 7.3

The past has less significance and weight in Western Europe than in the Eastern part, some claim. Welfare and prosperity, capitalism and consumption have made historic remembrances less pressing, more opaque and distant. A structural *surplus of history*, however, is not necessarily an asset in Europe as it sustains old grudges, traumas, frustrations, prejudices and hatred. Against an embellished and super-harmonious idea of Europe, embodied in Beethoven's ode to all men as future brothers, there is a stubborn record of negative remembrances and unreconciled animosities. With this aspect of heritage in mind, Europe as a civic project could be built on memories as much as on *wilful and selective forgetfulness* and forgiveness. Repeated invoking of the conflicts of the past would have made European integration unsuccessful and invoking some earlier attempts to integrate Europe would only discourage because all these previous initiatives failed. The ongoing experiment of the European Union is rather unique and by now more advanced in economical and political matters than in its cultural facets. The cultural dimension needs



Biograds, Sedno, 2004

to be strengthened in order to make the political one assert itself.

**7.4** As a *reconciliation project*, the European Union has been remarkably successful, using Franco-German reconciliation as its axis and counting seriously on German-Polish *rapprochement* to make EU enlargement work. Not all animosities have been eliminated - in Northern Ireland, for instance, or Cyprus - and yet building peace, trust and dialogue is increasingly becoming a task at the borders of an enlarged EU, in relation to its neighbours to the east and south. The cultural diversity of the continent manifests itself, among other forms, in the broad typology of memories, in the models of mythological rendering, historiographical orientations and obsessions. How they can be reworked and respectfully handled, packaged in common text books and taught without demagoguery and jingoism - that is the major educational challenge. And to succeed as a cultural project, Europe needs to be an ambitious *educational project*.

**7.5** Europeans could profit from a common educational ground, a core *Bildung* that will make them more curious, knowledgeable and appreciative of each

other. An open system of common references must not, however, become a canon and certainly not a core of some emerging European ideology. Common values could hardly be extracted from the past but could probably be postulated and developed in the future, especially as the Bologna Declaration envisages a growing synergy and synchrony among the national university systems in Europe, with direct implications on their requirements, learning processes and outcomes. Some of the EC schemes enable professional historians and academic history departments to connect into a thematic network in order to develop the European dimension of their discipline, research and teaching approaches (see, for instance, [www.clio.net](http://www.clio.net)). At the same time, some standards developed by the Council of Europe and some articles of the European Charter of the Human Rights set parameters which indicate common values or point out how they should develop. In order to affirm those values, the EU needs to embark on cultural engagement and stimulate multilateral cultural cooperation, further multilingualism, offset through its own programmes the difference between the big and the small, rich and poor cultural realms and systems, and embrace intercultural competence as a goal instead of obfuscations and obsessions concerning identity,

## 8 Cultural perspectives of EU enlargement

### 8.1

The recent enlargement of the European Union created a fair amount of self-congratulatory rhetoric but the cultural perspective of this political development remained rather unexplored. Cyprus and Malta, for instance, have rather anachronistic cultural systems with an emphasis on cultural heritage and an orientation towards cultural tourism. Eight post-socialist countries have, with the possible exception of Slovenia, so far failed to significantly reform their cultural systems and have striven to sustain the inherited cultural infrastructure with much less money available. Investment in new *prestige objects* is easier politically to justify than investment in the development of *new programmes* and schemes that would facilitate the emergence of new generations of artists, new initiatives and cultural places (Klaic 2004). Culture budgets on all levels are under the strain of steady clients who keep receiving their subsidies automatically, regardless of the quality and quantity of their output, just because they used to receive them in the past.

### 8.2

This rigidity and anachronistic character of the cultural system brings with it various negative consequences, including the reduced potential of the most dynamic cultural operators to engage in international cultural co-operation. At the same time, governments are squandering large parts of their international cultural budget on organizing superfluous and rather ineffective presentations of their culture in the key countries of the EU, believing in vain that these prestige-loaded manifestations could provoke curiosity for an unknown culture and secure its appreciation abroad. At the same time, at home, market-driven reform of the economy opened

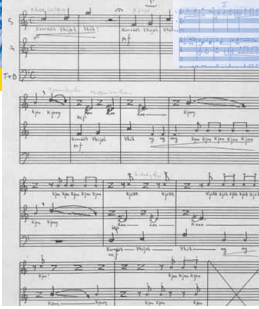
the way for a mass influx of the products of cultural industry from abroad. Among the intellectual and artistic elites, this avalanche of trivial culture provoked further identity anxieties, much confusion over the cultural impact of economic globalization and of the EU regulatory drift.

### 8.3

The situation in the new member states has been further worsened by a *brain drain* of talented artists who have left their countries. Many of the best cultural operators left the cultural sector and started some lucrative business or initiated their own cultural initiative, further aggravating institutional fatigue in the government sector. The new autonomous initiatives have recently been affected by the premature closing of the network of George Soros foundations ([www.osi.hu](http://www.osi.hu)) which in the first transition phase invested significant resources in developing an alternative, contemporary, dynamic and critical segment of the cultural infrastructure. Soros concluded that those Central European countries have become 'normal countries' following their admittance to the EU and hastened to close his foundations as superfluous, thus creating a gap no foundation, philanthropist or public authority could hope to fill.

### 8.4

Most of the new member states have carried out no modernization of their territorial-administrative systems and are behind with the political and juridical set-up of the regions that would be fit to receive subsidies from the EU structural funds. Even worse, EU enlargement will be implemented in Central Europe on a shoestring budget - the new



Külli K. Kaats, *Avjajuna*, 2002

member states could expect to receive only 10% per capita of the resources that were initially made available in the 1980s and 1990s from the EU budget for the integration of Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Greece. Less available money, more matching funds required and more severe criteria further reduce the possible applicability of the structural funds to a variety of cultural projects. The impact of other EU regulations and binding standards on the cultural sector and its infrastructure has not been even calculated. The discrepancy in cultural opportunities in the large cities on the one side and smaller places and the countryside on the other has only worsened because the public authorities have no resources to stimulate any circulation of cultural goods and touring.

**8.5**

Politicians and even cultural operators in the new member states have been succumbing to three fallacies: that the *market* will somehow miraculously fix all the new problems of cultural creation and distribution, by a simple balancing of offer and demand, failing to understand that the market could do so for the products of the cultural industry that are by their nature commercially oriented but not for the non-commercial cultural production that will continue to depend on subsidies or donations for its survival. Another belief is a sort of *sponsorship mystique*, or rather an expectation that the new

capitalist entrepreneurs will rush to sponsor cultural goods, events and services. In fact, they often do, to the extent that the emerging capitalism and early accumulation of capital permit - but tend to favour, as everywhere else, traditional, conventional, accessible cultural forms for the larger audience, but not the experimental and innovative, controversial and challenging art. The third mystic belief concerns the expectation that *cultural tourism* will result in a bonanza for the cultural sector, forgetting to calculate the substantial prior investment in both the tourism and the cultural infrastructures that needs to be made before tourists start showing up and spending money.

**8.6**

The cultural integration of the new member states in the EU poses the question what will happen with their interactions with the neighbouring cultural realms that will find themselves outside the newly drawn EU borders, with their restrictive *Schengen regime*? Some traditional cultural relations of proximity and kinship will be jeopardized and some ethnic and linguistic cultural zones will be split between the member and non-member states. The clear danger is that artists and cultural operators in South-Eastern Europe and the West Balkans and those in Eastern Europe (Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia) will become more isolated from the wide cultural development in Europe and that regional cultural cooperation will suffer (*Moving Borders* 2003). To counter a certain *Balkan fatigue* of the international community, multilateral organizations and NGOs, one needs to remember that the cultural realm generated much of the intolerance and hatred of the 1990s and thus needs to be encouraged to continue in a co-operative mode, locally, on the regional level and Europe-wide. And yet, paradoxically, culture is not even mentioned in the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe!



Hüseyin Alptekin

**9 Turkey's EU candidacy: a cultural issue?**

**9.1**

A case apart is the problematic Turkish candidacy for the EU. In December 2002, the EU heads of states and governments decided to postpone for two years a decision as to when they would start negotiating with Turkey about its accession and to wait for newly accumulated evidence of its progress towards the fulfilment of the Copenhagen accession criteria. As the decision time approaches, the EU's political voices seem rather divided, from the categorical rejection of Turkish accession ever, to careful demands for more time and further postponements, to an insistence that setting a firm time-frame of negotiations would encourage and speed up the necessary reforms, especially in politics, human rights, treatment of minorities, pluralism and economy in Turkey (Ahtisaari 2004). A decision by the European Council in December 2004 not to start negotiations with Turkey in 2005,

even if unlikely after the October 2004 advice of the European Commission, would be for many in Turkey a snub that in turn could provoke resentment and ultimately strengthen anti-European attitudes and prejudices. For those Europe-oriented intellectuals and culture professionals in Turkey, who expect Europe to aid them to escape the bureaucratic imbroglio of anachronistic, state-managed culture and acquire more autonomy, but also to reinforce their opposition to the traditionalist and re-traditionalizing tendencies in contemporary Turkish culture and society, the EU decision could be a major encouragement or a serious blow: if negative or imposing a protracted delay, it would be not only disappointing but would weaken their own standing at home and reduce their ability to collaborate with their peers in Europe.



Hüseyin Aiptekin

9-2

The confirmation of Turkey's longstanding EU candidacy by starting the accession negotiations in 2005 would prompt and reinforce the articulation of its relationship with Europe as an engaging one and dynamise all the resources that could contribute to a culture of democracy, human rights, secularism and economic and social development. And for Europe to define in a *positive, collaborative and engaging* fashion its relationship with Turkey is almost as vital as the relationship with Russia - because of its complex and contentious history, millions of Turkish citizens residing in EU countries, its key position in the Middle East, and because it is the only Muslim country where firmly entrenched secularism resists the increasing pressure of fundamentalist forces. Europe's long-range interest is clearly to help this secularist tradition emancipate itself from its authoritarian background and acquire a democratic legitimization and that could be possible only by consolidating ties between Turkey and the EU, in a multifaceted engagement with a strong cultural dimension.

9-3

For the civil society in Europe and for the broad field of international networks, foundations and cultural NGOs in particular, the forthcoming EU decision creates a formidable challenge: to speed up Turkey's cultural integration in Europe in the case of negotiations starting soon; and to stress cultural ties in the case of postponement of negotiations - in order to limit the damage and counter the ensuing backlash. In any case, cultural engagement with Turkey needs to be both bilateral and multilateral and a look at Turkey should go beyond the usual vision field of the politicians and civil servants, so as to include the contemporary culture of Turkey, within and outside institutions, the cultural dimension of human rights and community development activism, social and cultural research and the emancipation efforts concerning women and ethnic minorities - thus the multifaceted European qualities of Turkey. This engagement strategy needs to overcome the monopoly of the government and corporate interests and create opportunities to counter the fear mongering anti-Muslim discourse that is overwhelming Europe, to envisage Europe in terms of intercultural competence and not in terms of exclusive identity obsessions and fabricated harsh cultural boundaries.

## 10 The Mediterranean as a cultural realm

10.1

Turkey could be seen as a major test case for the entire spectrum of the EU's relationship with the Mediterranean region. The countries of the southern Mediterranean are the EU's immediate neighbourhood and keep traces of much that is commonly claimed as European cultural tradition. At the same time, the Mediterranean is a zone of political instability, marked by a blatant lack of democratic institutions and an abundance of oppressive regimes along its southern rim, economic stagnation, exploding population growth, as well as a zone of much legal and even more illegal migration into the EU. Long before the US intervention in Iraq, the EU engagement with its Mediterranean neighbours (the 'Barcelona process') had been practically halted, overshadowed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The turbulence of the second intifada and Israeli military reactions to it have practically halted EU developmental aid to the Palestinian Authority and destroyed much of the investment made so far. In the aftermath of 9/11, even the 'moderate' Arab regimes, such as Tunisia and Morocco, could not contain their domestic terrorist networks from striking against Europeans at home and abroad (Madrid). An improvement in the EU relationship with Libya goes alongside the worsening of its relationship with Syria over its meddling in Lebanon. EU relations with Israel remain strained and marked by mutual irritations and accusations.

10.2

The recent *Arab Human Development Report* (2003) explicitly put the blame for the malaise of the Arab world on the low government investment in education, the lack of democracy and the exclusion

of women from the public sphere. The poor harvest of new book titles in the entire Arab world indicates a protracted cultural stagnation and an absence of public intellectual debate. The scarcity of home-grown cultural products leaves the Arab cultural market open to inundation by the products of Western cultural industry, much as they are condemned on Islamic ground. Fierce anti-Western rhetoric does not really hold against the avid consumption of imported cultural goods, chiefly of American origin.

10.3

Contemporary artistic production in the Arab world suffers from poverty, censorship, corruption and the lack of any conscious cultural policy. In fact, government efforts are often centred on the execution of stifling control rather than the stimulation of creativity. In addition to repressive mechanisms and a variety of legal and fiscal obstacles to any self-organizing energy by the artists, there is the militant Islamic *puritanism* which is essentially hostile to the arts, artistic experimentation and innovation. Because of its strong grass-roots grip, the quest for an audience succumbs to widespread conservative attitudes, fear and lack of cultural habits.

10.4

The support that artists in the Arab countries receive from the embassies of the EU countries and their cultural departments and national cultural agencies and some foreign foundations is important but inadequate. These players are usually lead primarily by the *promotional aims* to affirm their own national culture and not to further any autonomous cultural



Serhiy Bratkov, *Spetscraspreditel*, 2000

development in the host country. Examples of arrogant instances of cultural imperialism and wasteful investment abound. Attention to cultural heritage and traditional artistic forms often takes precedence over innovative cultural practices and contemporary creativity that are deemed too controversial and amateurish. The development of an autonomous institutional capacity is neglected as too ambitious and cumbersome under the circumstances but attention to individual cultural operators could yield little if the general circumstances of cultural production and distribution are not improved.

#### 10.5

Even the individual benefit remains very limited. Cultural operators cannot move unencumbered within the Arab world but must obtain visas, often under long, slow and humiliating procedures. Their mobility in the direction of the EU is further made difficult by the hardening of security precautions since 9/11. Even if they have an invitation from a host in the EU, Arab artists have difficulties obtaining visas and even with a visa entrance into the EU is not guaranteed and is sometimes coupled with humiliating examinations. The temptation is to stay at home, or stay abroad once there.

#### 10.6

There is little reason to believe that the newly established Euro-Mediterranean Foundation

(officially called the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation - A Network of National Networks) can significantly improve cultural ties between the EU and the southern Mediterranean, i.e. the Arab world. The establishing process was very slow and politically untransparent. The foundation was set up with considerable objectives and a modest budget of some € 11 million, with its headquarters in the new Alexandrine Library in Alexandria, Egypt, which is already known for the inefficient management of its ample facilities and poor programming. The governance is heavy, with all members of the Euromed committee represented on the board and key staff appointments delayed. Since the foundation was established as an intergovernmental organization, one dreads the possibility that the censors of yesterday might appear as its officials tomorrow, that those who out of deeply ingrained suspicion work systematically to stifle the cultural production in their own country could appear as governors or key officers of a foundation that is supposed to stimulate collaboration between the EU and the southern Mediterranean. The impact of a similar intergovernmental construction, the Euro-Asian Foundation, governed by the governments of the EU and ASEAN countries, has also been much limited by the imposed symmetry of the governmental influence, a small budget and tiny staff, against the enormous diversity of cultural conditions in Europe and Asia.

## 11 The cultural dimension of EU foreign and security policy

### 11.1

The example of the Mediterranean as the immediate neighbouring region of the EU indicates that any consideration of culture in Europe must not be limited by European vistas alone; that a broader regional and global approach is necessary; that the cultural transactions in Europe and especially between Europe and other places are situated in a context marked by political relations and economic dynamics. The presence of so many people of southern-Mediterranean origin in the member states of the EU obliges the latter to articulate a policy of cultural engagement with the region. The increasing mistrust between Europeans and Arabs, Christians and Muslims or believers and secularists highlights the necessity of active cultural relations and cultural engagement in the broader Euro-Mediterranean space, in order to shape a dialogue and hopefully achieve trust, mutual understanding and peaceful collaboration. If the EU is determined to shape its own foreign and security policy, its specific quality should be a prominent cultural component and it should draw inspiration from the high articulation of cultural policies in Europe in order to determine its cultural approach and its instruments. Security considerations need to be reconciled with the cultural security of groups and nations and measures that systematically eliminate the sense of cultural insecurity and prevent gestures of cultural insensitivity and disrespect, build trust and engage on an intercultural level. Intercultural dialogue makes sense only if it can surpass the cultural monoliths and monopolies of representation, if it can include divergence and difference in a broad range of voices.

### 11.2

European approaches to the official bodies and governmental cultural institutions in the Arab countries usually yield little because the latter lack the operational autonomy to engage in international cultural cooperation as effective players. Encouragement of autonomous initiatives furthers their embedding in the micro-infrastructure of the civil society. Venues, museums, galleries - even where active - tend to be run in a heavy-handed bureaucratic manner, with a myriad of imposed restrictions and self-enclosure that declines creative initiatives as *a priori* suspicious. Arab countries lack autonomous zones of reflection, debate and creativity, so they need to be encouraged and supported and could, in time, emerge as appropriate partners for cultural organization in the EU. If the EU were to take culture as its strategic potential it could decide to set up *Houses of European Cultures* in some key cities outside the EU such as Istanbul and Cairo and also Moscow, followed by Teheran, Shanghai, Johannesburg, Sao Paulo, Bombay, Lagos, Mexico City... For instance, some recent concerns of the EU about the effacement of democratic features of public life in Russia (human rights, media freedom, rule of law) could be addressed on the spot, in Moscow in the first place, through cultural engagement and intellectual debate rather than political reproaches made in Brussels and Strasbourg only.

### 11.3

Instead of competition and bickering by several cultural agencies of national governments in the same city, those houses of European cultures would



operate according to local circumstances, needs, prejudices, assumptions and creative resources. In this way, the notion of European cultures, or rather of cultures in Europe, would be constructed from the outside as it were, experimentally, through a concentrated engagement of European cultural resources and talents in a few crucial and emblematic foreign capitals. Instead of diplomats, borrowed from the embassies, and EU civil servants, those houses should be staffed by seasoned cultural operators of practical international experience, contracted or seconded for two to three years and allowed to build their international team on the

basis of their previous collaborative experiences in Europe, relying on cultural networks which have given a tremendous boost to international cultural cooperation and pioneered many innovative models of multilateral work. In those urban pressure cookers, the link between culture and social development, creativity and intercultural competence, even arts and religion, could be further tested, making EU foreign and security policy take shape on the basis of dialogue, understanding, mutual respect and common learning rather than posturing, cajoling, dominance and exploitation.



D Nerve Lab, Europe Square XXL, 2004

## 12 Europe as a public space

26

### 12.1

The process of European integration has created an integrated market and a broad monetary eurozone but no integrated public spheres of reflection and debate that would be a precondition for the emergence of Europe as a community of citizens and their direct input in European politics. With the exception of a small intellectual elite, most European citizens focus on an immediate public sphere, determined by the geographic, cultural and linguistic boundaries of the national state, and often even more locally.

### 12.2

The European public sphere should not be thought of in its singularity but rather as a panoply of interconnected and partially overlapping public realms, where a variety of specialist discourses and discourses driven by specific interests are practiced. The plurality of those discursive zones is at the

same time a strength and a weakness because of inherent fragmentation and limited outreach. And yet they enable the interaction of citizens beyond national boundaries and help them to gradually build a sense of belonging to Europe as a larger community, without excluding local, regional and national loyalties, and to gain a sense of empowerment.

### 12.3

Much of the mainstream printed press across Europe is moulded in the defensive role of a self-appointed protector of the 'national interest' and switches easily into an anti-EU mode, sometimes followed up by anti-immigrant diatribes. The European integration process is forced to appease a broad range of identity anxieties, some caused by economic globalization, some by the growing competence of Brussels, some induced by

the overwhelming disorientation and destabilization, felt by many citizens caught up in a shaky economy, shrinking welfare state and a demography altered by migration. While most strategic issues in Europe today need a European solution, a European approach or at least a European if not a global awareness, debating stances remain entrenched in limited perspectives that cannot accommodate this European dimension. Stances taken, therefore, tend to reinforce resentment, anxiety, distrust or at least Euro-scepticism, and rarely offer any productive answers that would make sense across the nearest national border.

### 12.4

Debates are mostly carried out in Europe in the national language and the emergence of English as a primary European language benefits its native speakers but is a disadvantage for all other potential participants. Cultural differences and divergent traditions and styles also play a curbing role. Europe-oriented outlets are numerous but often

small and of limited outreach. Besides the major dailies and some prominent weeklies, they include a growing number of radio stations and their networks with strong local anchoring and dependent on citizens' engagement; European television channels, specializing in news, sports and arts and culture (Arte) that have benefited from satellite transmission and cable TV and will further explode with the implementation of digital TV; and a whole virtual jungle of internet sites of European aspirations, in a variety of idioms. One should add here hundreds of symposia, seminars and congresses taking place in Europe every week, debating the cultural and civic perspectives of European integration, the diversity and unity of cultures in Europe and other related topics, more often in a conventional, celebratory - rather than in a non-conformist and critical - mode.

### 12.5

On the eve of EU enlargement, many newspapers strengthened their European desks but some have

27



reduced the number of permanent correspondents abroad. It remains to be seen whether the increase in special projects aiming to give their readers a better insight into the 'broader Europe' will be sustained. That there is no such phenomenon as the 'European reader' complicates the possible collaboration of various outlets. It is impossible to write about Europe for all Europeans at the same time. In the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, privatization of the media actually led to predominantly foreign ownership by large Western European, mainly German and French, concerns. This could hardly be taken as a development that enhances European vistas and citizens' trust but rather prompts domestic resentful perceptions of Europe as a colonizing power. Consolidation of media ownership and monopolization of the distribution networks signal the hard chase for profits by corporate owners and the possible risks of homogenization of the opinions voiced. There is also the opposite trend of multiple specialist niches, small publications, technological innovations that facilitate distribution of minority opinions and the prospect of printing on demand and of e-books, short-circuiting large distributive systems with their monopolies and preference for sale boosters.

#### 12.6

Many younger Europeans read hardly any newspapers. Their specific lifestyles and habits demand some clever strategies to insert European perspectives into the phenomena of popular culture, penetrate television and radio programmes and, in particular, find a place in the popular youth and pop music channels. And at the same time, many youngsters in Europe are indefatigable travellers and their mobility shapes a Europe-wide public sphere of chance encounters, spontaneous dialogue, common interests and an accelerated build-up of Europe of

*personal experience*, with its common features, recognizable ubiquitous symbols and a baffling diversity.

#### 12.7

The explosive growth of the internet has given a major boost to the expansion of integrated European public spaces, well beyond the EU boundaries. The internet has developed its own culture of public discourse, based on interactivity rather than assertion of entrenched identity and received opinion. It provides updated information on millions of organizations and institutions, making them more transparent and accessible than ever before, including the institutions and the agencies of the EU and NGOs of European outreach.

The internet has created an economy of exchange, sharing, openness and dialogue that might appear as chaotic, overwhelming and often irrelevant but has ensured access to millions of users turned debate participants that traditional mainstream newspapers never could dream of involving with their op-ed pages and letters to the editor.

Communication on the internet connects peers in discussions but also overcomes generational differences.

Most of the information on the internet is free but it does not have to be considered worthless because it implies another economy of mutuality and solidarity than the standard relationship of a seller and a buyer. A huge part of this traffic has an international dimension and while most of it is in a rich variety of appropriated English, not all of it is only in English for sure. Many websites offer multilingual versions. Yet commercial applications of the internet for selling, sometimes in an aggressive and even fraudulent manner, the overwhelmingly intrusive digital shopping centre seem to be winning over the concept of virtual commons.

#### 12.8

Beside *media and professional journalists*, the forces shaping or at least being potentially capable of multiplying and reinforcing the interconnectivity of public spaces in Europe include *immigrants and expats*, thousands of *NGOs, cities and regions* that see themselves as autonomous subjects of international cooperation and frequently host events of European significance that include dialogue and debate. Furthermore, universities in Europe are engaged in a major harmonization of operation (Bologna Declaration process) that eases mobility and the development of multilateral collaborative projects in teaching, research and debate, asserting a European dimension of higher learning.

#### 12.9

The diversity of the languages of Europe and of non-European languages spoken in Europe are often invoked as a major obstacle to the further development of European public spheres. This linguistic diversity needs to be cherished and multilingualism has to be stimulated. Ideally, one

day educated citizens of Europe will speak their native language, English and another European language. If Europe wants to be as competitive as the Lisbon agenda proclaims, another non-European language should be added to this list of desired qualifications. The recognition of 'Euro-English' as the *de facto lingua franca* at the beginning of the 21st century, similar to the dominance of Latin or French in some other epochs, needs to overcome the obstacles of national sentiment and patriotic pride. This pragmatic acceptance of English is conceivable only if it is coupled with strong multilingual policies in education, publishing and media, careful nurturing of national language and respect of minority rights. Accepting English as a priority channel of international communication in Europe, especially at the institutional level, would allow the EU institutions to progressively invest less in the internal simultaneous translation of speeches and multiple translation of documents and more into the translation of cultural goods, especially from the smaller language areas, aimed at the citizens of Europe.

## 13 Conclusions: a complex constellation with multiple players

#### 13.1

For more than two hundred years, a great part of culture in Europe has grown in a firm institutional matrix. Cultural institutions have been set up by aristocrats and burghers, churches and universities, by national states, cities and regional authorities, and more recently by corporate entities and their

foundations. Today, many cultural institutions suffer from some sort of *institutional fatigue*, feel restricted by their highly specialist mandate or detached from mainstream cultural consumption, shaped by the cultural industry and its mass products. Some cultural institutions reacted with considerable delay



to the digital revolution and the changed patterns of communication with the public it imposed. Others are made uncomfortable by the greying of the audience and feel disoriented by the demographic changes in their social environment and especially by the challenges of multiculturalism. Invocations of prestige and traditions sometimes hide a lack of institutional development and strategic repositioning. The cultural consequences of globalization, global competitiveness and the expectation of international engagement and exposure make some institutions anxious and insecure, despite their concentration of professionalism. Public subsidies are increasingly inadequate and need to be complemented with self-generated income, sponsorship and donations. Even not-for-profit cultural institutions realize that they are perpetually exposed to market pressures and the competitive drive - whether they seek subsidy, sponsors, benefactors, publicity, prominent associated artists or expanded audiences.

**13-2** Digitalization and globalization have altered some traditional patterns of cultural production and distribution. Artists are simultaneously becoming more independent in terms of material conditions and the technological basis, and more dependent in terms of funding and marketing, switching between institutions and individuals, not-for-profit and for-profit worlds as clients, between local and distant partners and audiences, between virtual and live communication modes. For individual artists and collectives, numerous international professional networks of various degrees of informality are becoming the key channels for career development, artistic growth, collaborative ventures, funding and commissions, exposure and presentation. Artistic mobility emerges as a key desirable condition, one that can provide inspiration, exposure to new artistic stimuli and sustainable professional economy.

Artistic engagement is consequently dynamic, shifting, mobile and invokes a broad range of constantly changing partners and relationships.

**13-3** For many cultural institutions and for most public authorities and their cultural policies, those shifts in cultural production are occurring too abruptly to adjust to them properly. Increasingly, artists operate in an interdisciplinary mode against the discipline-driven profile of most cultural institutions. Artists develop a nomadic existence against the static habits of institutions. The sense of *creative time* of the artists and the sense of *programming/budgeting/production time* of the institutions do not overlap. For most cultural institutions, the main challenge is how to make the tension between local anchoring and global cultural trends manageable and productive. For most artists, the main challenge is how to enhance their exposure in the media and on the market and yet sustain their creative autonomy. Not-for-profit cultural institutions tend to see the cultural industry as an overwhelming competitor which they cannot beat. Artists tend to see the cultural industry as an ambiguous client that can bring success but also marginalize or even destroy artists through its exploitative drift and the pressure for uniformity. Cultural industries are able to take full advantage of the emerging European cultural market of 450 million consumers. When artists start to operate on this supposedly open market, they are confronted with incompatible national cultural policies and funding requirements, with double taxation and social provisions, tailored for an anachronistic model of a fixed, static cultural practice within the domain of a national state. Against the positive achievement in the monetary and market integration, Europe as a cultural project is weakened by the self-centredness of national cultural policies, the dim prospects of a *fiscal Europe*



Phil Collins, *Untitled*, 2003

of harmonized taxation standards, and the delays in tailoring a *social Europe* of transnational provisions in the domain of working conditions and health, unemployment, disability and pension insurance.

**13-4** In contrast to the profit-driven operation of the cultural industry and increased market pressures on the not-for-profit culture, local and international networks, alliances, consortia and partnerships connect individual artists, artistic collectives, cultural institutions, civic groups and NGOs from domains other than culture (education, community development, environment, human rights, public health, youth, migrants), so that cultural production and distribution bring with them the simultaneous creation of social capital and public value. Public authorities tend to encourage the cultural industries for their economic benefits and at the same time fear their levelling, globalizing impact. When they recite the mantra of *public-private partnership*, public

authorities habitually seek to ease the burden of financing culture, a burden they feel unable to carry alone, often not realizing the imposing grip of capital and the privatization of the public domain this PPP formula implies.

**13-5** As the notions of public space and public value increasingly acquire a local face and European and global dimensions, public authorities move away from the intrinsic value of culture and arts in the development of a policy rationale and seek justification for their engagement and investment in a range of more pragmatically defined expected benefits. Economic development and social cohesion are most commonly invoked. In the broader European space, in relation to the EU's neighbours, additional rationales, such as furthering a culture of peace and relationships of mutual trust, could be added. A newly defined objective, related to the coherence of the cultural policy and any public





policy on all levels, from local to global, is the furthering of *intercultural competence* as a skill, an attitude, a mentality and an institutional and policy marker (Klaic, 2001). In a globalized world of planetary mass communication, mobility, migration and widespread cultural tensions, of systematic cultural conflicts, prejudices and misrepresentations, intercultural competence becomes the key ingredient of peace and sustainable development, a prerequisite of any complex institutional construction, such as the EU, is a capacity needed in order to negotiate cultural difference and cultural diversity and to resist cultural, political and economic hegemonies.

**13.6**  
Cultural operations today strain between the expectations of public service and market pressures, between the delivery of public value and achievement of profit or at least self-generated income, between the quality of the cultural capital created and the quantity of audience lured away from other forms of consumption. Cultural policies vacillate between the ideology of a national state, with its emphasis on identity, homogeneity and continuity, and the ideology of the globalized market, with its erratic shifts and ups and downs. Consequently, governments seek to instrumentalize culture for mutually incompatible objectives. The EU takes pride in itself as a functioning unified market but allows governments to appropriate culture as their exclusive domain in the name of subsidiarity. As this economic association evolves into a political structure, it increasingly invokes the loyalty of its 450 million citizens but hesitates to offer them a common cultural framework in which they would recognize each other as fellows in the same communal adventure. Consequently, when citizens are expected to behave as voters, they snub the European Parliament as moody consumers would

do, turning down a defective product or avoiding a shoddy distributor of goods. Hence the low voter turnout, the apathy towards European institutions and even an aversion to their Byzantine ways and means.

**13.7**  
The European Union cannot expect to evolve in a community of interest nor in a community of values unless it places culture in the centre of its political agenda and embarks upon enhancing cultural diversity and multilingualism, intercultural competence, creativity, mobility, collective memory, and generosity and trust towards its neighbours. By placing culture in the midst of its integrative effort, the EU would emphasise its own specificity on the global playground: affirm itself as a society that avoids polarization and accepts its complexity and diversity as major assets and invents devices to capitalize on them; an economy that is not oblivious to the responsibilities of the corporate citizenship and fairness in labour relationships; a government that faces its responsibilities and yet expects the engagement of the civil society; a social model that is more complex in its essential values and concerns than the redistributive mechanism of the traditional welfare state; a political system of legality and democracy that places human rights at its cornerstone; a citizenry, government and business, all committed to environmental protection; a shared sense of global solidarity and justice, globalization of equality and of peace. Finally, culture would be cherished for its humanizing and emancipatory potential more than for its entertaining role. In the post-Cold War era, which has seen the disappearance of clear-cut divisions and knee-jerk loyalties, Europe can find its specific values and the uniqueness of its role in the world by embracing its cultural potential and by further developing its cultural policies as an essential part of public service.

## 14 Recommendations

**The Reflection Group has developed a set of recommendations, addressing the EU institutions and public authorities in the member states, cultural operators, their networks and NGOs, foundations and cultural research institutions.**

### 14.1 Governments of the member states and the EU institutions

A new cultural programme of the EU needs clear and feasible objectives and an appropriate budget (at least 70 eurocents per citizen per year, based on a carefully researched and documented action programme, as proposed by the 'Sharing Cultures' conference). This budget should be seen as an investment in European citizenship and not in the public relations of the EU.

A political and civic strategy needs to be developed to ensure the acceptance of the Constitution of Europe and, if needed, to overcome the stasis in which the EU could find itself if its Constitution is rejected by one or more national referenda. Implementing the qualified majority vote as prescribed in the Constitution is a prerequisite for the Union of 25 member states to function effectively and for the cultural dimension of the EU to be advanced.

Cultural industry, communication, media and education should not be placed on the agenda of future WTO negotiations before UNESCO finishes the drafting of the convention on cultural diversity.

The European Commission should reassert its own commitment to cultural diversity beyond lip service; by following up on its initial communication on cultural diversity with concrete action programmes

which focus on the interaction of the cultures of the member states and their engagement with the cultures of third countries, especially in the EU neighbourhood, while seeking to obtain proposals and recruit players from civic society.

The cultural dimension of the EU common foreign and security policy should be developed through a dialogue between cultural researchers and international relations and security experts. In parallel, practical steps to enhance mobility and remove obstacles to mobility should be taken, especially for building cultural bridges to the EU neighbours.

*Examples:*  
The joint development by the Commission and member states, cultural operators and security experts of a special type of Schengen visa to be issued to the participants in cultural and educational cooperation programmes in the EU, according to a simplified, free and fast procedure;  
The creation of an informal platform of European cultural, human rights, gender, research and media organizations, to intensify cooperation with counterparts in Turkey and speed up, regardless of the EU decision on the time-frame of negotiations, this country's integration in the EU;  
The development of the model of Houses of European Cultures, with the pilots to be set up in Istanbul, Cairo and Moscow.

The European authorities should - based on civil society initiatives and in public-private partnerships - develop an integrated strategy to boost a Europe-wide public space of cross-border reflection and debate and encourage a support scheme for European media cooperation.



Olivier Zabat, *1/3 des yeux - Miguel et les mines. Second part, 2004*

**Example:**  
The European Commission should seek the commitment of more EU governments to make ARTE a television channel that displays and enhances the diversity and richness of cultures in Europe, and urge the hospitality industry to make ARTE as ubiquitous as CNN in hotel rooms and airport lounges throughout Europe.

National governments should encourage the Council of Europe to reassert its cultural prerogatives and continue developing standards of cultural policy on the basis of its past achievements.

**Examples:**  
Stimulating the modernization of cultural systems in Central and Eastern Europe, but elsewhere in the EU as well, by advancing the principle of public subsidy distribution according to output and performance rather than status and tradition, and favouring

programmes with clearly defined objectives as opposed to the automatic support of the existing institutions;  
Asserting the competitiveness of Europe as an advantage, derived as much from a knowledge-driven economy and a democratic climate as from cultural richness and creative diversity, developed cultural infrastructure and the sophistication of cultural policies. Affirming the public character of cultural provisions and the primacy of their public support, complemented by public-private partnerships.

**14.2 International cultural networks, foundations and cultural operators**  
Cultural operators in Europe should lobby their national governments, the European Parliament and the Commission for an ambitious EU cultural action programme for 2007-2013, tailored to boost

multilateral cultural cooperation, artistic mobility and intercultural competence, support European networks, alliances and consortia, develop new tools for information processing and knowledge generation and facilitate cultural research and the circulation of its results.

**Example:**  
The ECF has initiated a Laboratory of European Cultural Cooperation (the LAB), with an internet portal that is to serve as a gateway to international cultural cooperation.

The programme should include the neighbours of the EU in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean and delineate an integrated European visitors' programme for cultural operators from outside Europe.

Public and private bodies, foundations and networks should invest in the capacity building of cultural operators in the new member states and in the EU neighbourhood so as to enable them to develop valid cultural projects that could obtain the support from the EU structural funds.

Paragraph 151.4 of the Amsterdam Treaty, which obliges the EU institutions to anticipate and assess the cultural impact of all regulations, needs to be put into operation. It is up to the cultural operators, their networks and research resources to urge the Commission to take the initiative and to develop its own proposals.

European cultural operators should oppose the cultural industry in its efforts to hijack the notion of cultural diversity as a replacement for *l'exception culturelle* and as a rationale for the protectionist policies of the member states and the EU, and insist on cultural diversity as an inclusive, dynamic and interactive concept.

Diversity and difference are not just an embellishment of any given cultural constellation but a key marker and condition for innovation and creativity.

European cultural networks should argue within the International Network for Cultural Diversity and elsewhere against a nominalist, essentialist and static notion of cultural diversity and for an open, dynamic understanding of cultures as values and expressions in constant flux, transformation and mutual influence.

Cultural heritage organizations and those supporting contemporary creativity should cooperate in order to develop an understanding of cultural heritage beyond the (necessary) protection only, in order to construct a cultural memory that fuses memory sites and memory narratives. The sense of European citizenship will emerge from the dialectics of cultural memory and creative exploration of the future.

Cultural operators should continue arguing with their national governments that international cultural cooperation has a primarily partnership-building rather than promotional purpose, that the role of the governments is to support and facilitate cooperative projects rather than representative manifestations abroad. Consequently, government cultural agencies need to reformulate their mandate as bridge-builders, as an interface rather than as public diplomacy agents.

Cultural operators should combat the manipulation of historic records that aim to divide nations and religions, especially in the Balkans, by drawing perspectives for the future, stressing the benefits of cooperative engagement over self-enclosure of identity. Cultural cooperation can serve as a model



for self-understanding and the practice of reconciliation. They should also insist on support for cultural cooperation within the EU programmes and mechanisms.

Cultural operators should lobby for the constructive input of civil society organizations and cultural networks in the profiling, governance and programme development of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation.

The cultural world should advocate the curbing of the media and communication oligopolies in Europe through the intervention of the European Commission, aiming at openness and pluralism of the common European public space of debate. Media cooperation schemes such as the ECF's journalism programme, the *New European Deal*, and public European debate schemes such as foreseen in the LAB, can help to forge this public European space.

Cultural operators and their associations should cooperate with the Commission in order to further harmonize working conditions and fiscal and social provision for cultural operators across the EU, thus facilitating their cooperation and mobility and eliminating obstacles imposed by national social security and tax systems.

In order to bridge the considerable gap between arts and business, their practices, motivations, values and jargon, the formation of arts and business platforms in the European countries needs to be instigated as a method to articulate mutual understanding and common interests.

#### 14.3 Cultural research

In developing a cultural strategy for Europe research is needed, and support for applied research on cultural policy and cooperation

issues with a European and a global perspective needs to be provided on all levels (Council of Europe, EU, member states, universities, Circle network, public-private initiatives such as the LAB).

Research into not-for-profit cultural production and the research of cultural industry need to be fused into one stream that will respect the basic values and motivations of both and seek to investigate their interdependence and mutual influences.

Research is needed into the practice of private-public partnerships in culture, including the for-profit corporations and not-for-profit private foundations, in particular the study of investment into international cultural cooperation, mobility, multilingualism and intercultural competence.

Research is needed on the cultural components of a future foreign EU policy.

Research undertaken with the goal to assess the impact of the Open Society Institute cultural programmes in Central and Eastern Europe during 1989-2003 would help understand the benefits, limits and risks of private philanthropy, articulated during a turbulent transition of societies through a system of autonomous national foundations and regional programmes, and the gaps ensuing after 2003.

The ongoing Bologna process of higher education should be used to assert and develop European cultural studies, build on the cultural infrastructure, public policies, processes and conditions prevailing in Europe, instead of being only a shadow of the cultural studies constructed as an academic field in the US.



Randa Shaath, *Tamass 2, Contemporary Arab Art Exhibitions*, 2004



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## Appendices

### Members of the Reflection Group

**Otto von der Gablentz** jurist and diplomat, former Ambassador of Germany to Russia, Israel and the Netherlands; former Rector of the College of Europe in Bruges; Executive President of Europa Nostra.

**Boris Groys** German-Russian art historian and philosopher; Professor of Aesthetics, Art History and Media Theory at the Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie, Karlsruhe, Germany.

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**Michael Naumann** publisher and chief co-editor of *Die Zeit*; political scientist and former Professor at the Humboldt University Berlin; former Minister for Culture of Germany.

**Geert Mak** author of *The Century of My Father* and *In Europe* and other best-selling books on the history of Amsterdam and the Netherlands; former Adjunct Professor at the University of Amsterdam; former Editor of *de Groene Amsterdammer* opinion magazine and of the *NRC Handelsblad* daily.

**Andrei Pleșu** Professor of Philosophy of Religion and founder of the New Europe College, an institute for advanced study in Bucharest; former dissident, former Minister of Culture and of Foreign Affairs of Romania.

**Krzysztof Pomian** historian and author; Emeritus Director at the National Centre for Scientific Research in France; Professor at the Nicolas Copernicus University of Torun, Poland; former lecturer at, amongst others, l'Ecole du Louvre and the University of Geneva.

**Maarten van Veen** engineer, industrialist and musician; chairman of the Board of the Concertgebouw Orchester and of the Nieuwe Kerk Foundation, Amsterdam; member of the Board of Directors of ABN AMRO Holding NV; former Chief Executive Officer of the Royal Hoogovens NV.

**Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd** theologian and philosopher; exiled from Egypt to the Netherlands in 1995; holds the Averoes Chair of Islam and Humanism at the University for Humanistics; taught at the University of Leiden and was a Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin.

**Željimir Žilnik** film-maker from Novi Sad, Serbia, author of many works fusing fiction and documentary techniques, causing polemics and much controversy by his handling of sensitive political topics, holder of many international festival prizes (Berlin, Oberhausen).

**From the ECF:**  
Gottfried Wagner, Odile Chenal, Isabelle Schwarz, Lieke Schuitmaker.

### Meetings of the Reflection Group

**28 June 2002, Amsterdam**  
Introduction, articulation of objectives and working method, identification of key issues.

**25 October 2002, Amsterdam**  
European cultures facing globalization - cultural diversity in the time of intensive economic globalization. Invited guest: Dr Joost Smiers.

**21 February 2003, Amsterdam**  
Cultural diversity and the pitfalls of globalization. Followed by a public debate in Felix Meritis: 'The need to remember, the necessity to forget: memory, identity and the future of Europe'.

**5-6 June, 2003, Santpoort**  
Duin & Kruidberg (in conjunction with the meeting of the Board of Governors of the ECF). Cultural perspectives of the EU enlargement. Invited guests: Dr John Löwenhardt and Dr George Schoepfflin.

**24 November 2003, Berlin**  
The complexities of creating a European public space and trans-border public debates. Discussion connected to the ECF project, the *New European Deal*. Invited guests: Leo Braun, Ivar Ekman, Volkert Hassemer, Marie Luise Knott, Jacques Pilet, Arne Ruth, Adele Seelmann-Eggebert, Thorsten Schilling.

**27 September 2004, Amsterdam**  
Final report. Conclusions and evaluation. Followed by an open seminar at Felix Meritis, in association with the European Studies programme of the University of Amsterdam, in the form of public hearings, with the students of UvA as examiners and Reflection Group members as expert witnesses.

### Papers of the Reflection Group

**Working paper 1**  
Position of culture in the EU: some scenarios for the future (May 2002)

**Working paper 2**  
Agenda Culture (June 2002)

**Working paper 3**  
European cultures facing globalization (October 2002)

**Working paper 4**  
Europe, its cultural perspectives and globalization (January 2003)

**Working paper 5**  
Cultural diversity and the pitfalls of globalization (April 2003)

**Working paper 6**  
The need to remember, the necessity to forget: memory, identity and the future of Europe (April 2003)

**Working paper 7**  
Cultural perspectives of the EU enlargement (June 2003)

**Working paper 8**  
The Emergence of European Public Spaces (February 2004)

**Final report**  
Europe as a Cultural Project (October 2004)



# Ten ways of looking at Europe

Members of the Reflection Group share their individual perspectives on the cultural challenges facing Europe today

## Future History

*Otto von der Gablentz*

In my diplomatic work I was always involved and strongly interested in cultural affairs. I made full use of the many opportunities to cultivate my own interest in the arts and in the cultural differences between countries and regions. I soon discovered that cultural work in the broadest sense has become, in fact, the very essence of what embassies have to do in our interdependent world.

When I came to the Netherlands in 1983 I soon learned that traditional diplomatic work was no longer appropriate for the professional challenges presented by a neighboring EU country. Germany and the Netherlands were bound to each other by what diplomats might call close and excellent relations in all walks of life: they saw eye to eye on all major European and world problems; their ministers and civil servants met regularly within the EU and NATO. But there existed a deep gulf in psychological relations, obviously the result of the German occupation during the Second World War, but with deeper roots in the difference of political cultures and lifestyles developed over the centuries. To bridge this gulf became the most important challenge for our embassy. In order to meet it, my colleagues and I had to restructure the work of the embassy, focusing increasingly on a role as mediator between two societies rather than on the relations between the governments, with their ever-closer cooperation within the EU. Cultural work in the broadest sense became a priority. It was more than 'public diplomacy'. It was an attempt to make the Dutch realize the profound changes that had taken place in German society in the context of the new Europe that had emerged after the war. This Germany was very different from the image that persisted in the

minds of the Dutch. However, the attempt could not be made without showing, on the German side, a deeper understanding of Dutch society and its specific culture.

In Moscow, under Yeltsin, it was of course much more difficult to reach 150 million Russians in a vast country that was desperately searching for its own identity. We had the satisfaction of knowing that our political reports were read carefully in Bonn because no one knew the way Russia would go. Yeltsin quipped: "Russia has always been European - only our tail wagged in Asia." And when Solzhenitsyn returned to Russia via Vladivostok, a Moscow journalist wrote: "In Russia, everything comes from the West - except the sun and Solzhenitsyn." In this situation I had a dream which was unfortunately not realized. Why not acquire one of the large houses in the centre of Moscow that were left by Soviet institutions and turn it into a 'House of European Culture', with separate quarters for the cultural agencies of the various European countries and with joint facilities and programmes? It would be an opportunity for Europeans to present themselves in their national and regional diversity as well as showing that we belong to a common European culture of which Russia remains a part even after the enforced separation of many decades. Perhaps the time was not ripe, but I still think that it was a missed opportunity.

My conviction that in the modern world EU member states should and could coordinate and partially pool their so-called cultural foreign policy derives from my experience in the 'European Political Cooperation' framework, a much underrated



Markus Schimwald, *Diaries (to you)*, 2003



*Otto von der Gabelentz grew up in Berlin and trained as a jurist and political scientist before following a diplomatic career, serving ultimately as German ambassador in The Hague, Tel Aviv and Moscow. On retiring from the Foreign Service, he became Rector of the College of Europe (Bruges and Natalin). He is, among other things, Executive President of Europa Nostra, the pan-European Federation of non-governmental heritage organizations. He now lives in Amsterdam.*

democracy and, most importantly, away from international isolation. We must not forget that Germany's isolation since at least 1914 was one of the main reasons for nationalism and political extremism. The 'lonely superpower' that is the United States does not yet have sufficient credibility to initiate such a worldwide dialogue of cultures. In the eyes of the world, the US is too strongly identified with a one-sided economic globalization. But Europe could do it. Our model of unity-in-diversity could appeal to those who know that globalization is inevitable but who will not accept it at the expense of cultural diversity. Europe has the opportunity to overcome the ideology of 'Occidentalism' which taints the image of modern democracies in a growing number of countries, cultures and religions.

But Europe will not be able to play such a role if the most dynamic force of European integration, the EU, lacks a cultural dimension. During the recent discussions on enlargement and a constitution, it once more became painfully apparent that the EU determines so much of our daily lives and yet has no actual citizens of its own. Small wonder, since the three factors which help to create the sense of belonging and citizenship - education, culture and democracy - have remained exclusively in the hands of national governments throughout more than 50 years of European integration. Education and culture are touchy subjects, since they are intimately bound up with the origin and identity of nation states.

Take universities, possibly the most specifically European of all our institutions. Around 1800 they lost their European character and became part and parcel of national education systems with the explicit mission to educate national citizens. Until recently, however, they remained the guardians of a specific feature of our common European culture:

the ideal of educating people not simply to become experts but to gain a broad understanding of the world. In the last ten or fifteen years, leading members of the world's elites have increasingly been educated in top business schools that have a very different educational profile from traditional European universities. A failure of universities to live up to the challenges of the modern world? Certainly! But also a worrying sign that the demands of global markets are overriding the importance of the Europeaness of our universities, and that essential parts of our European culture - the ideals of general education, 'Bildung' and 'paideia' - are being lost in the process.

It has been said that one of the distinguishing features of European civilization has always been its capacity for renewal, for renaissance, the rediscovery of the past in order to shape the future. Here is another dream: should it not be our ambition to ensure that future historians will describe the

44 forerunner of what we now hope will, at some stage, become an efficient EU foreign and security policy. The most obvious success story of this network of professional diplomats was certainly the Helsinki process; another example that, even under the constraints of the Cold War, a dialogue on political cultures and human relations can slowly change rigid confrontational situations. We also suggested new measures for coordinating the cultural work of member states more efficiently, so that they might present themselves both as separate nations and as shareholders of a common European culture. There were strong practical and political reasons to do so, but even this attempt to consider a very informal framework that would encompass all EU member states (instead of occasional bilateral cooperation) apparently went against the grain of national cultural institutions.

The time has come to take up these ideas and prepare for a worldwide dialogue of cultures.

A European Cultural Foreign Policy would have to present in a balanced way the unity and diversity of European culture. It must convincingly convey to all countries and cultures the message that, in our globalized world, cultural identity cannot be preserved by cultural and political isolation, but rather by cooperation. Europe could demonstrate that the diversity of cultures can be maintained amid the levelling influences of globally operating markets and media. Obviously, such a European Cultural Foreign Policy would only be convincing if the smaller European countries that cannot count on the support of the British Council or Goethe institutes are enabled to play their full part. Special European funds will be needed to ensure that the diversity of Europe's culture comes to the fore.

As a German of my generation, I cannot help but recall the role that the *Amerikahäuser* played in occupied Germany after 1945. They were a major factor in helping Germany to take the road towards



**Our model of unity-in-diversity could appeal to those who know that globalization is inevitable but who will not accept it at the expense of cultural diversity.**

ongoing process of European integration as one of the greatest periods of renaissance in European history? One small contribution might be the rediscovery of our monuments and cultural landscapes as part of our common European culture. After all, they are visible and tangible witnesses that there is such a thing as a European culture worth preserving for future generations. Heritage work contributes not only to the quality of life, but also to a sense of belonging to a cultural community. We have only to look at how nation

states have used and abused heritage (of both the tangible and intangible sort) in shaping the emotions and minds of their citizens.

One of the great achievements of our 'Europe without frontiers' is that the younger generations are so widely travelled. They cannot help but discover the beauty of cities, villages and landscapes that have been shaped over centuries or millennia. But if they are to believe their guide books, they are looking at national monuments only - even though these may date from periods of our history when there were no nation states. On our long journey towards creating responsible European citizens and even a true renaissance of European culture in the modern world, would it not be a good idea to provide our young and mobile generation of Europeans with a truly European Cicerone guide to monuments and cultural landscapes shaped by a shared European culture?

should really make use of the complementary nature of culture and civilisation and merge the Eastern and Western connotations of the word. What really happened, however, bears more resemblance to a disjunction than to a reunification. Historically and culturally, the East has remained somewhat old-fashioned and past-oriented, while the West is developing a pragmatic rationality, administrative optimisation and constructive dynamism; it is, as it were, future-oriented.

For Eastern Europeans, joining Europe means a rediscovery of those values that they were separated from after the Second World War. The problem of re-establishing a former Europe does not pose itself to Western Europeans, who, instead, are striving to found a new Europe, tomorrow's Europe, which, although undoubtedly able to deal with its legacy in a respectful way, is nonetheless mainly concerned with what will be. Eastern European thinking is more nostalgic in this regard. It is a return to 'the good old times'. Western Europe associates its thinking about Europe with a different objective, with hope. It is not about the crystallization of a memory; rather, it is a project. Both views have advantages; both pose risks. The East has a better relationship with memory, but tends towards sentimentalism, towards excessive and obsolete conservatism. The West is fresher, more invigorating, more sober, but tends towards utopianism and uprooting. The East nurtures the cult of the yellowed photograph and lingers in the romantic twilight. The West may be accused of a science-fiction naivety. It is more susceptible to triumphalist ideology and extravagant exaggeration.

As far as the past is concerned, the West prefers critical analysis and less than winsome realism. The past must be demythologised, and its mistakes must be corrected. The notion of 'coming to terms

with the past', which originally expressed a disclosing and uncovering of the immediate past and an honest attitude towards its mistakes, fits the overall attitude of Western Europe towards the past, which must be systematised, tamed and employed for the benefit of the present.

A new expression is needed that captures the Eastern attitude towards the past, such as 'valuing the past': to lovingly hoard and make use of the old. The high standing of the bygone is one aspect of the identity drama of the Eastern European nations, who, weakened by their current precarious situation and anxiously looking to the future, avail themselves of the past as a means of justification and refuge. For Western Europeans, the past is museal, for Eastern Europeans, existential.

If we succeeded in overcoming our inferiority and



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## Nostalgia and Hope

### Andrei Pleșu

East and West will not be able to find common ground on a functional level as long as they do not agree on their ideas about Europe.

In Eastern Europe, the concept of Europe is predominantly cultural: a common origin in the Mediterranean, a common history from Scandinavia to Sicily and from Ireland to the Urals, a common attitude to the world of literature, to transcendence, to the love of knowledge and to non-European otherness. In Western Europe, however, the term 'Europe' seems to have assumed a different

meaning in the last few decades, a meaning which (to use the classic terminology) does not so much have to do with culture as with civilisation. Europe is seen as the realm of the modern age, of scientific progress, of political and economic progress, of 'enlightened' ethical norms and efficient technologies.

We do, of course, take care not to establish a hierarchical relationship between these two views of Europe and not to give preference to one rather than the other. The definition of present-day Europe





Angela de la Cruz, *Studio in Progress*, 2004

48

superiority complexes, our infantile competitiveness and all our historically grounded prejudices, then we would not find it difficult to comprehend that Europe - fully and truly reunited, not merely monetarily and legislatively standardised - needs the self-portrayal of both its constituent halves in equal measure. Past iniquities must be driven out, but it is also necessary to be aware of noble, or at least picturesque, episodes. A renewing spirit is as essential as a preserving patience; bold and audacious management as contemplation; anticipative dreams as memories; and hope is as essential as nostalgia. The East must rediscover the youthful charm of a forward-looking glance, it must learn to mobilise for future-oriented, joint advancement. The West needs to reacquire a taste for tradition, for retrospective contemplation and a glance towards the past.

In order for such a meeting of complements to take place, both sides of the former 'iron curtain' must

once again actively whet their cognitive appetite for the other. East and West must feel the desire to get to know each other better: intellectual interest and congeniality towards the estranged other must be developed. Karl Marx famously said that 'Philosophers have always tried to interpret the world, the point is to change it': a rather strange notion, given that he was a philosopher.

The Europe of today needs to discover the utility of the opposite notion: the problem does not lie in the attempt to change each other; the problem lies in correctly interpreting our differences, acknowledging these differences and understanding them! Taking into consideration that 'understanding' has nothing to do with rational systematisation or with a lethargic and feeble spirit of reconciliation. 'Understanding' means to become one with the object of one's understanding. That is the kind of unification we need to strive for. The rest is mere administration.



## Four Snapshots and a Commentary

Želimir Žilnik

1

June 15, 2004. Partisan Stadium in Belgrade. A concert by the American rock group Metallica brings 30,000 visitors, and another 10,000 people - those who did not have money for the tickets - are in the streets around the stadium. Good atmosphere, a festive excitement. THEY have finally arrived, they are no longer afraid of us. The band plays their best-known numbers 'Nothing Else Matters', 'One', 'Enter Sandman'. The entire stadium sings along word by word. Those outside sing the choruses. "EXIT LIGHT, ENTER NIGHT."

TAKE MY HAND - WE'RE OFF TO NEVER-NEVER LAND."

The band is surprised. James Hatfield is shouting: "We are here for the first time. Sorry it took us 23 years to come. You're terrific." Ovation. "We'll come again." And they retire. The ovation lasts for several minutes and no one is leaving the stadium. The band returns to the stage. "As long as you are here, we'll stay too." They play for another 40 minutes. Probably one of Metallica's longest encores.

2

April 2004. Wiesbaden. The goEast festival of Central and Eastern European Film. Most interesting of all, the young Russian film directors Boris Hlebnikov, Genadij Sidorov and Aleksej German jr., with their films *Coctabel*, *Old Women*, *The Last Train*. Not the usual mafia-and-homeless stories of Russian cinema in the last decade. These films are explicitly anti-war, with almost romantic images of village life, nature, ordinary family relationships.

The media buzz about Russian film returning to its poetic tradition. This signals the stabilization of Russia under Putin, they explain.

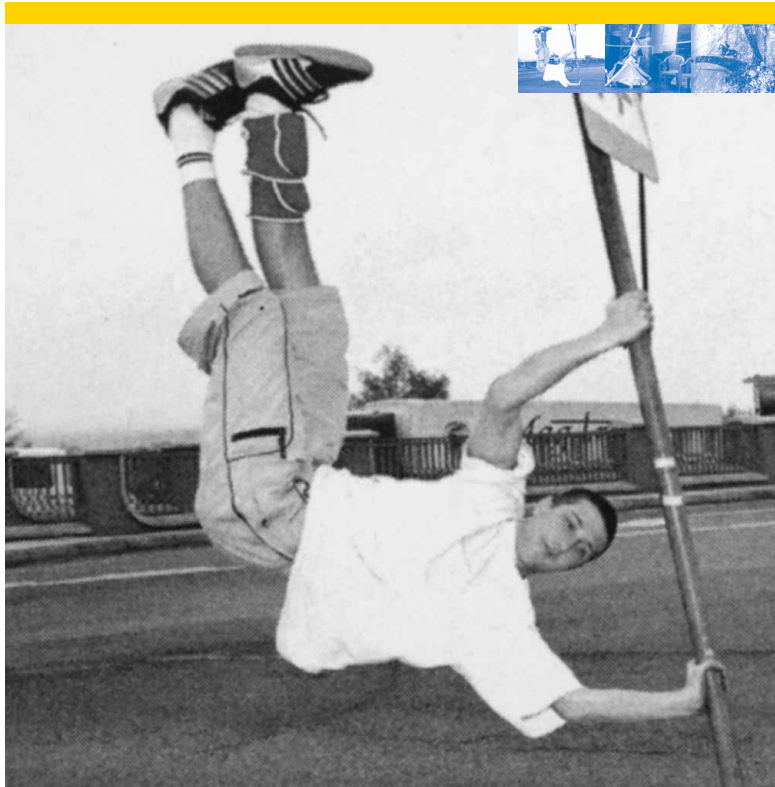
My film *Kenedi Goes Back Home* - about the deportation (*abschiebung*) from Germany of tens of thousands of refugees from the former Yugoslavia - is also being shown. The Germans feel uneasy when they realize that so many children of refugees, born and schooled here, are being displaced to suffer the wretched conditions of Roma dwellings in Serbia and Kosovo. The press describes the film summarily as another image of confused Balkan destinies and characters who are restless as refugees in the West and hysterical when sent home on free flights.

In the press conference, the young Russians agree that their films are poetic in the tradition of the classics, but their explanation differs from the media's: Russia is boiling like a kettle, people are humiliated, jobless and poverty-stricken, betrayed by the ruling oligarchy and the false promises of the West, so that many long for a new Stalin to appear and chase away the plunderers from the transition years and the Western profiteers. They say: "You Germans will understand us because we live as you did in the last years of the Weimar Republic. Russian public life is filled with nationalist propaganda, and the bestsellers are crime and science fiction novels about the demise of Western civilization. Our films are a lonely crying out that life has some sense, that it still pulsates with beauty, that the current crisis does not have to end in catastrophe, that the world war is not inevitable." The journalists bow their heads. There is no discussion.

3

July 2003. Petrovaradin fortress near Novi Sad. The music festival EXIT. 450,000 visitors in one week.

49



Biogrupa, Sedno, 2004

Mass arrival of youngsters from Bosnia, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Hungary. Euphoric and yet relaxed atmosphere. The desire of those young people to meet and socialize is palpable and they understand each other well. They spent their childhood with the events and images of the bloody destruction of a country and now they are discovering that, contrary to the nationalist

propaganda, they could be together in one place and have fun. Many of the bands are from the region, some from Amsterdam and London. Seven stages are set in the enormous fortress so that the sounds do not mix. The music goes on from 8 pm to 8 am. In the morning sun, thousands of people descend to the Danube shore and enter its waters.



**The enlarged Europe almost matches the borders of the old Roman Empire. Time to anticipate a new decay of Rome under the assaults of some new barbarians?**

4

Summer 1999 on the Slovenian border with Italy and Austria. I'm shooting a documentary film, 'Fortress Europe'. It is then still a Schengen border. Hundreds cross it illegally every night, heading towards Italy and Austria, having passed through Hungary, Bosnia and Croatia. I expected to see police harassment, hear sirens and gunshots as in action movies. The zone is very quiet, however. People are getting caught - most of them were attempting to get to the West to make some money, their families starving in Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia or Ukraine - but no one gets hysterical. The police do not attempt to trump up some more serious charge. They look at the hands and in the luggage of those caught. I understand now: those who have calloused peasant hands are taken to one side and not guarded carefully. Most run away. I ask the police why they do not try to pursue them. "How would the harvest be finished without those 200-300,000 seasonal workers?" they answer.

In Hungary, in the former barracks of the Soviet army, a thousand people caught crossing the border illegally are kept for several months. I ask "Isn't this illegal, isn't the set procedure to send them back to the country of origin without delay?" "Yes," comes the answer, "but the European Union is paying 110 DM accommodation costs per day for each illegal alien, so we always make sure we are at full capacity. And those people are returned home when we catch a sufficient number of the new ones."

*Željimir Žilnik is a filmmaker from Novi Sad, Serbia. After filming several socially engaged and critical documentaries (winning awards at the Oberhausen film festival in the 1970s), his first feature film Rani Radovi (Early Works) brought him a Berlin Festival Grand Prix, and much trouble with the authorities of the former Yugoslavia, resulting in several years of forced residence in West Germany as a so-called 'Gastarbeiter' (guest worker). Later he worked as an independent maker of docu-dramas for TV Novi Sad, TV Belgrade and TV Ljubljana. Even under the pressures of UN sanctions, the Milosevic regime, and NATO bombardment of Serbia, he continued to make low-budget films. With Tito's Second Time Among the Serbs and Marble Ass, Žilnik helped to initiate video and television production for the most radical media outlet in Yugoslavia at that time - B 92 in Belgrade. His recent projects (the feature film Wanderlust and the docu-dramas Fortress Europe and Kenedi: Goes Back Home) all deal with the post-transition dilemmas and destinies of ordinary people from Central and Eastern Europe.*



Interaction between fringe and mainstream culture was never as intense before. And for that reason *circenses*, entertainment, isn't just an update of the gladiators' games.

What is new and promising in the episodes described here? OK, nothing would have been the same without the fall of the Berlin Wall. Before its end, illegal émigrés from behind the Iron Curtain used to be greeted in the West as freedom fighters. With the Berlin Wall still in place today, young Russian directors would have been speaking about *perestroika* and not about a new Stalin. 'Partisan' Stadium was the site of Tito's birthday celebrations, with gymnastic exercises, military marches and folk dancing. Frenetic applause had once echoed there just as it did now for a Metallica concert. Aren't Metallica and other world-famous bands playing the same trump card of euphoric immersion of the individual in the collective, with rock youth frenzy taking the place of communist enthusiasm?

Do my first and third episodes imply a return to the old style of rule? The Roman Caesars' *panem et circenses*? At first glance, yes, they do - and the enlarged Europe almost matches the borders of the old Roman Empire. Time to anticipate a new decay of Rome under the assaults of some new barbarians? Besides the worries of young Russian film directors, there are some unsettling facts: some 30 million jobs have been lost in the former socialist countries. Pensions and social security systems are in a state of collapse. University education is no longer free. Job opportunities for young people are scarce. In the years to come, we'll see the spill-off from this huge pot of deprivation.

But perhaps the post-socialist space has been pacified already? The media do not bother us with news about the despair of laid-off workers or the hunger of those who have retired. On the contrary, good news abounds, and the champions of post-socialist transition rest in their Mediterranean villas. Another calming image from the Old Rome. Clearly, the ex-socialist world will remain calm and on the margins for a while.

I am not obsessed with cataclysmic imagery, but rather admire human vitality, endurance and stubbornness, and the human brain's ability to invent evil and yet keep imagining, dreaming and rejoicing. Openness, change and information-flow mark this epoch of electronic tools of communication which rule our lives, oblige us to adjust, submit and accept uniformity. But simultaneously, the same tools of communication open new realms of freedom. In all artistic disciplines and cultural domains, both tendencies manifest themselves in parallel. The dictates of the market and an incredible explosion of alternatives. Interaction between fringe and mainstream culture was never as intense before. And for that reason *circenses*, entertainment, isn't just an update of the gladiators' games.

When James Hatfield shouts his song 'Enter Sandman', he is singing of his own fears, of childhood rejection. He is singing in front of thousands of youngsters in Serbia whose sandman (a local dictator) destroyed ten years of their lives. And when thousands sing with Hatfield, TAKE MY HAND, WE ARE OFF TO NEVER-NEVER LAND, they are not just consumers of a commercially successful band. They are countering their own fears and announcing the rejection of an imposed humiliation.



Magdi El Shafei, courtesy of Ahmed El Attar, *Les aventures du Prince Seif bin zi Yazen*

## No Europe Without a European Coffee House

**Geert Mak**

Just sit a group of Britons, Italians, Dutch, Irish, Yugoslavs, Germans, Austrians and French around a table and get them to talk about their different histories. They will invoke so many different worlds while talking about a single Europe. I'm starting to feel that, despite all the intensive communication between us, Europe enjoyed a greater cultural unity in the years before 1914 than it does now, ninety years later. True, we have all embraced the ideas of Erasmus and Voltaire, as everybody is so fond of telling us. But people often tend to forget that the catastrophes of the 20th century drove us Europeans very far apart. Our shared disaster can be summarised as follows.

Around 1900 there was a tree and an apple. Everybody ate this apple and two diabolical wars followed that we all experienced in our own ways. Four dead decades followed for the East, while Western Europe experienced a kind of heaven on earth, a paradise of scooters, electric whisks, cars and televisions. Then came the fall of the Wall, one of the most celebrated moments in 20th-century history. But life became difficult for the East again whereas the West, hardly noticing what was going on in Central and Eastern Europe, experienced the boom of the 1990s. No, we still have a lot to talk about, East and West - and actually we have yet to begin talking.

Without such debate, Europe will continue to be just a flow of catchphrases, a democracy in name only, but in reality a grand ennui, with no stories to tell, no discussion, and no public drama.

Most Europeans have an image of Europe which is in fact a projection (usually an unconscious one) of their idea of their own national community combined with certain experiences from history. For the Germans, Europe will become one great Germany; the Dutch still heroically see Europe as just as orderly and prone to compromise as themselves; while for the Poles, Europe inevitably evokes associations with the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact. These differences alone lead to almost daily conflicts and misunderstandings.

The great contradiction that we Europeans must learn to live with is that our continent's weakness - its diversity - was always its great strength in past centuries. It was precisely this collision between many different cultural and economic spheres of influence that created such an incredible dynamic. So there is no single European people. There is no single all-embracing community of culture and tradition among, say, Warsaw, Amsterdam, Berlin and Belgrade. In fact, there are at least four communities: the Northern Protestant, the Latin Catholic, the Greek Orthodox, and the Muslim Ottoman. There is no single language - there are more than twenty. And the Italians have a totally different notion of the word 'state' from the Swedes. There are no real European political parties, and European television channels still lead a very

marginal existence. And most significantly of all: unlike the United States, Europe still does not have a common story.

In 1831, on his return from a journey across the United States of America, Alexis de Tocqueville published a collection of travel diary entries and notes about that young nation, entitled 'Democracy in America'. This became an historic document about law, democracy, emerging nationhood and, above all, the shared mentality of Americans. Today, De Tocqueville's book reveals the significant differences between the United States-in-the-making and the current European project.

Nothing that De Tocqueville observed more than a century-and-a-half ago in the young America - unity of language, passionate public interest in the new forms of statehood, clear agreement on the roles of the different levels of government, strong democratic legitimacy, a set of simple but solid rules agreed between the various powers - none of these things so carefully forged by the United States can be found in today's Europe.

European integration has for too long been a technocratic project, initiated by idealistic pioneers, but pretty soon taken over by merchants, bureaucrats, and one or two inspired politicians. And now that the Union is both expanding geographically and deepening its political unity, that technocratic and bureaucratic character is growing.

If several hundred thousand demonstrators take to the streets in a country every time the government assembles, there is definitely something wrong with that country's democratic system. That is what is happening with the European Union at this moment. At the same time, the turnout figures for the latest European Parliament elections were lower



Geert Mak is a journalist of long-standing repute, a historian and a diligent traveller. He is the author of several best-selling books that made record print runs in The Netherlands and now appear in other languages: *The Century of My Father*, *How God Disappeared From Jorwerd*, and most recently *In Europa*.

As an illustration of the seriousness of the situation, here are the words of European chronicler Timothy Garton Ash: "When I want to reach the broadest intellectual European public, the best thing I can do is write an essay in *The New York Review of Books*." However crazy this may sound, that is how it is.

In our Reflection Group, we kept coming back to the same point: that without meeting-places and coffee houses, any further political process will be left hanging in the air. Without such debate, Europe will continue to be just a flow of catchphrases, a democracy in name only, but in reality a grand ennui, with no stories to tell, no discussion, and no public drama.

The lack of shared attitudes to life creates an intellectual inertia which ultimately could bring down the entire European Union. This makes democratic and cultural dialogue within Europe - I intentionally avoid the word 'unification' - a matter of the greatest urgency. In the current situation, European 'culture' is no longer the icing on the cake, but rather a vital condition for survival.

The European project is historically unique. It is neither an empire nor a federation. It is something completely original, just as new and unknown as the Republic of the Seven United Provinces of the Netherlands in the 17th century. It will still take a lot of time - with these kinds of integration processes, we must not think in terms of years but rather of generations. But it is not in the least hopeless.

In 19th century France, a large proportion of the population spoke no French at all, and the fact that they were French did not interest them in the least. The only identity they knew was of their village, their town, sometimes their region. They even fought among themselves - for example, in the Pyrénées, in



Ariège, and to this very day in Corsica. And yet France fought in the First World War as a nation. Not because the people were spurred on by rousing speeches and clever public relations, but mainly thanks to the construction of countless roads and railways, the building of thousands of schools, and the introduction of compulsory military service.

When two Dutch students, Jacob van Lennep and Dirk van Hogendorp, went on a walking tour through their newly formed fatherland in 1823, everywhere they went they had to grapple with different currencies and attempt to make themselves understood amid strange local dialects; they even had passport problems in the middle of Zeeland. That was because political life never rose above the level of the local club. Yet the Netherlands had already been a political federation of seven provinces for two-and-a-half centuries. Only in the course of the 19th century did anything like a 'representative community' manifest itself at national level.

These two examples - there are many more - should inspire the current European Union, especially regarding cultural integration. Huge infrastructure projects are appearing everywhere. The binding effect of compulsory military service can again be realised by introducing pan-European social compulsory service, a large-scale exchange programme for 18 to 21 year-olds. A student from Brussels could spend a year working in a Warsaw hospital, or a Prague student spend a year in Amsterdam cleaning paintings, and so on. The EU might grant, for example, one-year scholarships as a 'reward'. After one or two decades, the positive effects on European integration would be evident: millions of young Europeans would have had the experience of living in another country, would have made friends, fallen in love, breathed a different air, broken free from their nations and provinces.

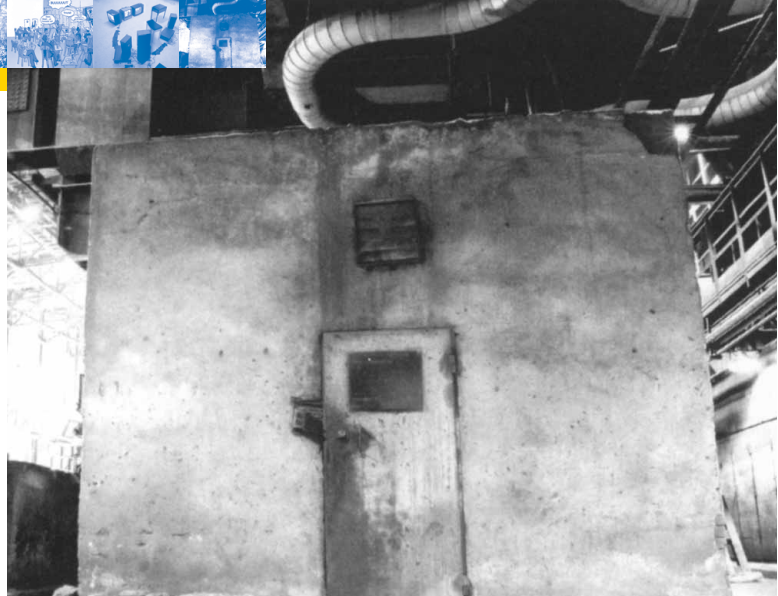
Pan-European newspapers and TV stations etc., which are vitally important for the creation of a European 'coffee house', cannot develop without a shared language.

Officially, Europe is very divided on this issue, whereas the reality is that our continent is more like the America of Tocqueville than we may wish to admit. In practice, we are starting to understand each other very well, and this applies especially to young people. Here the problem blocking further integration does not reside in fact but in theory, in national emotion. At this moment, around 90 percent of European young people speak English pretty well, or are busy trying to learn it. (True, for the French and Germans, the figure is around 30 percent.)

My proposal: let's stop all the petty bickering and face reality, but let us do it as soon as possible, because every postponement of this inevitable decision is damaging to European integration. Personally, I would have liked to see Dutch or Frisian as the pan-European language of communication, or Italian with its melody, or French with its richness.

But that will never be. So let us take the plunge, recognise English as the Latin of the new Europe, train every young person to use this second language alongside their own, and new dimensions will open up for us all.

Integration means gaining something new, but it also means letting go. If the Union collapses, the main reason will be a deficiency of democracy. But national prestige is at the root of that - which is something different from national heritage or national interest. A high price will have to be paid for holding on to that prestige. Because, as Otto von der Gablentz once said in our Reflection Group: Europe only gets this chance once.



Biograda, Sedno, 2004

## Weighing Culture by the Tonne

### Michael Naumann

Between 1998 and 2000 I served as the first Minister of Culture in Gerhard Schröder's government in Bonn and Berlin. Since our Constitution makes federal units responsible for cultural affairs, in the past our country was represented at European level by Germany's states, the 'Länder'. This meant a lack of bargaining power, since the appointed delegate had no leverage on budgetary matters, which fall into the dominion of the federal government. With a federal representative at European level, Germany was able to convince the Commission not

to get rid of our fixed book price agreement, which had been a feature of the highly developed German book business for the past 120 years. Per capita, Germany has far more bookstores and first publications each year than any other country. This is due to the fact that small publishing houses and small bookstores are able to compete on the same price-level as major bookstores and chains. Ending this arrangement would have severely affected the cultural landscape not only of Germany, but of Switzerland and Austria too, where it also applies.



*Dr. Michael Naumann studied political science, history and philosophy in Munich and Oxford, and worked as foreign correspondent and editor for Die Zeit and Der Spiegel, before going into book publishing in Hamburg and New York. After a stint in politics he returned to Die Zeit as its publisher.*

Strangely enough, Karel van Miert, then the Commissioner for issues of trade and competition, had set his mind on just that - the final removal of what his officials deemed to be an obstacle to fair competition.

Their main argument ran like this: Fixed price agreements are contrary to the doctrine of free trade, specifically when they pertain to commodities which cross national borders, as books do.

The counter-argument - that a transnational agreement between Switzerland, Austria and Germany is in reality a projection of a borderless Europe of the future - did not convince Mr van Miert. His Commission failed to grasp that the average price of books in Germany remains the lowest in Europe due to lively competition between more than a thousand publishers.

The absence of a fixed book price in the United States has led to the disappearance of independent publishers and bookstores and a continuous rise in book prices for practically every book that sells less than 10,000 copies. It has also introduced the culture of cut-price blockbusters and led to the book industry's concentration on 'super-sellers' as well as the disappearance (due to the commercial costs involved) of literature in translation. The struggle with the Commission lasted two years, ending with defeat for Karel van Miert's project after some intense lobbying of other commissioners.

During my short tenure in politics it became clear to me that cultural policies in Europe are severely hampered by the financial means available. On an annual basis the cultural budget of the European Commission per annum is not much higher than that of the opera in Hamburg. Considering the agricultural and other European subsidies, this is scandalous.

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The political and cultural future of the European Union depends on the continuous increase in the legitimacy it enjoys within the member states - a legitimacy which, in all nations historically speaking, is not based on economic well-being alone, but to a much larger degree on citizens' experience of its constitution. This experience defines their political identity. Obviously, with numerous states and languages of extremely diverse backgrounds, a cultural coherence based on such universal values as justice, freedom and human dignity will not grow automatically out of the accumulation of wealth, or social security, or a well-functioning health system. The only way to achieve a cultural union of over 400 million Europeans is to maintain individual national cultural identities as embedded in language and in literary, aesthetic and historical tradition, while fostering the continuous growth of knowledge about our neighbours. This will be a long and continuous process, one which has to be supported by the Commission. Such support could take the form of a highly subsidized programme of transnational, mutual European projects. Maintaining national cultural heritage - architectural monuments, churches, castles etc. - would be part of such a process. This becomes particularly important as the continuous demise of the oldest form of institutionalized memory - the churches and their religions - seems unavoidable, once the pressures of

a post-industrial modernity begin to affect the new members of the EU as well.

Unfortunately, the present cultural trend in Europe is defined by a process of growing regionalization. Italian films are not shown in Germany any more, nor are French films as prominent there as they used to be. The same is true for German films in these countries and everywhere else, and true for most of the film industry in all European countries. European support for a viable film distribution programme would be one of many possible ways to improve our knowledge of one another and the exchange of different viewpoints. Without a much-improved European understanding among the Union's citizens - an understanding not limited to the spectacle of continuous summit meetings and the murmur of bureaucracies - the European Union is bound to fail.

My short experience with the political operators of the European Union was not encouraging. To have read Commission reports on the export of books between Austria and Germany, which was literally measured in tonnes, was, to put it mildly, disappointing.

Europe's advantage over other regions of the world depends on its intellectual and cultural creativity. Its cultural resources remain the fountain of what is today called the 'knowledge industry'. This industry needs to be understood by politicians, by the Commission, and certainly by those who work in it. Freedom does not grow on subsidized meadows and wheat-fields. And yet, freedom and peace and justice are the *raison d'être* of the European Union. They grow from lessons of the past and they are symbols of our mutual cultural achievements. These achievements have been underestimated in Brussels and they need to be nurtured in the future.



Huseym Alptekin

## Europe as a Supranational Reality

### Krzysztof Pomian

In using Europe's past to enhance a sense of belonging among the citizens of European countries, there is a risk of becoming entangled in 'competing claims and mutually exclusive [national] narratives'. To avoid such a risk, one would have to develop a European perspective on the past capable of being superimposed onto national perspectives. I stress the word *superimposed* because I do not believe that it would be possible or even desirable at present to replace national perspectives by the European one. The latter is not opposed to the former; rather, it is complementary. Such a European perspective existed in the past and was adopted by the great

historians of the 18th century, Voltaire, Robertson, Gibbon and Schlozer. It was forgotten during the period of triumphant nationalism that we have been slowly leaving behind us since the 1950s. We have to rediscover this European perspective, internalize it and endow it once more with intellectual, moral and political dignity.

In practical terms, this means studying and presenting the European past not as a sum total of different ethnic pasts, but as a past common to all of them. The question is: what does this past consist of? There is indeed a common past of wars,

dynastic, religious, and ideological. It is not this past which may enable us to have a better understanding of how Europe emerged, first as a religious, later as a cultural, and then as an economic community. Nor can this approach to the past help us to understand how Europe is emerging now also as a political community (an unfinished process, the results of which are uncertain). This common past of wars serves as a reminder and a warning of factors which may hinder or even disrupt the present stage of European integration. But to arrive at a full awareness of the history of European integration (more than a thousand years in the making), we must turn to another common past: the past of shared beliefs and institutions. Acting initially at a supra-tribal and later at a supra-national and supra-confessional level, these eventually succeeded in integrating to some extent all ethnic groups living on our continent.

Christianity was the most powerful belief in integrating Romans and Barbarians and the multiplicity of barbarian tribes. And it was Christianity that established the first network of supra-tribal and supra-national institutions, extending over the entire European continent. In some quarters, particularly among French socialists, there is a strong reluctance to acknowledge this unquestionable historical fact. But to acknowledge it *does not mean* to subscribe to Pope John Paul II's claim that today's Europe is still a Christian Europe. Today's Europe is a secularized Europe, united by a common adherence to the principle of the separation of the State from the Church, of politics and morals from religion, and to the equally important principle of the absolute freedom of conscience; united moreover by an adherence to liberal and democratic values. It is only as a result of adherence to these principles that Europe is capable of integrating nations composed of the followers of

different Christian denominations and of many different religions, as well as of non-believers.

If Christianity was Europe's most powerful integrating factor, it was also its most divisive. It created a confessional gulf between the west and the centre of the continent on one side and the east on the other, between Latin and Greek Christendom, between Rome and Constantinople. Later, it created another confessional gulf, this time between (roughly speaking) the north and the south of Latin Christendom, between Protestants and Catholics, with barbarous religious wars which lasted for almost two centuries. Europe as different from and opposed to Christendom emerged from these wars as a supra-national and a supra-confessional community expected if not to establish a lasting peace, at least to somehow civilize wars through the acceptance by all states, whatever their professed confessions, of the same *ius gentium*. As a community, Europe materialized in the network of institutions of the Republic of Learning, based on a common language and common educational system that unified the minds of the elites of



*Krzysztof Pomian is a Polish historian who, having made France the place of his exile, has been teaching and conducting research there. After the end of communism he began returning regularly to Poland; he currently teaches at the University of Torun. He is also often in Brussels, where he is creating a Museum of Europe in the new building of the European Parliament.*



Since 1989, and for the first time in European history, all countries of the European continent have professed an acceptance of liberal and democratic values.

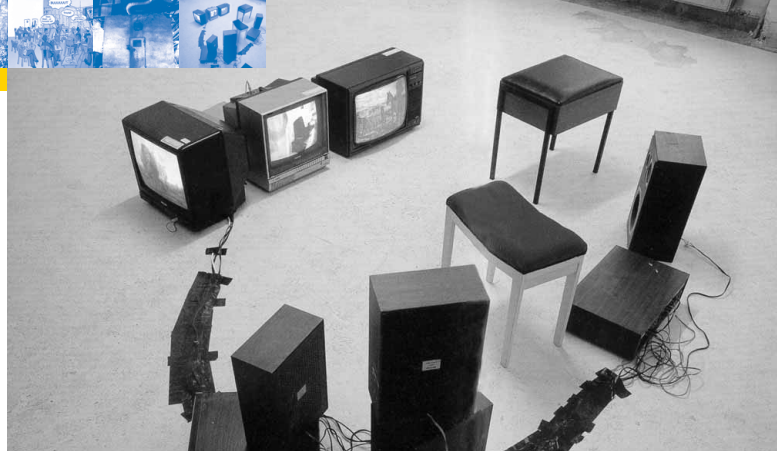
different countries and gave them shared beliefs: in the exemplary character of the Ancient art and of Ancient civic virtues; in the autonomy of politics, economy, science and culture with respect to religion; in the superiority of Moderns in the fields of knowledge, technology and power. The birth of Europe, conceived as the embodiment of Enlightenment values, made possible the appearance of the European perspective on the past I alluded to earlier.

Such an elitist Europe, identified with a community of culture, was destroyed in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries by social and national conflicts grafted upon the already present conflict between two types of collective beliefs, the new and the old one, ideology and religion. But even the ideological wars of the 20th century did not succeed in uprooting the *ius gentium* and international organizations based on it, as well as all other vestiges of institutions of the Republic of Learning and the nostalgia for a Europe without inner frontiers. The new stage of European integration began in the early 1950s and differed from previous ones in not being a by-product of a movement trying to attain different aims - to christianize or to establish a 'balance of power'. Instead, it represented a deliberate attempt to unify countries which had recently been engaged in a life-and-death struggle. This unification was intended to take place not at the level of elites only, but principally at the

level of the everyday life of the largest masses. Its end result is the present-day European Union. And its emergence also indirectly influenced changes within authoritarian and totalitarian regimes, contributing to their peaceful transition to democracy. Since 1989, and for the first time in European history, all countries of the European continent have professed an acceptance of liberal and democratic values. The implementation of these is another story, but first steps in this direction are being taken everywhere.

I developed my argument in order to explain clearly what I mean by a European perspective on the past, and to justify my contention that developing such a perspective may help to create among the citizens of European countries a feeling of belonging to the supra-national and supra-confessional community called *Europe*. I am convinced that it is one of our duties to stimulate historical research from a European perspective; to have, besides the teaching of national history, the history of Europe written from a European perspective in the curricula of schools and universities; and to promote exhibitions and museums which make such a history visible.

Let me add to this a personal note. People like me, born and educated in one country, living in another and frequently crossing what used to be frontiers between states without even being aware of it, probably number hundreds of thousands (if not millions) in today's Europe. I believe that for all of us Europe is a fact of everyday existence, particularly since the introduction of the common currency. In this sense, Europe is already something real, as real as the nations it consists of, but also on another level complementary to them. And plural national identities, which we share are felt as if they were but different partial manifestations of Europe as our common heritage and our common future.



Heather Allen, *Untitled*, 2003

## Provocations

### Sonja Licht

I grew up in Subotica, a city on the Yugoslav border with Hungary, which was probably more provincial in the 1950s than it had been before the Second World War, and more affected by the fact of its border position than in the period 1918-41. Against the official communist culture, an idea of European or Central European culture - or rather cultural tradition - was recognizable in the splendour of a few Secession buildings in town, but what made the city more provincial was the elimination during the Holocaust of almost all its four thousand Jews and the expulsion of the German population after 1945. A new socialist elite was emerging, mainly from the peasants and the newly settled population from elsewhere in Yugoslavia, and these people had no connection with Central European cultural traditions. In the Hungarian amateur society I saw operettas for the first time, and later I discovered the less visible historic layers of Subotica in the city

archives, and started reading authors born in my native city: Kostolanyi, Sinko, Kiš...

The Vojvodina of my youth was a laboratory of multiculturalism for the entire country. Paradoxically, communist ideology meant that Vojvodina could not develop properly in socio-economic terms, yet this ideology asserted the equality of ethnic groups, cultures and languages, which were allowed room to develop as long as they did not attempt to challenge the Party's monopoly on power. The authorities tolerated cultural pluralism which did not advocate political pluralism. In the late sixties, a unique constellation of talent and explorative energy was concentrated around the Hungarian language magazine *Uj Symposium*, and I remember smuggling it into Hungary on many occasions. For Hungarians, the texts published in *Uj Symposium* and the translations of Western authors it carried





(authors otherwise banned in Hungary) were of major cultural importance. Konrad, Eorsi, Eszterhazi and other Hungarian authors later told me how important *Uj Symposion* had been for their intellectual and literary development.

That the Hungarian minority culture in Yugoslavia had more freedom than the centre of Hungarian culture in Hungary - stifled as it was by considerable political restrictions - is yet another paradox. Yugoslav socialism's emancipatory capacity facilitated the emergence of a new Hungarian cultural elite in Vojvodina, one that was better informed, more representative of different socio-economic backgrounds, and more connected with the rest of the world than its counterpart in Hungary. While everyone in Hungary had to learn Russian (with little success due to people's strong resentment) and other languages were not well known, in Yugoslavia there were excellent translators who produced Hungarian as well as Serbo-Croatian texts. Not only their translations, but the poetry of Otto Tolnai and the prose of Laszlo Vegel - Hungarian Vojvodina authors - exerted a huge influence on contemporary Hungarian literature. But when those same authors engaged in the slightest political criticism, they were persecuted in Vojvodina by the authorities.

In 1966 I moved to Belgrade, which had always fascinated me as a big city which offered the possibility of escape from the pressures of provincialism, especially the stifling lack of privacy I had felt in Subotica. In Belgrade I studied at the Faculty of Philosophy, where a group of professors inspired by the New Left and a re-reading of Marx came into direct conflict with the Party. In 1966 in Belgrade I witnessed Yugoslav police cruelly beating up students who were protesting against US intervention in Vietnam. For me, this led to an



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emotional break with the regime and its ideology, which I had believed in fully before. There was an explosive atmosphere of polemic and debate in Belgrade at that time, many magazines and books, many important translations, and much critical and original thinking. It was difficult to discern from the ideas reaching us were American and which European. American critical sociology featured strongly, alongside European reflection on alienation, interwoven with protest music and beat poetry, critical and avant-garde film, Camus, and

**In order to emancipate themselves, the Balkan countries need Europe. But the reverse is also true.**



Sartre's *Existentialism and Marxism*. In the spring of 1968 we watched the Polish party expel such critical professors as Kolakowski and Baumann from Warsaw University: their departure to the West meant that their texts reached us sooner. A small booklet by Jacek Kuron and Karel Modzalewski revealed to me the last secret of the one-party state. The discovery of an alternative Marxism and of a non-repressive Left was a thrilling intellectual adventure, continued through the student demonstrations that engulfed Europe in May and June of that year, including the turbulent days of the student occupation of Belgrade University.

That following summer I was with a group of colleagues attending the Summer School of Philosophy at the Dalmatian island of Korčula. Ernst Bloch, Lucien Goldman, Herbert Marcuse were there, along with my Belgrade professors. Habermas - then a marginal young assistant - was also present. As Bloch spoke at the opening (which commemorated the 150th anniversary of Marx's birth) the electricity went out. He continued to speak with a strong voice and we listened in the darkness. *Spiegel* later commented cynically that Bloch had given a speech in Korčula on the unstoppable nature of progress, lit only by a petroleum lamp. We spent days and nights debating the meaning of the student revolt of spring 1968, the war in Vietnam, and contemporary capitalism and socialism. While we were experiencing an opening-up and liberalization in Yugoslavia, our fellow students from the West, fascinated by Trotsky

and Mao, were sliding into dogmatism. We woke from these polemics on 21 August to the news that Warsaw Pact troops had occupied Czechoslovakia. We all signed some petition but the school was practically over. On the way back, on the boat, in Split and later in Subotica, I saw many tourists from Czechoslovakia, confused, lost, disoriented, and was reminded of Hungarian refugees I had seen as a small girl in 1956 in an improvised camp near Subotica.

Political and cultural ideas were intertwined in Belgrade, as were the debates and professional gatherings. Around us a dynamic climate of challenge to all orthodoxies would occasionally suffer some blow: the prohibition of a book, film or play. But other books, films, and plays would arrive, festivals brought many foreign works, the International Book Fair was a major event, and bookshops were full of imported books and new editions of translations. Each repressive intervention by the regime was making it weaker. No monopoly was sustainable, and there was no cultural hegemony of any orientation or set of ideas. Although I did not travel abroad much at that time, neither did I feel isolated from the world or from the political and cultural developments taking place in Europe.

Instead of ending up in Europe sooner than any other communist country, Yugoslavia entered a horrible time of disintegration, aggressive nationalisms, and the destructiveness of war. The



majority of newly founded states became engulfed in regressive ideas and processes. Even with the peak of nationalism over, as in today's Serbia, the aura of being a poor peripheral country haunts all of society. Young people feel hopeless and without prospects, and although they have access to global communication (Internet, cable TV) they still suffer from being cut off from the world. Hundreds of thousands of young urban professionals left or still dream of leaving the country. Without them, the recovery and reconstruction leading to European integration will only be slower. In order to emancipate themselves, the Balkan countries need Europe. But the reverse is also true, since the stability and security of the continent would otherwise remain vulnerable. This is why I strongly

believe that it is necessary to continue the struggle for the Europeanization of the entire region by developing mechanisms of intensive cooperation among those within and outside the EU; by including young people in various mobility programmes while providing attractive opportunities for those who left the country to consider returning home. Although the success of such a complex project depends on the political will and responsible behaviour of local power centres, the EU could and should do more to encourage the strengthening of European identity in the Balkan countries, especially by giving more forceful support to a substantial degree of cultural exchange, an ongoing flow of cultural 'provocations'.



Mohamed Mohieddin Ellabbad & Claire Rado de Selva, *Tamás 2, Contemporary Arab Representations*, 2004

## The Example of the *Hijáb*

### *Nasr Abu Zayd*

Since the President of France announced in December 2003 that there was a need to introduce a new law prohibiting the display of religious symbols in French national schools, the reaction generated all over the Muslim World (especially the Arab world) presents a model of the polemical controversy/dispute/debate/discussion that has been overshadowing the relationship between the Muslim and the Western worlds since the late eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. From the French government's point of view, the issue at stake here is the protection of the secular basis of French society against the possible disintegration threatened by the wearing in public schools of such religious symbols as the Jewish

*yarmulke*, large crosses, and the female Muslim headscarf, the *hijáb*. In the shared public sphere represented by schools, religious symbols would identify pupils according to their religious affiliation, thus causing a serious threat to their national identity as French citizens. Religious symbols should be prohibited in public schools (the argument runs) in order to safeguard this identity and enhance the process of integrating citizens of a migrant background. For the Muslim community in Europe, the *hijáb* is - unlike crosses or the *yarmulke* - not a religious symbol; rather, it is an obligatory religious requirement ordained by God and his Prophet. If a Muslim woman fails to wear the *hijáb*, she is considered a sinner and disobedient to the divine

command, and punishment in the afterlife will be inflicted on her. Preventing Muslim girls by law from wearing the *hijáb* thus represents a Western enmity against Islam and discrimination against Muslims. Reading articles in the Arabic newspapers and watching some of the Arab satellite TV programmes which deal with the issue, one could easily get the impression that the French move presents a severe threat to the identity of Muslims, not only in France but in the whole Muslim world - and to the entire Muslim nation, *umma*, as well.

I cite this case in order to reflect on what might be the space for non-Western cultures in the enlarged Europe, especially if we bear in mind that many Muslims are just as integrated as Orthodox Christians are. As a non-European member of the Reflection Group, I feel it is my responsibility to stress the necessity for Europe to negotiate its cultural codes in order to add and accommodate extra constituencies presented by its ethnically and culturally varied citizens. The example of the *hijáb* reflects a mutual fear and distrust that is built on a polarized distinction between secularism and religious symbolism. I am not going to argue whether or not the *hijáb* is an essential component

of the Islamic faith. On the contrary, I am arguing against the inability of French laicism to accommodate religious symbols, which means it is unable to develop beyond the historical context of its emergence against the political power of the Church, while Islam is able to adapt its own tradition in order to accommodate the values and ethics of contemporary civil society. (This is especially true of European Muslims.) Another point to raise is that other sorts of non-religious cultural symbolism - such as food, music, dance, visual art and literature - are welcomed, and fit easily, into the texture of European cultures. Religious symbols, however, seem to be at odds with the European legacy of the privatization of religion and its relegation from the foreground of public life. The problem as I see it is that laicism is theologizing religious symbols, thus pressuring those who use these symbols to essentialize them. By such essentialist reaction, Muslims in particular are finding refuge in a tradition that had already been re-interpreted.

This prescribed 'assimilation' comes at the expense of the richness of the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic structure of Europe. Why would a foreigner at the



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moment of becoming a citizen be expected to abandon his previous identity? Identity after all is not a dress we put on and take off. Even with the second and third generations, certain components of the parents' and grandparents' identities remain. It seems that European countries do not realize that a specifically European identity is still under construction. It is time to move towards the goal of realizing such an identity.

This brings up a question that is strongly connected to the issues of 'integration' and cultural diversity; namely, which language is to be adopted as the European one? My own experience may be taken as an illustration. When I came with my wife to the Netherlands in October 1995, invited by the University of Leiden as a visiting professor, it was meant to be for a couple of years, until the legal case against us was sorted out. On August 5, 1996, the supreme court of Egypt confirmed the appeal court verdict of June 1995 which had declared me an apostate, consequently annulling our marriage. Had we asked for political asylum, it would have been very easy at that time to get a Dutch passport immediately. We did not want to do this for the obvious reason that we did not want to give up our Egyptian nationality.

We realized in the meantime that we would be in the Netherlands for the rest of our lives. I worked hard as a visiting professor, teaching and supervising MA students for five years. In the year 2000 I was honoured to be given the very prestigious Cleveringa Chair, an honorary rotating chair at Leiden University, and I worked as a resource person for the 'Rights at Home' project at the International Institute for the Study of Islam in the Modern World (ISIM) from 2001 to 2003, when I was appointed to the Ibn Rushd (Averroes) Chair as a Professor of Islam and Humanism at Utrecht's University of

**It seems that European countries do not realize that a specifically European identity is still under construction.**

Humanistics. In addition to these official positions, I have been very active in the public debate on Islam in Europe, particularly in relation to the Netherlands. I am also involved in many academic projects in the International Institute of Advanced Studies in Berlin (the Wissenschaftscollege zu Berlin) and the Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). Needless to say, English is the language I use in all these academic and public activities. Last but not least, I had the honour of becoming a member of the Reflection Group of the European Cultural Foundation, in which all of us communicate in English.

According to Dutch regulations - which have been made stricter since 9/11 - those indicators of 'integration' which would make my wife's and my application for Dutch nationality successful are insufficient. We have to pass written and oral examinations in the Dutch language. We applied anyway, asking for an exemption from these exams, and we await an answer. Should I mention to the Dutch authorities that I chose to continue my career in this country - a country to which I feel strongly connected, indeed in which I feel myself to be deeply integrated - rather than accepting a very prestigious offer of a lifetime chair at the University of California, Berkeley? Would it help to show all the documents that prove this strong and deep affinity with the people (not only students and colleagues)? Again, this insistence on Dutch language proficiency (which, it seems, proficiency in the English language cannot compensate for) raises the question of what

would be the acceptable language of a European citizen?

The dispute about the *hijab* shows the inability of secular civil society to accommodate the religious symbolism of its own Muslim citizens. If Islam, and Muslims - especially Muslims living in the West - are able to accommodate modern values and civil ethics, secular Europe should take steps to accommodate the Islamic values and ethics which do not contradict the values and ethics of civil societies. Again, decisions should not be based on power that demands unconditional submission, in the way that the American administration acts; instead, authorities should acknowledge the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious structure of contemporary Western societies.

## Culture's Crisis of Attention

### Maarten van Veen

The City of Amsterdam and the Dutch government contribute more than half of the Concertgebouw Orchestra's total budget of 16 million Euros, while the rest comes from subscriptions, tickets, tours, royalties and sponsors. Both administrations consider it important that we are able to tour abroad. In 2000 we were described as one of the country's spearhead cultural institutions, not only in terms of Dutch musical life, tradition and excellence, but also as a demonstration to the world that this sort of excellence can count on public support in the Netherlands.

When I look at the Concertgebouw Orchestra I am not worried about the future of symphonic music or

the major symphonic orchestras. In the last five years we have raised ticket prices substantially and we still have a waiting list. There is growing interest in our contemporary music series, for which ticket prices are lower. The new young orchestra members we have recruited are of tremendous quality. Thanks also to the support of the public, we can afford to bring conductors and soloists of the highest reputation.

But when I see what is happening in the Dutch music world more generally - the way the Raad voor Cultuur (Council of Culture) proposes subsidy cuts across the board, and our foreign affairs minister speaking at Berlin's Humboldt University states that



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Jeremy Deller, *Memory Buckets*, 2003

culture should not be an EU responsibility - then I do worry that more voices in Western Europe will claim in the future that culture should not be a basic responsibility of government.

Public support for the arts cannot be taken for granted. Perhaps a lack of exposure to stimulating cultural experiences, a fault of education, explains this narrow-mindedness. But it could also be caused by a preoccupation with the major social and economic problems facing the country, Europe, and the world today. We are undergoing a major transformation nowadays. Having gone through a period when the benefits of economic development could be widely spread and we had enough money for a reasonable welfare system and for culture, we are now getting into a period when we cannot share the goodies but must share the 'baddies' instead. There are so many problems on the political agenda that initial gestures in the right direction are not properly followed up. For instance, the so-called Lisbon goals of the EU relating to the knowledge-driven economy remain a slogan, and no one has heard much about the 'innovation platform' announced in the Netherlands amid much fanfare following the last elections. Apparently there are no obvious solutions to the many pressing issues and problems we face in our society today, which means that culture gets squeezed out, simply vanishing from the minds of politicians.

I can imagine that many politicians are not so involved in culture because they have no free time, yet one's cultural attitudes and preferences are shaped by participation in culture. So even when they talk about European values, this becomes a rigid discourse about money, rules and regulations, and not about the cultural basis of European values. This crisis of attention is only aggravated by the

media. Politicians know only too well that they will not get any media attention if they talk about cultural matters and other long-term issues. So they don't.

A distinction should be made between those cultural institutions whose success breeds success and culture that is primarily perceived as leisure, similar to sport or holidays. The basic Enlightenment type of culture lies outside most people's experience. But even if politicians don't like to go to the opera or don't listen to classical music while being driven to their meetings, culture remains an essential ingredient of human life. It should play a fundamental role in our thinking on

such major issues as social cohesion and viable healthcare. Culture at a higher level has a major humanist value of its own.

Culture, along with religion, is what motivates people and gives them meaning and inspiration in life. A top-ranking issue. I don't think you can leave that to the market and certainly not to the inconsistent feelings of people who in some period of crisis or distress might be inclined to shift loyalties or preferences. If culture is so important, then the responsibility for developing it and keeping it alive must rest primarily with the public authorities, since its impact will be felt in all aspects of social life, in the economy, politics, science.

Excellence in culture can be only realized with the help of subsidies because audience interest does not always go hand in hand with high-level avant-garde performances. Artists are often ahead of their time, so you can't depend on paying visitors alone.

Investment in artistic renewal and experiment should be seen as just as normal as governments putting money into universities and scientific institutions. Artists cannot be expected to start a career at the very top, attracting audiences and sponsors in the early stages of their career. Often they are recognized much later, perhaps only after death. So the public authorities have a responsibility to invest in emerging artists and their gradual development towards excellence.

Why should culture be attended to at EU level? If the EU member states work together on the economy, defence, public health, agriculture and environment, it would be inconsistent to leave aside culture, which nourishes all those fields. Culture cannot be left only to national and lower-level authorities. Our way of life, the way we work, would dry up without culture. Bureaucrats and technocrats would become overwhelming, and we'd soon find ourselves in some 1984-style Orwellian nightmare.



*Dragan Klaić is a theatre scholar and cultural analyst who moved from Belgrade to Amsterdam in 1991. He led the Theater Instituut Nederland for almost a decade, and has been President of EFAH since 2001. As well as teaching in Europe and the US, he is a researcher, author and activist who has become increasingly involved in cultural policy and strategies of international cultural cooperation.*

## A Plea for Some Transatlantic Solidarity

### Dragan Klaić

In the early 1970s I went from Belgrade to the United States to do my graduate studies. I believed that I knew Western Europe well enough from my previous travels, that I had nothing to seek in the communist bloc, and I was curious about the US. Once there, I started thinking of cultural differences and of the specific characteristic of Europe, while constantly experiencing the contrasting features of American culture. Because I was at a major research university, many of the graduate students and those in the faculty were from Europe, but my social circle consisted of Europeans, Americans and friends from the developing countries, such as India, Brazil and Sri Lanka. In our conversations a critical analysis of American culture was always coloured by some Asian and Latin American observations. Those were the Cold War years of polarization between the political left and right, reformulated in the US as an opposition between liberals and conservatives, and at the time such concepts as 'identity' and 'globalization' were not part of our vocabulary, while 'postmodernism' was mentioned only occasionally by a few professors.

The cultural presence of Europe was ubiquitous: in the curriculum, in the library and the university gallery, in films shown in the art movie house and in campus theatre productions, in a constant stream of academics and public personalities coming as guests from Europe. The urban environment was, however, unmistakably American: well-kept 18th and 19th century buildings on campus, interspersed with some examples of neo-Gothic revival, and the painful ghetto ring around this, with decayed two-storied New England houses, poverty and crime, especially 'downtown', a victim of the radical urban

renewal of the 1960s which had left ghostly garages and deserted shopping malls. University was an intellectual oasis of privilege and learning, affluence and civility, but it lacked social context and cultural influence. Even the shabby streets on the edge of campus were an isolated zone where we the graduate students lived while our professors were tucked away in the safe suburbs.

Fortunately New York was not far away, and I used to go there to experience some living European context. Though I was always aware of the proximity of non-European ethnic communities and of the pervasive presence of American popular culture, I could live out my nostalgia in the Central European cafes and shops of the Upper East Side and in the bustling streets of Little Italy. In New York, the notion of a European-style intellectual who could bridge the gap between academic and contemporary society, between research and publishing, reaching out from the university ghetto to some other intellectual or artistic communities - such a figure was conceivable, if unlikely. From this metropolitan East Coast perspective, Europe acquired an additional degree of coherence and appeared as a rather strong and unique cultural constellation, or rather a comprehensive cultural mentality, but I would combat my homogenizing nostalgia by reminding myself of the enormous diversity I had experienced on my journey through Europe. In my graduate work I was busy with authors who considered themselves fully European and yet did not belong to the European cultural mainstream (e.g. Karl Čapek, S.I Witkiewicz); later, I had the satisfaction of introducing such European authors as Odón van Horvath and F.X. Kroetz to the

American stage. In my American reading I sought erudite critics and acerbic polemicists in the European fashion, and found them in Edmund Wilson and Gore Vidal: next to Krleža and Gombrowicz, these became my new cultural heroes. After a few years I obtained my doctorate and returned to Belgrade, without any regrets or doubts, but I would regularly go back to the US.

The end of the Cold War did not immediately affect the cultural polarity between Europe and America. Later on, resentment against the US found a cause in the globalization discourse, in response to the overwhelming, intrusive presence of the products of the US cultural industry, especially in Europe. The transition of the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe towards market capitalism brought a disorientation and weakening of their inherited cultural systems, and their cultural market was quickly flooded with US-made cultural industry products, causing additional resentment and some anxiety. As European intellectual debates and networks grew in intensity throughout the 1990s, and as Europe continued to invent and enlarge its cultural space, reaching out further east and south, US intellectual participation in those streams of conferences and colloquia decreased a little, even though US books and articles still had a significant intellectual impact in Europe. For instance, several American cultural figures played a prominent role in the debates stirred up by the war in my former country, their attitudes ranging from exceptional commitment (Susan Sontag) to ignorant, distorting arrogance (Robert Kaplan).

Since the official declaration of a war on terrorism by the US President, political disagreement between Europe and the US has led to cultural strains also. I prefer to ignore the manifestation of trivial anti-Europeanism or, more specifically, anti-French

gestures in the US, as much as the knee-jerk anti-Americanism common in Europe nowadays. One sees vain efforts to engage in cultural self-definitions of Europe in order to set it in opposition to the US. These inevitably turn out to be reductionist and simplistic, with regard to both the complexity of American culture and the diversity inherent in European cultural constellations. Europe has nothing to gain from the fabrication of its own ideology, a truncated cult of Europe-hood and a feeling of European superiority, nor from painting a contrastingly hostile image of the Other - whomever is assigned this role, American, Arab, or the Muslim world. It is bad enough that political emotions and disagreements get translated into exaggerated cultural differences. Rather than invent an ideology of Europe-hood, European intellectuals would do better to expand the quality and inclusiveness of Europe-wide intellectual debates, and also advocate the development of European cultural policies at all levels, from the municipal to the EU, so as to stimulate intercultural relations, mobility and international cooperation. In a greatly altered world - liberated from the clear-cut divisions of the Cold



Marek Sutek, *Adrian, Superman* Warszauski, 2004

War, grappling with the cultural consequences of economic globalization, affected by migration and the aging of Europe's population, speeded-up by the digital revolution, and shaken up by terrorist assaults - cultural policies in Europe do need a major overhaul. Neither an imitation of American philanthropy in place of government responsibility, nor a simple-minded opposition to the American cultural constellation would be a productive course in this respect.

A sense of solidarity is a cherished feature of European culture and politics. Why not display solidarity with the critical voices in the US, with those who oppose the homogenizing discourse of the war against terrorism ('you are either with us or against us'), with forces struggling in the US for diversity beyond the politically correct distribution of the cake according to the multicultural quotas.

Despite the recent enthusiastic plea of Timothy Garton Ash, discarding the obsolete notion of 'the West' (more appropriate to Cold War opposition) would probably improve the transatlantic dialogue. With the EU emerging as an economic power bloc and - more slowly - as a unified political entity, the cultural dimension of Europe cannot be reduced to EU boundaries. Europe's cultural specificity should be sought in openness to other voices and stances, as well as in the absorbing capacity and readiness for intercultural engagement, rather than in some invocation of European tradition as an emblem or ideological cornerstone. Our American peers, suffering from the trigger-happy super-patriotism of reactionaries and jingoistic fundamentalists, would benefit from some gestures of European solidarity - gestures of the sort that lessened the isolation of Eastern European dissidents in the Cold War epoch.

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*Transformacje* (Marek Sutek, 2004) page: 75

*Srdno* (Biogrupska, 2004) pages: 18, 50, 57

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