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CULTURAL COOPERATION WITH AFRICA

Abstract:

Cultural cooperation with Africa is possible by means of various instruments, namely the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and the Development and Cooperation Instrument (DCI). These bodies have already financed several projects. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in December 2007, tries to enhance a coherent and global approach towards the African Continent, including the field of cultural cooperation.

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Culture in the development instruments

The European Consensus on Development identifies culture as being part of the EC human development policy framework. This is a major change compared to the previous development policy framework. The Commission has adopted on 10 May 2007 a **Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World** which highlighted the role of culture including in Europe's external relations. In terms of financial support the EC should concentrate on the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, people's access to culture and foreign market access.

The main instrument of co-operation with African countries is the **European Development Fund**, based on the ACP-EU partnership Agreement (Cotonou Agreement). Article 27 of the Cotonou Agreement specifically addresses cultural development in ACP countries (of which 48 African countries participate), stating the role of promoting cultural values that enable intercultural dialogue, as well as developing and supporting cultural preservation.

Since the Cotonou Agreement came into force, the European Commission has supported two meetings of ACP cultural ministers, which took place in 2003 and 2006.

The European Development Fund is the main instrument for the European Union's effort to assist cultural development. The 9th EDF's (2000-2007) support for cultural development has been estimated at €40 million.

The 10th EDF has been in operation since 2007, and is due to end in 2013, and provides an overall budget of €22.6 billion.

To achieve these objectives in the ACP countries, the May 2007 Communication proposed to set up an EU-ACP Cultural Fund, which would support primarily the distribution, but also the production of ACP cultural goods and works of art (mainly audiovisual, written and multimedia works) both at local level and at the level of access to European markets.

The Northern African Countries benefit from the **European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument** (ENPI) which deals with the promotion of multicultural dialogue and cooperation to protect cultural heritage.

A further instrument is the **Development and Co-operation Instrument** (DCI) and in particular the "horizontal" chapter 'Investing in People' - Investing in Culture.

The Development Cooperation Instrument's 'Investing in People' offers development assistance under a thematic programme in the fields of health, knowledge and skills, culture, employment and social cohesion, gender equality, and finally youth and children. Specifically as regards cultural development,

Projects financed under the 9th EDF:

- Rehabilitation of coastal castles in Ghana, and the protection of rock-hewn churches of Ethiopia against erosion;
- Regular support to the FESPACO film festival in Ouagadougou (Burkina-Faso), the DAK'ART contemporary arts fair in Dakar (Senegal), the African Photography Encounters in Bamako (Mali), and the African Dance Festival in Antananarivo (Madagascar);
- The financing of support programmes that develop culture, including assistance artists, museums and local authorities in Benin, Burkina-Faso, Ghana, Mali and Senegal;
- Financial assistance in constructing, maintaining and renovating museums and arts schools, including Kenya's and Mali's national museums, and co-financing a traditional and contemporary African dance school in Senegal;
- Over a third of the Commission's financial support of cultural development in ACP countries comes from the Film and Television Support Programme, and the Cultural Industries Support Programme. €8 million of funds assisted creating and sustaining audiovisual instruments, including movies, TV series and animation films, as an expression of culture through the Film and Television Support Programme. The Cultural Industries Support Programme will help support cultural actors in ACP countries, and will assist in creating an ACP Cultural Observatory, which will offer a better perspective of how culture impacts regions within the ACP.

the 'Investing in People' is meant to offer a financial mechanism to bring people together while preserving diversity to exploit the economic potential in cultural activities. €50 million has been allocated for cultural development projects under the 'Investing in People' programme, with €4.3 million worth of projects being proposed in 2007, and €7 million in 2008. All developing countries are eligible for this funding.

Joint Africa-EU Strategy

Although many initiatives and projects taken on the basis of these instruments have been recognised as very positive (see table above), it becomes clear that there might be a lack of consistency and a missing strategic and global approach for cultural cooperation with the African continent.

An overall approach towards the African Continent was outlined at the Lisbon Summit. In December 2007 in Lisbon the EU and the African States adopted their **Joint Africa-EU Strategy**, which identifies culture as an objective for 2008-2010 of the 'Africa-EU Partnerships'. Located within the strategy on democratic governance and human rights, the strategy on strengthening cultural development calls on the African Union (including the Pan African Parliament and participating African countries), the European Union, UNESCO, actors within civil society in the fields of culture and sports, as well as universities, museums and research institutions to facilitate enhanced cooperation and preservation of cultural expressions and diversity in Africa. The Africa-EU Strategy will be financed by the existing instruments and contributions from the Member States.

The nomination of an AU commissioner in charge of cultural questions, currently Ms Bience Gawanas, will also contribute to reinforce the overall approach of cultural cooperation.

9. Africa and the EU will need to jointly address a number of key political challenges that are essential for the success of the new partnership, including: (...)

d) To encourage mutual understanding between the peoples and cultures of the two continents and promote better and more systematic use of our shared cultural and social heritage and our cultural diversity, as well as the economic wealth and opportunities that exist in Europe and Africa.

31. Africa and the EU stress the importance of having a better knowledge of African cultural goods and call for the exchange of information between EU and African countries on existing African cultural goods in the EU and Africa. Africa and the EU will continue to cooperate in the fight against the illicit trade in cultural goods, and facilitate and support the return of illegally acquired cultural goods to their countries of origin, as set out in the relevant UNESCO and UNIDROIT conventions and other commonly agreed legal instruments. Africa and the EU will also cooperate through the exchange of best practices and lessons learned, by raising public awareness and by providing capacity building in, and technical assistance to, African countries.

Cultural Cooperation

88. A stronger political partnership between Africa and the EU should be underpinned by an equally strong partnership on cultural cooperation. All expressions of culture, including arts, multilingualism and sports, should be taken into account.

89. Africa and the EU will therefore engage in an effective dialogue and cooperation on culture, promote cultural exchanges and twinning arrangements, and support capacity building and technical assistance on the protection and preservation of, and access to, cultural goods and sites in Europe and Africa. These efforts will strengthen the safeguarding of African World Heritage sites, as well as the diversity of cultural expressions within the framework of relevant UNESCO conventions. In this context, the two sides will launch an inventory of ongoing cooperation on cultural goods issues with a view to identify potential areas of further cooperation. Furthermore, Africa and the EU will also – in the context of their development cooperation – fully take into account local culture and contribute to increase the access of people to culture and to means of cultural expression.

Extract from "The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership - A Joint Africa-EU Strategy", Lisbon, December 2007.