

European Capitals of Culture

Initiated in 1985, the programme « European Capitals of Culture » (ECOC) has been so far illustrated by one or two cities. In 2010, 3 towns are concerned : Pecs (Hungary), Essen and Ruhr (Germany) and Istanbul (Turkey). Cork was European Capital of Culture in 2005. This programme raises a number of questions : to what extent, Cork inhabitants felt as European citizens in 2005 ? Did the ECOC label bring a long-term image building to the city ? Did it change the relationship between inhabitants and the arts and culture ?

The European Union and culture

Only in 1992, the European Union acquired a competence in the field of culture and the arts. (article 167 of the Lisbon Treaty). It is a very short article that we could read together. The reading of this article shows that the EU only has a complementary competence according to the Treaty. Member States are eager to protect their sovereignty in this field. Is this limitation negative or positive for cultural exchanges throughout Europe ?

The mobility of professionals of the Arts and Culture

The liberty of circulation throughout the European Union is one of the rights included in the Rome Treaty. Students, intellectuals and artists are among the most mobile throughout the EU. However they suffer the lack of coordination between member states legislations, as far as social and fiscal statutes are concerned. In the frame of the OCM (Open Coordination Method) launched for cultural affairs at the EU level, some member states administrations and representatives currently work together on the mobility issues in the cultural field. What could be done in this respect at the national and European level to facilitate artists's mobility and to foster cultural exchanges ?

Cultural initiatives and European citizenship

More than 100 cultural networks currently facilitate the circulation of information, people and professionals throughout the European Union. More than 6 000 festivals have international activities on the continent. The European Year on the Intercultural Dialogue 2008 has shown the commitment of many cultural associations in supporting all kinds of initiatives. For instance, the Arts Council of Ireland has launched a programme against xenophobia in the cultural field. How are these initiatives seen ? What suggestions could be made so that all the outstanding cultural European initiatives are more acknowledged by European citizens ? Can the arts and culture help building a European citizenship ? And how ?