

A CONTRIBUTION FROM  
LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES  
GIVING SPECIAL FOCUS TO THE CREATIVE SECTOR  
WITHIN THEIR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

*What lessons can be drawn from the experience of preparing the 2007-2013 programmes? In this context and in the light of the analysis provided by this report, how far is cohesion policy adapted to the new challenges European regions will face in the coming years?*

Many questions related to the future of the Cohesion Policy are linked to culture and/or to the creative sector. The following statement comprises some of the major arguments, but needs to be further developed in the framework of the ongoing discussions and debates for the new Cohesion policy from 2014 onwards. In this first paper, we did focus on the major challenges which Europe will face in the next decennials and described some of the potential contributions from the field of Culture and Creativity.

*CHALLENGE 1: Increasing global pressure to modernize and to restructure:*

Already the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) recognized the diversity (especially related to cultural heritage) in Europe as one of the major assets in the framework of globalization to attract both tourists and investors. Diversity is interlinked with identity. The later is different (with many overlapping layers) on local, regional and national (European, global) level. Identity is a dynamic concept which can be inclusive or exclusive. Case studies in the framework of STRATCULT-INTERREG IIIC project as well as outcomes of ESPON-study on Cultural Heritage and Identity (ESPON-project1.1.3) proof this relationship.

Thus, if the EU Cohesion Policy (together with related activities of the Member States and the regional/local territorial authorities) takes into consideration the following points (list not complete), Europe can benefit from globalization because of culture and the creative sector:

- Efficient support for innovation in the creative sector: as already stated above, identity is a dynamic concept. If Europe does not invest in the cultural heritage of the future, it will loose its competitive advantage compared to other global players. And there is a danger, that Europe is becoming a huge museum which is not attractive anymore. There exist already many examples of tourist villages having lost completely their "soul" as well as "normal" inhabitants outside the tourism industry. Contemporary (regional) artists or architects can considerably contribute to the (authentic) enhancement of the cultural assets in Europe. The actual focus of support for innovation on research and technology should be therefore considerably enlarged in the future

Cohesion Policy (e.g. enlarge technology centers with creative clusters or allowing access of the next generation to creative processes). An inclusive concept of innovation should therefore be implemented and should be concretely reflected in all regional operational programs.

- The creative sector is a promising economic field providing better growth rates than many traditional economic sectors (compare DG EAC study "The Economy of Culture in Europe" published in 2006). Never the less, those producing the creative output are not always those benefiting the most in terms of money or from adequate conditions. The share of self-employed people is considerably higher in the creative sector than in many other sectors (compare EUROSTAT, October 2007). People in the creative sector often appreciate this model and other sectors could learn from them. But in order to further motivate Europeans to create own companies or to be self-employed, Member States should be encouraged to abolish uneven treatments (employed/self-employed) in their social and tax systems. This is especially important for the maintenance and the improvement of the dynamic in the creative sector with its high share of self-employed persons. Cohesion policy should contribute to the exchange of good practice on this topic between territorial authorities.

- Globalization leads to the fact that Europeans will be more in contact with persons coming from somewhere else (e.g. refugees, migration, new European citizens with a different cultural and/or religious background). Intercultural questions are therefore central in the next decennials. Due to its history, the whole of Europe would constitute an excellent training field for intercultural understanding and exchange. The future INTERREG programs should be therefore enhanced in terms of budget as well as in terms of scope. The intercultural techniques learned – in the best case together with the European neighbors – are extremely useful and important for the global exchange. Therefore, each future INTERREG project should be able to answer how it contributes to intercultural understanding and exchange. The intercultural dimension should become at least the same status as the transversal topics on environmental protection as well as equal opportunities. The thematic scope of the cross-border, trans-national and inter-regional co-operation in the framework of the EU Cohesion Policy should be enlarged and all related operational programs should integrate action fields for intercultural as well as socio-cultural exchange (e. g. learning of neighbor's languages for children). In addition, future INTERREG programs should further enlarge the possibilities to exchange experience with territorial authorities outside the EU and beyond those covered by the actual neighborhood programs.

- Enlargement of a "culture of participation" when implementing EU Structural Funds programs including the encouragement of the integration of representatives of minorities or new citizens in Europe. This contributes for example to better implementation of projects – especially those targeted to the global market (e.g. elaboration of a common European marketing strategy for the commercialization of European Design in Asia).

### *CHALLENGE 2: Climate change & increased energy prices*

The larger concepts of sustainable development integrate the protection of the cultural and natural heritage in order to allow future generations to have access to these human achievements. In addition, especially recent trends and developments in architecture (like solar architecture) or design (like eco-design) can considerably contribute to a reduction of energy consume as well as the use of (raw) materials.

The future Cohesion Policy should therefore integrate and finance the following activities (list not complete):

- Development and implementation of (more & better) regional and local programs for solar architecture and eco-design including campaigns for the sensibilisation of citizens in Europe, exchange of good practice between territorial authorities and export of European eco-innovations in that field. These activities provide beside the ecological value an additional esthetical value contributing to convince new target groups.

- Protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in order to use those structures already available. A special focus should be given to optimizing the energetic balance of these buildings. In addition, the enhancement of the cultural heritage contributes to save guarding diversity in Europe with its positive impact in the global context.

- The link between tourism and culture has already been developed for a long time in the framework of the implementation of EU Regional Policy. Due to the climate change, tourism industry will face one of the major challenges in most parts of Europe in the close future. New products have to be developed taking into consideration this new situation. Culture and the creative sector can provide new and (some of them including low energy consume) products for local and international tourists (e. g. cultural events providing sustainable access to local traditions and contemporary festivals).

### *CHALLENGE 3: Emerging demographic imbalances and social tensions*

The cultural and creative sector's strength lies especially in the field of prolonging working lives (e. g. for cultural work mainly intellectual competences are needed, which can be more easily provided by elderly people than activities needing physical strength).

The new Cohesion Policy should therefore support the following activities (list not complete):

- Development, implementation and dissemination of results on pilot projects related to the creative sector's potentials for the sustainable integration of the elderly people. The results could be then transferred to other knowledge based economic sectors.

- All activities related to intercultural dialogue and the building of an open society will have to become a major topic in the next decennials.

- Integration of elderly men and women on all levels of the implementation of operational programs.

### *CHALLENGE 4: Key future skills that are essential for our citizens and what are the critical competencies that should be developed at the regional level to make regions globally competitive?*

STRATCULT fact sheet on "Culture & Social Cohesion" did already summarize the key future skills for the European citizens as well as the contribution of the cultural and creative sector: "A particularly important role is given to the enhancement of lifelong learning in order to adapt people to an evolving labour market. This is also directly linked with the development of a knowledge-based society." The High Level Group of social policy stated that new competences are needed like personal competences (networking, creativity, entrepreneurship) or theoretical competences (foreign languages, civic engagement and understanding for cultural diversity). "The cultural sector constitutes an excellent training field for these skills and competencies."

The future Cohesion Policy should therefore implement and finance the following activities (list not complete):

- All operational programs on regional level (Mainstream programs) should integrate activities on creativity and for the understanding of cultural diversity. Additional activities related to intercultural understanding should be integrated into the new generation of INTERREG programs (including the learning of languages from neighboring countries and regions).

- Projects financed in the framework of the new Cohesion Policy should provide evidence of regional or inter-regional networking. Additional indicators should measure the extent to which this new funding criteria is fulfilled (number of good practice identified, number of meeting with experienced project promoters in the field tackled by the project). These activities should

contribute to the development of a new "project culture" – preventing from the permanent "reinvention of the wheel" as well as from "closed circles" avoiding the fruitful exchange with other stakeholders (including those not having the same cultural background). Within the INTERREG IIC operation "STRATCULT" potential success indicators related to networking and participation have already been developed and published (STRATCULT-study results).

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Contribution and proposals based especially on the experienced made in the following projects and initiatives:

STRATCULT-INTERREG IIC project (2004-2007)

STRATCULT-REGIO.net (2007- ongoing)

CREATIVE REGIONS (application for 1<sup>st</sup> call – INTERREG IVC)

**STRATCULT-REGIO.net - A common strategy for co-operation in the field of Culture and EU Structural Funds within an interregional framework**

The STRATCULT strategy "STRATCULT-REGIO.net" aims to bring together territorial authorities from all EU countries on regional (NUTS II-) and local (NUTS III-) level focussing on culture as a development factor. The strategy is the final outcome of the INTERREG IIC "STRATCULT" project (2004-2007) confirming the need to feed EU debates and policies with the practical experiences at the grass-roots level. It is equally necessary to support the local and regional levels to make better use of good practice and available research.

<http://www.strategyforculture.net>