



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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CULT 42

NOTE

From : Presidency
To : Council

Subject : Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010
 - *Information from the Presidency*

Delegations will find attached a Presidency Note on the above subject matter which has been included on the provisional agenda, under "*any other business*", for the forthcoming Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting on 11 and 12 May 2009.

Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010

The Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 was adopted in May 2008¹. Since then, the working groups set up in the framework of the open method of cooperation have been successful in starting up their work. In line with the requirement to keep the Member States duly informed of the work of the groups, the Czech Presidency made sure that the chairs of the working groups had ample opportunity to give a thorough overview to the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) of the state of affairs and the progress of work to date.

The chairpersons of the following three groups informed the Committee of the progress of their work: working group on improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field (2 March), working group on synergies with education (23 March) and working group on the mobility of collections (7 April). Considering the comprehensive presentation made by the chair of the working group on maximising the potential of creative and cultural industries in December 2008, it was agreed that the next presentation would take place at a later stage.

On the basis of this reporting exercise it can be concluded that all the working groups have by now consolidated their respective working methods and structures and identified priority areas for future work.

On a different issue, a request from Iceland and Norway to participate in the work of the Open Method of Coordination in the field of culture was addressed to the Presidency which the latter then officially presented to the CAC on 23 February 2009. Subsequently, an in-depth debate on the issue took place on 2 March 2009. The exchange of views was conducted *inter alia* in the light of the intervention made by the representative of the Council's Legal Service according to whom there were no legal obstacles to the participation of third countries in the OMC.

¹ Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. OJ C 143, 10.6.2008, p. 9.

In the course of the ensuing exchange of views, the majority of delegations expressed their support to the principle of extending the OMC to Iceland and Norway and possibly to other third countries. Some of these delegations, however, did express their preference for any initiative regarding individual countries to be taken in the context of a more general decision regarding the participation of third countries. At the same time, the general feeling was that it might be somewhat premature to formulate such an approach at this point in time as the OMC is still at a very early stage of implementation.

By way of conclusion, the Presidency indicated that the Cultural Affairs Committee might be in a better position to discuss the matter further in the context of the final report on the implementation of the current Work Plan. After having received the endorsement of the CAC to this approach, the Presidency drafted an appropriate reply to the requests of Iceland and Norway.
