

Dear Minister,

Dear distinguished participants,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today and to address this conference on behalf of Commissioner Vassiliou.

Let me start by congratulating the Cypriot Presidency for having chosen **governance in the field of culture** as one of the priorities of their Presidency.

As Europe is undergoing a most severe economic crisis and public budget are facing unprecedented pressure, we do have to revisit the way we initiate and manage public policies. We must make policy making more efficient, and more inclusive. This is true of culture, as well as of many other sectors.

Secondly, cultural governance is a very interesting topic for the European Commission who is a relatively late – but very active - new comer in the field. The European Agenda for Culture, adopted by the Commission in 2007 and endorsed by the Council the same year, introduced **two** key innovations in the field of cultural governance at European level.

The first innovation was to propose that the **Open method of coordination** would apply to the field of culture; the second was to build a **structured dialogue** with cultural civil society.

Four years down the line, we can say that these governance tools have been very useful to strengthen European cooperation in the field of culture. The time will come soon to assess them in greater details, so that we can improve them further.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would now like to touch upon a number of other aspects linked to governance and culture, at European level, and which are in direct connection with the themes of today's conference.

One of these themes is the development of **integrated, holistic strategies**. This approach finds a high resonance for the Commission.

Firstly because the Commission is a collegial body whose decisions are taken collectively. Each new proposal is consulted with every single Directorate General in the Commission. This process facilitates the development of proper integrated strategies. It also facilitates our efforts to mainstream culture into other EU policies.

Secondly, the development of **integrated strategies** is particularly important with respect to the cultural and creative sectors.

For the past two years, our services have devoted considerable time and energy to look at how the cultural and creative sectors can be helped to overcome the challenges they currently face. These challenges stem from the digital shift and globalisation, as well as from a high fragmentation of markets along cultural and linguistic lines. Access to finance also remains a major problem for the cultural and creative sectors, with insufficient expertise in the financing sector on the proper valuation of intangible assets but also insufficient invest-readiness from cultural entrepreneurs.

To respond to these challenges, integrated strategies are needed. In recent years, many Member States, regions and cities such as the UK, Estonia, Wallonia, Puglia or Barcelona have developed ad hoc strategies to boost the potential of the cultural and creative sectors. These successful strategies build on a full mapping of the cultural and creative resources in a given country or region. They are holistic, and call for partnerships between various departments such as culture, industry, education, tourism, territorial planning. They also involve all the relevant public and private stakeholders, at all levels of governance: local, regional, national up to the European level.

While some countries and regions have fully understood the potential of CCS for local development, others are only starting

and they should be encouraged to go further. We are currently in the process of putting together a strategy to this effect, and we hope to adopt at the end of September, in the form of a Communication.

The second main theme of your conference is **evidence-based policy making**.

In the European Commission as in other public policies bodies, we are striving to develop policy which is evidence based. As you may know, each new legislative proposal which is put forward by the Commission must be accompanied by an **impact assessment**. The purpose of these impact assessments is to invite the officials responsible for policy development to assess the economic, social and environmental consequences of what they propose. This, in itself, is a good governance measure.

Last year, we applied this governance measure to the field of culture. We had to back our proposal for Creative Europe, which is the new European cooperation programme for culture for the years 2014-2020, by an impact assessment, using the results of studies and public consultations as well as feedback from a regular monitoring and external evaluations of the current programmes. This was a most useful and healthy exercise. It highlighted once again that while quite some progress has been made in gathering figures, there is still a

**lack, as we all know, of comparable and reliable data on culture in the EU.** Data on issues such as cultural employment, culture's contribution to GDP, public expenditures in culture, cultural participation and its impact on people have still to be improved and made more comparable across Europe.

A key factor of progress would be to deploy the statistical framework developed by ESSnet culture and work on future priorities in this field.

I would go even further: I believe that there is a need to reflect on how to measure the value of culture for society. In time of crisis, there is a temptation to look at arts and culture as a cost rather than a vital investment for society, and this is, in my opinion, deeply mistaken. To counter these views, we need evaluation and measurement methods which can capture the diversity of impacts that culture and the arts have on societies.

I do trust that this most timely conference will contribute sharpening the tools that the EU and its Member States have to continue improving governance in the field of culture. This is indeed more than needed in the current context.

Thank you for your attention.