

MEMO TO ALL MEMBERS (3)

Following the 2nd Board meeting of the Platform in Brussels on January, 20th and the first OMC-Commission-Platform Secretariat and Chair meeting on December 16th (see memo 22 December) the Board wishes to submit to all its members the following information.

1. Access to Culture Platform strategic, political and pragmatic positioning

Strategic concern

To overcome the weak political status of the Platform “Access to Culture”, derived from it having no clear counterpart among the Member States’ Working Groups foreseen by the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and there being no clear reference to the issue in the “Agenda for Culture”, the Board considers it necessary to lobby for a strong positioning within the institutional framework (Member States Working Groups, the Commission and the other 2 Platforms) but also within the preparation process of the European Cultural Forum, organized by the Commission and that will take place from 28 to 30 September in Brussels.

In this perspective, the Board decided to draft a **common letter** to be sent to the Commission by the three Civil Society Platforms stressing the need for a synergy of Platform contributions to the European Cultural Forum regarding its content, structure and format.

Political/Pragmatic concern

Regarding the concrete **output** of the Platform, the Board considers that:

- it should contribute to the definition of the guidelines for new EU funding programs,
- it should influence the long-term mainstreaming approach at EU level as well as the Member States’ Working Groups policy development both at national/regional level,
- it should also consider other bodies (European Parliament, National Parliaments, foundations, other networks).

2. Policy document

The Board discussed the first draft of the “policy document”.

The drafting **procedure** has taken into account:

- a) the reports from the 3 Working Groups to identify the existing common and transversal positions;
- b) the scope and target groups to be addressed, as well as the policy framework it has fit into.

The “policy document” structure defines:

1. the background against which it is set,
2. its main objectives,
3. the conceptual framework that underlines its content,
4. the legal framework in which it is set,
5. the policy recommendations with references to working group reports.

The document will include the reports of the Working Groups as well as the best practices identified.

The process underlying the preparation of the “policy document” should ensure a bottom-up approach - the consultation process within the Working Groups should guarantee the definition of the basis of the policy process and its longer-term impact.

The “policy document” is generic in scope but, at the same time, concrete in its approach.

Regarding the next steps in the preparation process of the “policy document”, the Board proposes:

1. that the Chairs of the Working Groups distribute the draft to its members in order to collect feedback from the members by 15 April 2009,
2. the second draft is sent out to Platform members by 15 May,
3. that the Platform meets for its plenary in June (dates to be confirmed) to discuss and endorse the draft “policy document”,
4. that the Working Groups and members deliver their final comments on the “policy paper”, including the annexes (final working group papers and best practices, definitions, etc), by 15 August,
5. that the “policy document” be included in the European Cultural Forum documentation.

3. Funding

A decision on the application presented by the Secretariat of the Platform to the European Commission will be taken by March/April (see Board memo December 2008).

4. Calendar

*** 26-27 March 2009, Prague, Creative Europe Forum**

A Czech Presidency event focusing on ‘Creativity and Society’ - ‘Creativity in Education’ - ‘Creativity and Economy’.

*** Spring 2009, dates to be confirmed, 2nd joint meeting of the Chairpersons of the Culture Open Method of Coordination Working Groups and the Chairpersons and Secretariats of the 3 Platforms.**

*** 8-10 June 2009, Annual plenary meeting of the Platforms (date tbc)**

Facilitated and co-sponsored by the Commission, the exact date is still to be confirmed.

*** 28-30 September, 2009, Brussels, European Cultural Forum**, with on 28 September a 28 September, Conference on best practices supported by the Culture programme, and 29 and 30 September the European Cultural Forum, structured thematically around the 3 pillars of the European Agenda for Culture (promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity; role of culture in external relations). There will be a mix of plenary sessions and smaller workshop discussions. The expected attendance is of some 650 participants.