

Theatre and the performing arts in an enlarged Europe

P5_TA(2002)0496

A5-0264/2002

European Parliament resolution on the importance and dynamics of the theatre and the performing arts in an enlarged Europe (2001/2199(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Articles 1 and 6 of the EU Treaty and Articles 3, 5 and 151 of the EC Treaty,
- having regard to Articles 13 and 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union(1),
- having regard to the resolution of the Council of Ministers for Culture of 7 June 1991 on the development of the theatre in Europe(2),
- having regard to its resolution of 26 October 1991 on the promotion of the theatre and music in the European Community(3),
- having regard to its resolution of 11 March 1992 on the situation of artists in the European Community(4),
- having regard to the first Commission report on the consideration of cultural aspects in European Community action (COM(1996) 160),
- having regard to the resolution of the Council and the Ministers for culture meeting within the Council of 17 May 1993 on the Promotion of the Translation of contemporary European dramatic works(5),
- having regard to the Council resolution of 4 April 1995 on cooperation with the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the cultural domain(6),
- having regard to the report of the High-Level Panel on the free movement of persons submitted on 18 March 1997,
- having regard to its resolution of 30 January 1997 on the first report of the Commission on the consideration of cultural aspects in European Community action(7),
- having regard to its resolution of 9 March 1999 on the situation and role of artists in the European Union(8),
- having regard to the Council resolution of 17 December 1999 on the promotion of the free movement of persons working in the cultural sector(9),
- having regard to Decision No 508/2000/EC of the European Parliament and

of the Council of 14 February 2000 establishing the 'Culture 2000' programme(10),

- having regard to the Council resolution of 23 July 2001 on exchange of information and experience concerning conditions for professional artists in the context of EU enlargement(11),
- having regard to its resolution of 5 September 2001 on cultural cooperation in the European Union(12),
- having regard to the conclusions of the Forum on cultural cooperation in Europe, organised in Brussels by the Commission on 21 and 22 November 2001,
- having regard to the Council resolution of 21 January 2002 on the role of culture in the development of the European Union(13),
- having regard to its resolution of 28 February 2002 on the implementation of the 'Culture 2000' programme(14),
- having regard to the Commission study on mobility and the free movement of persons and productions in the cultural sector,
- having regard to Rule 163 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education, the Media and Sport (A5-0264/2002),

A. whereas the term 'performing arts' covers theatre, dance, opera, music, circus, street performers, puppetry and all interdisciplinary works, and whereas the theatre, which originated in Europe, is emblematic of the European area of the performing arts,

B. whereas theatre and democracy have been intrinsically linked since the beginning of their respective histories, and whereas drama and the performing arts have always mirrored society, providing a public space where openness and also resistance may find expression,

C. whereas this sector, in contrast to the audiovisual industry, occupies a limited amount of time and space,

D. whereas the Member States are primarily responsible for the situation of culture in the Community, and whereas their cultural policies favour dissemination at national level rather than European exchanges,

E. whereas Member States could thus pursue cultural policies and measures designed to rekindle public interest in the theatre, primarily by disseminating major works that form part of world and European heritage,

F. whereas the vitality of the theatre and performing arts should not depend chiefly on public subsidies, and whereas States and local authorities should play a leading role in supporting the creation of new works and the free movement of both performers and works, primarily by encouraging a more diverse range of sources of funding and by affording scope for private ventures such as the Society of the Historic Theatres of Europe,

G. whereas patronage and sponsorship play an important role in the creation of new works and artistic events, and should be encouraged and developed by

means of partnerships between institutions, cultural associations and private enterprises,

H. whereas the rekindling of public interest in the theatre can influence the law of supply and demand by increasing demand and making audiences an important source of income,

I. whereas the financial contribution from European programmes for the performing arts is approximately 40% for Kaleidoscope and 30% for the first two years of the Culture 2000 programme, and whereas this consistent support calls for a suitable framework policy to remove obstacles and promote cooperation,

J. having regard to the lack of comparative statistics on the situation of the theatre and performing arts in Europe, particularly with regard to the mobility of performers, the dissemination of new works and audience attendance levels,

K. having regard to the expanded possibilities for culture which digitalisation will bring about in terms of new job possibilities and mobility of cultural workers, as stated in the study 'Exploitation and development of the job potential in the cultural sector in the age of digitalisation' commissioned by the Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs,

L. whereas the job security of those working in the performing arts⁽¹⁵⁾ is often uncertain and precarious, and whereas many entertainment halls and companies are in a fragile financial position,

M. whereas the performing arts consist of individual and personal expression, whereas each project results from meetings and affinities between artists, and whereas this original production method precludes any form of interventionist policy,

N. whereas performers have always travelled about in Europe, whereas it is now natural for new works in the performing arts to be produced and disseminated on a European scale, and whereas most performers wish to have a Europe-wide career,

O. whereas the lack of coordination between various social and tax laws is an obstacle to the mobility of those working in the performing arts, and whereas the different ways in which the Member States charge income tax and VAT can sometimes constitute direct or indirect discrimination,

P. whereas the theatre is, in essence, an expression of the wealth of the various European languages, and the dissemination of works in their original language is ideal and essential for linguistic and cultural diversity,

Q. whereas contemporary dramatic works must be translated if texts, writers and directors are to travel,

R. whereas festivals and touring performances play a major role in discovering and promoting writers, performers and works in the fields of theatre, choreography, opera, circus, and encouraging their mobility,

S. whereas the lack of professional recognition of performers' qualifications between the Member States is a genuine obstacle,

T. whereas initiation into the performing arts disciplines at a very young age contributes to the development of the individual and creates openness to cultural

diversity,

U. whereas there are many ways in which research and technological development on lighting, sound, images, acoustics and machinery can be applied to creating and disseminating the performing arts and contribute to interdisciplinary developments in this area,

V. having regard to the innovation of 'cultural fallow areas' enabling groups of performers to promote new and original artistic projects and new publics to discover live theatre,

W. whereas East and West share a common past and future, whereas in the field of culture and the arts enlargement is a matter of renewing old ties, whereas the strong Central and Eastern European traditions in theatre, choreography, circus and music, backed up by a high standard of training and the heritage of a substantial network of cultural institutions, will enable this sector to consolidate its position,

X. whereas increased cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the field of theatre and the performing arts may contribute to the success of enlargement and public support for the European project, whereas the appropriate framework for a European area of the performing arts is an enlarged Europe including the Member States, the candidate countries and non-member States as far as Russia,

Y. mindful of the importance of the performing arts to dialogue between peoples, and of the need to include culture in development policies and in the partnership with the Mediterranean countries,

Support for the performing arts sector

1. Considers that the development of a European area of the performing arts presupposes the following specific objectives:

a) supporting the mobility of those working in the performing arts through additional information and technical and financial assistance;

b) facilitating a wider dissemination of productions through aid for translation, subtitles for dramatic works and support for European festivals;

c) promoting public information and awareness-raising measures in respect of the performing arts;

d) developing basic and continuing vocational training for performers, technicians and others working in the performing arts to enable them to benefit from their occupation's European dimension;

2. Believes that, through the Culture 2000 programme and/or by launching specific pilot projects, 'cooperation platforms' made up of recognised professionals from the relevant sectors of the arts world to promote mobility of those working in the performing arts, wider dissemination of works and continuing training might prove desirable;

3. Hopes to see the assessment and review of the Culture 2000 programme result in a better distribution of the budget and objectives so as to make it possible to devote a specific annual budget to the performing arts, fine arts, heritage, translation and reading;
4. Calls on the Commission and the budgetary authority to provide for a mechanism to fund the operations of organisations of European cultural interest and to ensure a balance between the various performing arts;
5. Calls for the European statistical system to study the situation of the theatre and the performing arts, audience attendance levels, the mobility of performers and the ability of productions to travel within an enlarged Europe, and calls on the Commission to increase Eurostat's production of cultural statistics;
6. Calls on the national public authorities to take an even-handed approach in strengthening their policies of support for the performing arts, cultural events and experimental performances and to promote amateur performance and access for all to these sectors of the arts;
7. Points out that networks of associations of friends of specific art forms (e.g. 'friends of the opera', 'friends of chamber music') play an important part in spreading and deepening knowledge and love of the performing arts; asks the Member States to encourage the establishment of such networks;
8. Calls on the Member States to apply the minimum VAT to cultural goods (as referred to in the 6th VAT framework directive) in order to promote local and European culture;
9. Emphasises the importance of patronage and sponsorship for new works and artistic events, and reiterates its request to the Member States to grant tax relief to patrons;
10. Urges the Member States to ensure that their cultural policies are consistent with a European dimension, by increasing their efforts to produce, welcome and disseminate European works from their own and other countries;
11. Calls on the Member States to remember that public television has a cultural mission to promote broadcasts of the performing arts and provide cultural information, also during prime-time viewing hours, and that this mission will become especially important when digital terrestrial television is launched;
12. Calls on the Member States to promote theatre and the performing arts as a whole as a means of social inclusion, particularly in disadvantaged sectors and places;

Mobility of those working in the performing arts

13. Calls on the Member States to help performers, those working in the cultural field and programme-makers to become more mobile, by setting up co-financing mechanisms to fund their travel for research or production purposes, and calls on the Commission to support such cooperation;
14. Calls on the Member States to recognise and increase the social security status of all those working in the performing arts, especially circus workers and street performers;

15. Calls on the Commission, with due respect to the principle of subsidiarity, in view of recent analyses to consider coordinating social and tax laws applicable to those working in the performing arts and to draw up a White Paper;

16. Urges the Member States and the Commission to abolish double taxation by the State of origin and the host State, to abolish all tax discrimination against non-nationals working in the performing arts and to establish tax measures to encourage mobility of performers and those working in the cultural field;

17. Calls on the Member States to set up a 'one-stop shop' for all the formalities required for recruiting and employing national and non-national performers and cultural workers;

18. Urges the Member States to refrain from imposing unjustified or excessive requirements on cultural workers and artists operating across borders so as not to shackle the freedom to provide services and hence the cultural, artistic, and linguistic interpenetration of the Member States;

19. Calls on the Commission to include in its cultural portal more information for professionals on structures to assist mobility, social and fiscal legislation and administrative formalities in the EU and candidate countries, as proposed in the study on 'Exploitation and development of the job potential in the cultural sector in the age of digitalisation' commissioned by the Commission DG Employment and Social Affairs;

20. Calls for a European federation of professional organisations and trade unions in the performing arts sector to create a 'European passport' for artists to ensure that their interests are represented;

21. Encourages performing rights organisations to cooperate more closely with each other to ensure that European artists working outside their country of origin are properly remunerated;

Dissemination of works and productions

22. Underlines the importance of specific aid for translations of works and subtitles for productions and calls on the Commission to bear this in mind;

23. Calls on the Commission to encourage the creation of a platform for European networks of translators of European plays;

24. Calls on the Commission to support the creation of a database of contemporary plays, an incidental music and sound creation fund (recordings and scores) and a database of technical information on entertainment halls;

25. Points out to the Commission and Member States that the use of IT in the performing arts is very much on the increase and is resulting in interesting innovations as well as international cooperation between theatres; this trend deserves support;

26. Calls on the Commission to consider converging the legal and technical regulations governing scenery and itinerant structures (such as circuses, tented structures and mobile theatres), so as to remove the obstacles to the free movement of the entertainment industry in Europe;

27. Urges national and regional theatres and festivals to give more space in their programmes to writers and productions from other European countries;

28. Calls on the Member States to create more multi-purpose residential centres for European writers and performers;

29. Suggests that the Commission could sponsor a European performing arts prize as part of the 2003 invitation to tender for the Culture 2000 programme;

Basic and continuing training

30. Calls on the Commission to establish a nomenclature of performing arts occupations and to harmonise the common technical vocabulary for all the Member States;

31. Calls on the Council and Commission to include on the political agenda mutual recognition between Member States of performing arts qualifications;

32. Calls on the Member States and the Commission to establish European programmes for continuing training for performers and technicians, and to publicise the continuing training on offer in each Member State;

33. Calls on the Commission to devote more of its Erasmus, Socrates and Leonardo programmes to training those working in the performing arts;

34. Encourages academies, training institutes, and those working in the performing arts to develop itinerant training programmes and intensive courses in the various disciplines of performing arts;

35. Calls on the Member States to give more weight to foreign language teaching in training courses for performers, in order to prepare students for professional mobility in the future;

36. Calls on the Member States to introduce performing arts education in schools from an early age through collaboration between teachers and performers;

Wider cultural cooperation

37. Calls on the Member States to increase their cultural cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, by instituting a multiannual action plan to encourage mobility of performers, travelling productions, exchange of training, and technical and logistical support for professionals, and calls on the Commission to support this policy;

38. Calls on the Member States, and specifically on the candidate countries, to use some of the Structural Funds to rehabilitate and renovate theatres, opera houses and entertainment halls;

39. Welcomes the fact that the 5th Euro-Mediterranean Conference held in Valencia in April 2002 agreed to the principle of creating a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for intercultural dialogue, and calls on the Member States, the Commission and the Mediterranean partners to place special emphasis on exchanges in the field of the performing arts;

40. Calls on the Member States to simplify the process for obtaining visas and residence permits for performers and cultural workers;

41. Calls on the Convention to include as fundamental principles in the future European Constitution cultural diversity, support for artistic creation, artistic

freedom and access to culture for all citizens;

42. Calls on the Convention to ensure that its work for the 2004 IGC includes giving full effect to Article 151 of the Treaty and calls on the Member States to implement this article in their cultural cooperation policies;

43. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries.

(1) OJ C 364, 18.12.2000.

(2) OJ C 188, 19.7.1991, p. 3.

(3) OJ C 305, 25.11.1991, p. 518.

(4) OJ C 94, 13.4.1992, p. 213.

(5) OJ C 160, 12.6.1993, p. 1.

(6) OJ C 247, 23.9.1995, p. 2.

(7) OJ C 55, 24.2.1997, p. 37.

(8) OJ C 175, 21.6.1999, p. 42.

(9) OJ C 8, 12.1.2000, p. 3.

(10) OJ L 63, 10.3.2000, p. 1.

(11) OJ C 213, 31.7.2001, p. 9.

(12) OJ C 72 E, 21.3.2002, p. 142.

(13) OJ C 32, 5.2.2002, p. 2.

(14) P5_TA(2002)0088.

(15) * Translator's note: the phrase 'those working in the *performing arts*' throughout the text includes all kinds of performers, back-stage and front-of-house staff, writers, directors, administrators, etc.