


Procedure file

Basic information	
COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic) 1996/2263(COS)	Procedure completed
Cohesion policy and culture: a contribution to employment	
Subject 4.15 Employment policy, action to combat unemployment 4.45 Common cultural area, cultural diversity	

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	REGI Regional Policy	UPE AZZOLINI Claudio	27/02/1997
Council of the European Union	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy	GUE/NGL RIBEIRO Sérgio	26/02/1997

Key events			
20/11/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0512	Summary
17/02/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
08/07/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
08/07/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0252/1997	
15/09/1997	Debate in Parliament		
16/09/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0431/1997	Summary
16/09/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
06/10/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2263(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 142; Rules of Procedure EP 050

Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	REGI/4/08470

Documentation gateway

Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0512	20/11/1996	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading	A4-0252/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0006	08/07/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading	T4-0431/1997 OJ C 304 06.10.1997, p. 0024-0040	16/09/1997	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0069/1997 OJ C 379 15.12.1997, p. 0021	17/09/1997	CofR	

Cohesion policy and culture: a contribution to employment

OBJECTIVE: The purpose of this Commission communication is to demonstrate the contribution of culture to employment. It identifies culture as a sector with great potential for job creation and analyses the existing links between culture and regional development, drawing particular attention to the role of the Structural Funds. **SUBSTANCE:** Culture is clearly one of Europe's most valuable economic assets but is greatly under-exploited. It is a major source of employment, particularly in the tourism sector, which accounts for 7% of jobs in the Union. Culture is also an increasingly decisive location factor for new investment at regional level as it enhances the image and attractiveness of a region. In addition, it can play a positive role in promoting social integration and thus contribute to the economic and social cohesion of society. The Commission points at the same time to the growing importance of culture as a vehicle for the economic development of society, particularly in the service sector. Lifestyle changes (eg. greater individual mobility) and increasing leisure time also create more demand for leisure activities, including culture. Together, these two trends tend to foster the economically viable aspects of the arts. In this context, culture can contribute significantly to employment beyond the mere preservation or exploitation of cultural heritage. The Community takes cultural aspects into account in its activities. The communication takes a number of examples to illustrate how the Union contributes to regional development by promoting cultural activities, particularly in the media and information technology sectors. Examples are: - a project developed by the city of Antwerp, with EU backing, to link the regions and cities of Uusimaa (Finland), Palermo and Tuscany (Italy), Oporto (Portugal) and Newcastle (UK) in order to create a virtual European museum on historical heritage via the Internet; - the "Cit  de la Musique" in Marseilles: a project which received Community funding as a pilot project under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation; etc. The level of funding allocated directly to culture under Structural Fund programmes between 1999 and 1993 is estimated in the communication at ECU 400 million. The Commission now proposes to take greater account of the job-creation potential of cultural activities in allocating assistance under the Structural Funds and to encourage activities with more of a cultural bias in its support of pilot projects under Article 10 of the ERDF Regulation. The Commission wishes to demonstrate above all in this communication report that the Structural Funds can play a key role but are still under-used at present in the cultural sector. The Structural Funds must be able to contribute to the preservation and development of the Community's assets and encourage investment in Europe's cultural products and industries. ?

Cohesion policy and culture: a contribution to employment

The role of culture and its effect on employment should be explicitly recognized in the future Treaty on European Union and taken into account in the revision of the Structural Funds in 1999. This was the main thrust of the report by Mr Claudio AZZOLINI (UPE, I) adopted by the committee on the European Commission communication entitled Cohesion Policy and Culture - a Contribution to Employment. In fact, with the necessary resources, culture could help to achieve economic development, strengthen economic and social cohesion and preserve the identity of the regions. In order to achieve this, an active programme was needed to train qualified staff both in the exploitation and the conservation of the cultural heritage and in the promotion of artistic, tourist and cultural activities. The report also proposed a harmonized reduced VAT rate on work to restore and maintain cultural monuments. Proper synergy between the various sources of financing, especially from the European Social Fund, should be used in order to increase efficiency. As far as regions in industrial decline (objective 2) and rural areas (objective 5) were concerned, the rapporteur called as a matter of priority for specific cultural projects to be implemented in order to meet environmental and other requirements. In conclusion, even though they approved the broad outlines of the Commission proposal, MEPs wished to go still further, mainly by: - taking account of a specific cultural line of approach (planning stage); - sharing experience gained (setting up technologically advanced libraries accessible to the public); - using new information technologies; - setting up a close partnership with all interested parties which emphasized the role of women as stakeholders in action to coordinate local entities.?

Cohesion policy and culture: a contribution to employment

In adopting the report by Mr Claudio AZZOLINI (UPE, I) on the role of culture as an integral part of economic development, Parliament considered that the role of culture and its effect on employment should be recognized in the Treaty and taken into account during the revision of the Structural Funds (1999). In terms of the financial aid allocated to cultural activities, it called for a balanced approach between the preservation of the cultural heritage and any other cultural field. It also suggested that, in order to increase efficiency, the different sources of financing should be well coordinated (especially those from the ESF). It recommended, in addition, the application of a harmonized, reduced VAT rate for work related to the restoration and maintenance of cultural monuments, with a view to encouraging projects relating to

monuments that were not state-owned. As regards the cultural heritage, it also believed that renovation work in the old quarters of historical towns should be carried out in a way that blended in with the commercial, tourist, social and cultural activities in the towns. Parliament stated that the restoration of the European cultural heritage should be integrated into a coordinated regional cultural strategy, linked to a policy of promoting high-quality tourism. It reasserted the importance of cooperation between the public and private sectors in this context, as well as the importance of local initiatives and programmes promoted by cultural associations. It also hoped to go further than did the Commission in its document in terms of: - the incorporation of a specific cultural dimension at the programming stage of projects financed by the Structural Funds; - action to inform, consult and mobilize all those involved at local and regional level by establishing a close partnership with all concerned; - sharing the experience gained (setting up innovative and technologically advanced libraries with a view to providing democratic access for all citizens of Europe); - use of the new information technology; - an integrated and coordinated approach incorporating all the Community policies involved (research, education, professional training, etc.); - a comprehensive explanatory campaign designed for those involved at local and regional level. Parliament also recalled that employment in the cultural sector accounted for 2.1% of all employment in the Community, and it called on the Member States to highlight in their statistics the proportion of jobs generated directly or indirectly by cultural activities. It also asked the Member States, as well as the Commission, to use all the means available to underline the importance of the cultural sector in cohesion policies. Examples of good practice by the Member States in this field should be made widely known and it was necessary to increase awareness of the sector (particularly through the financing of 'European cultural networks, possibly involving associated third countries). Finally, Parliament called for the drawing up of a Green Paper on the cultural industry as well as a framework programme for culture, grouping together all the Community's direct activities in the cultural sphere. ?