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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development

Delegations will find attached the Resolution on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development, adopted by the Council at its 3730th meeting held on 21-22 November 2019. The Resolution will be forwarded for publication in the Official Journal.

Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL

TAKING NOTE of cultural policy cooperation in the European Union up to 2019: the Council has been implementing work plans for culture since 2002 and the European Commission has implemented the European Agenda for Culture (2007) and the New European Agenda for Culture (2018). The work of both the Council and the Commission has concentrated on promoting, in particular, cultural diversity as well as the economic, social and external relations aspects of culture. The cooperation in the framework of the work plans and the agendas has resulted in policy development in Member States, in particular through the open method of coordination (OMC), and in several concrete actions. Although these developments and actions have undoubtedly contributed to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), work specifically dedicated to delivering on those goals would be beneficial.

RECALLING the urgent need to step up measures to achieve sustainable development and the commitment by the new Commission to deliver on the SDGs, the objective of this Resolution is to strengthen culture's contribution to sustainable development by starting a process that will lead to an action plan on the cultural dimension of sustainable development at EU level. The action plan should ensure coherence among cultural and culture-related measures and approaches at the EU level and it would complement the work of Member States in this regard. In accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union, this Resolution does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve this objective.

CONSIDERING THAT

1. The climate crisis and mass extinction of species are existential threats;
2. Sustainability is and has to be an absolute priority for all;
3. The three dimensions of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) are integrated and indivisible and culture is an inseparable part of all three;
4. Coherent and comprehensive sustainable development strategies which are vigorously implemented are necessary to stop climate change and the extinction of species and to protect democracy, human rights, peace, security, and inclusive growth and prosperity, and to position the EU as the global leader in sustainable development;
5. Local, national, European and international policies and measures, including cultural measures, can help ensure a fair transition and encourage active citizenship and global responsibility;
6. Each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development, as recognised in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda;
7. EU-level action on sustainable development is, however, needed to support, coordinate and supplement action by the Member States in order to achieve maximum results;
8. In the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, inclusiveness and sustainability are key building blocks and the EU leaders commit to investing in culture and cultural heritage, which are at the heart of European identity;
9. The UN SDGs and their targets form the universally agreed framework for fostering sustainability;
10. The SDGs do not refer to all the policies and measures that can be used to achieve sustainability; however, all policies and measures, including cultural policies and measures, can – and should – be actively used to attain the SDGs;
11. Culture, as a sector of activity, can be understood as a self-sustaining pillar in sustainable development;

12. Culture, as a system of shared meanings within a community, has an impact on how sustainable development measures are assessed by that community and, subsequently, is a driver for sustainable development that can mediate between different environmental, social and economic concerns;
13. As the defining characteristic of humanity, cultures, in all their diversity and richness, embody values and are sources of identity, by virtue of which culture can have a transformative role as a creator of sustainability, promoting sustainable lifestyles and societies while enhancing quality of life;
14. Key European cultural policy objectives such as promoting identity, inclusion, participation, creativity and diversity are aligned with several SDGs and, therefore, cultural policies and measures contribute significantly to the attainment of the SDGs;
15. The contribution of cultural policies and measures to sustainability is not yet fully acknowledged, assessed and utilised, in spite of evidence of their contribution to sustainable development;
16. Cultural policies and measures should be systematically employed to complement the existing measures used to achieve sustainability in order to enhance the efficiency of sustainable development strategies both nationally and across the EU.

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT

1. The calls by the European Council and the Council for the Commission to elaborate a coherent and comprehensive EU implementation strategy for the 2030 Agenda that pertains to all internal and external policies;
2. The political background as established by documents listed in Annex II;

3. The important work carried out by UNESCO to harness culture's contribution to the 2030 Agenda, in particular by aligning the implementation of all cultural conventions with the SDGs, and the EU Member States' willingness to contribute to this work as well as to other UN-level processes on sustainable development.

ACKNOWLEDGE

1. That the inherent nature and intrinsic value of culture as well as the autonomy of the cultural sector and freedom of artistic expression are fundamental principles;
2. That many Member States are pursuing work to integrate cultural policies and perspectives into their national sustainable development strategies and approaches;
3. That the EU and the Member States operate an impressive number of cultural or culture-related policies and measures that directly or indirectly contribute to sustainability and the attainment of the SDGs;
4. The European Parliament Resolution of 6 July 2017 on EU action for sustainability and the Resolution of 14 March 2019 on the Annual strategic report on the implementation and delivery of the SDGs, in particular the request by the European Parliament for a partnership between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament and the call for an in-depth gap analysis of existing policies and their implementation in order to identify critical areas of synergies and incoherencies;
5. That there is significant potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of sustainable development policies and measures through better policy coherence for sustainable development;

6. The important work initiated in this field on a global level, within frameworks such as the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the UNESCO 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

CONFIRM

1. Our commitment to sustainability and dedication to the full and rapid implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

AGREE

1. To step up our efforts to promote the cultural dimension in sustainable development;
2. To pursue work to integrate cultural policies and perspectives into national sustainable development strategies;
3. To review cultural and culture-related policies and measures in order to maximise their contribution to sustainability;
4. To continue exchanging information and good practices, in the spirit of peer learning, on lessons learnt at the national level;
5. To consider including culture in Voluntary National Review Reports for the UN's High-level Political Forum;
6. To engage in participatory, multi-stakeholder and integrated governance of culture and sustainable development, including through support to bottom-up initiatives by cultural and creative sectors and active involvement of citizens, especially children and young people;

7. To work closely with other EU institutions as well as with other stakeholders to unlock culture's full potential for sustainability and, in particular, with the Commission in the development of the action plan on the cultural dimension of sustainable development;
8. To set up, as soon as possible, an Open Method of Coordination working group on the cultural dimension of sustainable development.

INVITE THE COMMISSION

1. To prepare, in coordination with Member States, an action plan on the cultural dimension of sustainable development at EU level and integrate the action plan in the EU's implementation strategy for the 2030 Agenda;

The action plan could:

- a. Ensure the delivery of SDGs in the area of culture, promote policy coherence for sustainable development, and harness culture's full potential to foster sustainability;
- b. Build on existing work carried out in the framework of the Council Work Plan for Culture, especially the work to be undertaken by a dedicated OMC group, and the New European Agenda for Culture;
- c. Ensure coherence of EU's cultural and culture-related measures and approaches to maximise the contribution of the cultural dimension to the delivery of the SDGs;
- d. Propose amendments to existing work or engage in new work on culture and sustainability, as appropriate;
- e. Apply the principle of evidence-based policy-making as appropriate.

Relevant policy documents

European Council

- *A New Strategic Agenda 2019–2024* (adopted by the European Council on 20 June 2019)
- European Council Conclusions of 18 October 2018 (EUCO 13/18)

Council Conclusions

- *Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action* (OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 6)
- *Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals across the world: The 2019 Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union and its Member States - Council Conclusions* (10997/19)
- *Towards an ever more sustainable Union by 2030 - Council Conclusions* (8286/19)
- *Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022* (OJ C 460, 21.12.2018, p. 12)
- *Council conclusions on the need to bring cultural heritage to the fore across policies in the EU* (OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 20)
- *Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations* (OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 38)
- *A sustainable European future: The EU response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Council Conclusions* (10370/17)
- *Council conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation* (OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 41)
- *Council conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe* (OJ C 183, 14.6.2014, p. 36)
- *Council conclusions on participatory governance of cultural heritage* (OJ C 463, 23.12.2014, p. 1)

- *Council conclusions on the contribution of culture to the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy* (OJ C 175, 15.6.2011, p. 1)
- *Council conclusions on architecture: culture's contribution to sustainable development* (OJ C 319, 13.12.2008, p. 13)

European Parliament resolutions

- *Annual strategic report on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* of 14 March 2019 (A8-0160/2019)
- *EU action for sustainability* of 6 July 2017 (A8-0239/2017)

Joint Communications from the European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

- *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations* (JOIN(2016) 29 final)

Communications from the Commission

- *Commission Communication on A New European Agenda for Culture* (COM (2018) 267 final)

Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission

- *The New European Consensus on Development - Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future* (OJ C 210, 30.6.2017, p. 1)

International conventions

- *Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development* (United Nations, 2015)
- *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* (UNESCO, 2005)
- *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO, 2003)

Reports and research

- *Global Assessment on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), May 2019
- *Assessment Reports* by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)