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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council
Subject: Facing crisis in Europe: investing in culture
- Information from the Italian delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Italian delegation on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under 'Any Other Business' for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 21 and 22 November 2016.

Facing crisis in Europe: investing in culture

- The European integration process has guaranteed 60 years of peace and built an unparalleled model founded on shared values, as well as on respecting existing differences. Culture has played a key role in this process as an expression of collective memory, identity and as a means of imagining and designing the future.
- Today, the European project is experiencing a crisis that is at a tipping point. We may begin to see the risks of new fragmentations, with dramatic effects especially for the new generations of European citizens. Against this background, it is imperative to invest in culture again, in order to relaunch a more open and diverse vision of Europe, respectful of our diversity as a source of inspiration and richness, and to tackle the resurgence of any kind of fear. The time has come to **give culture a central stage in the European Union's policies as a source of creation and transmission of knowledge.**
- The European cultural heritage and our culture are a powerful source of inspiration and knowledge; they are innovation catalysts based on a unique know-how. They generate jobs which cannot be delocalised, especially for young people. The cultural and creative sectors today employ, across the EU, more than 6.3 million people, amounting to 3% of the total employment in Europe. Despite the long economic crisis, these sectors have shown a high degree of resilience and have kept growing with significant positive social and economic impact.
- With this in mind, Italy proposes to work in the direction of **increasing the human and financial resources allocated by the European Commission to culture** and to invest in the potential of cultural and creative sectors in generating quality employment, in particular for the young generation, while contributing to strengthening social cohesion. Italy believes that investing in culture is guaranteed to boost economic growth.

- Italy invites to consider the insertion of a whole **new chapter on culture, and investment in culture, in the forthcoming review of the EFSI**, with the aim of strengthening investments in networks and infrastructure, while guaranteeing protection and full and unconditional access to and participation in the European cultural heritage especially for young people. It would be a clear and powerful sign of the strategic relevance the EU attaches to Culture, to our Cultural Heritage and to the cultural and creative sectors.
 - The Year 2018 has been declared a **European Year of Cultural Heritage**. Let's make of it an opportunity to boost the European Cultural Agenda by working, in all areas of action, towards an active involvement of our civil societies and young people.
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