

Culture as a Catalyst for Creativity and Innovation

This document constitutes a contribution of the cultural heritage sector to the public consultation launched by the European Commission (EC) on "Community Innovation policy". The consultation forms an input to the preparation of a new European innovation plan having the objective to put in place new policies to foster innovation in Europe in the context of the post-2010 Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.

The present document builds on the conclusions of the European Council of 13/14 March 2008 which states: "A key factor for future growth is the full development of the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens built on European culture and excellence in science".

By making of 2009 the "European Year of Creativity and Innovation", European institutions have recognised the importance of culture, arts and creativity as drivers of innovation. This European Year showed that Europe boasts a remarkable cultural heritage and the wide range of contribution culture makes to the economy and to social cohesion.

Indeed, these strengths have yet to be integrated in shaping the EU innovation policy, where contribution of non technological innovation has remained marginalised in EU policy actions with innovation considered as the result of technological progress only.

Culture is intrinsically linked to creativity which finds its source in art and culture, therefore EU innovation policy should also be considered through these sectors. Culture can support social, economic and technological innovation at a time when we need to reconcile the creation of wealth with sustainability and harmonious social development.

The importance of culture was underlined by the European Parliament (EP) in a resolution on cultural industries in Europe adopted in April 2008, in which the EP called on the EC and the Member States "to set as priorities, policies based not only on entrepreneurial innovation, but on the innovation of cultural actions and creative economies". The Council of the EU recently defined culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation and called for a strategic investment in culture, cultural and creative industries to be part of the future Lisbon strategy beyond 2010.

NEMO advocates EU policy makers to recognise cultural heritage as a resource for creativity and innovation taking place at various levels, at learning level, by promoting art and culture in lifelong learning, by encouraging the mix of competences and interdisciplinary activities, or by encouraging partnerships between the education, cultural and entrepreneurial activities. Innovation needs to be supported within the arts and culture sector, the creative and cultural industries, as well, by ensuring the best conditions possible for creativity and creation. The next generation of EU programmes should aim at developing these cross-sectoral approaches and ensure that the potential of culture to contribute to a creative and innovative Europe is fully tapped.

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