The Ambiguities of Intercultural Dialogue: Critical Perspectives on the European Union's New Agenda for Culture

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Abstract

Throughout the last couple of decades various aspects of culture seems to affect the lives of European citizens more and more. As a reply the European Union (EU) in 2007 endorsed 'A European agenda for culture in a globalising world', evidently their first-ever strategy for culture. Zooming in on three areas – intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst to creativity, and culture as part of foreign relations – culture had for the first time been elevated into the premier league of Union politics. This article therefore investigates the background and content of the agenda further with particular emphasis on intercultural dialogue: What is the substance of this phrase and under which conditions is it likely that it will affect European culture as policy instrument? Unfortunately the EU demonstrates an indistinct understanding of the notion that cultural variation consists of both diversity and difference. These two concepts are related, but not synonymous, and furthermore essential to a) understand the multicultural Europe, and b) in deciding where the attempts of intercultural dialogue should end. As a consequence it is argued that the EU must revise their understanding of intercultural dialogue if their cultural policy should become something more profound than good intentions.

Keywords: European Union, cultural policy, globalization, intercultural dialogue

Introduction

If the European Union (EU) is facing any crisis, writes Political Scientist R Daniel Kelemen in a 2007 article, 'it is an existential crisis, driven more by anxiety and a panicked search for meaning than by any objective failings of the system' (Kelemen, 2007: 66). Having in mind the indifference Europeans sometimes demonstrate towards the EU, the recent clashes caused by the controversial Lisbon treaty, which changes the workings of the EU in a centralizing manner, could be a good thing since 'the collective dialogue concerning the objectives of the EU that this crisis has sparked is surely good for a Union that has long failed to inspire much interest or passion on the part of its citizens' (ibid.).

Thoughts like Kelemen's are attention-grabbing considering the fact that the EU has begun to cover new ground in an area they have avoided for a very long time: *culture*. In 2007, the Communication on a 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World' emerged. Dubbed their 'first-ever European strategy for culture', the Communication was published by the European Commission on 10 May, after having been approved by the College of Commissioners on the same day. Later, during their November 2007 meeting, the European Ministers of Culture adopted the Communication. Seeing the Communication together with the EU's Culture Programme 2007-2013 and MEDIA 2007, and being aware that the year 2008 was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID), there are thus several reasons to ask what renewed European self-reflection this fresh centre of attention could bring (for a broader discussion, see Næss, 2009).

First, to understand the Communication's areas of importance, I will outline the globalizing basics of its broader context. Secondly, I will present a brief history of EU's cultural policy, ending with a review of the general content of the Communication. Thirdly, I will discuss how the EU has implemented the phrase "intercultural dialogue" in the Communication. In contrast to the usual divide between the artistic ("creativity") vs. ethnic (social/community identities) construal of "culture", due to the EU's blend of the two perceptions in the Communication, the discussion revolves around the notion that cultural variation

consists of diversity and difference. Finally, I will exemplify how the dichotomy between diversity and difference can be revised.

The Global Context

With the document entitled 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World' one obvious reason for the new policy orientation of the EU emerges. Many are skeptical as to whether 'globalization' really is something new, or just an invented word for changes that have been around for centuries (Chanda, 2007). But the increased speed, intensity of exchange and mixing of people, goods, communication and information technologies, services and symbols documented by several researchers the last 20 years has forced a new kind of complexity to emerge (Eriksen, 2007). Four interlinked developments, by no means exclusive, can be outlined as constitutive of the new era.

First, the end of the Cold War and the Yugoslav wars, proving the recurrent power of radical identity politics and nationalism, are two examples of the way that cultural perspectives have become deeply interwoven with global politics (Neumann, 2006). In the United Nations Development Program's (UNDP) *Human Development Report 2004* it can be read that 'cultural liberty is a vital part of human development because being able to choose one's identity – who one is – without losing the respect of others or being excluded from other choices is important in leading a full life' (UNDP, 2004: 1). Nations that have adopted the 2005 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention on Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression are obliged to be aware that 'cultural diversity creates a rich and varied world' (UNESCO, 2005: 1).

Secondly, culture has become an economic keyword. The term *cultural economy* is indicative of a particular subsection of economic activity that is concerned with cultural products and activities, such as music, film, video games and fine art (Pratt, 2008: 44). Finding successful links between cultural creativity and commercial activities is not difficult. In 2006, Europe accounted for more than half of world exports of cultural goods and services (Anheier and Isar, 2007: 453). The very same year the EU's balance of external trade with the rest of the world in the main cultural goods showed a surplus of €3 billion (EuroStat, 2007: 103).

Thirdly, culture is no longer a concept exclusively bound to national territories or ethnic groups (Tilly, 1990). Ontologically and practically, culture is perhaps the best example of what, in the age of globalization and transnational networks constitute, Sociology Professor Manuel Castells calls 'the new social morphology of our societies', whereas 'the diffusion of networking logic substantially modifies the operation and outcomes in processes of production, experience, power, and culture' (Castells, 2000: 500). Castells also adds that while networking logic has existed in other times, new information technology provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure.

Fourthly, the level of public awareness concerning cultural exchange on a global scale has entered a new phase. Sociologists such as Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens claim that people throughout the 1990s became increasingly reflexive of what globalization is about and what it does to their lives in terms of cultural matters (Giddens, 2002; Beck, 2006). Consequently, transnational media and the power of globalized phenomena like chop suey, the atrocities on 11 September 2001, and frequent disputes about multiculturalism and national identities have again moved culture to the centre-stage of politics in both new and old ways.

Against this interlinked backdrop it is easy to see why the European Union and European citizens are more concerned about its role in cultural affairs than before. According to a 2007 Eurobarometer survey, a very large proportion of Europeans – a whopping 89 per cent – perceive a greater need for culture to be promoted at EU level. Similarly, 88 per cent felt that cultural exchanges are important, and they called on the European Union to facilitate cultural exchanges for Europeans, and so promote intercultural dialogue. Seventy-six per cent agreed with the sentiment that it is the existence of European cultural diversity that gives European culture its unique flavor and enhances its value.

The respondents were also asked which actors are best placed to launch initiatives that reinforce culture and cultural exchange in the EU. Looking at the average, national institutions scored 50 per cent, with the EU scoring 44 per cent. However, when looking only at the numbers relating to the first place, a surprising reversal of this pattern emerges: EU institutions are given as an answer by 28 per cent with

national governments mentioned by 25 per cent (Eurobarometer, 2007a: 55). All in all therefore, these numbers signify that the EU resonates much better with the European people when it comes to carefully implementing cultural policies than when enforcing remote treaty discussions upon them.

EU and Cultural Policy: A Brief History

In the 2002 film *L'Auberge espagnole* Xavier, a French economics student in his twenties, signs on to Erasmus – a European exchange programme – as part of a job that he is promised in Barcelona. Upon his arrival, Xavier is thrown into a cultural stew when he moves into an apartment full of international students, who join him in a series of life-initiating adventures. As Xavier says: 'I'm French, Spanish, English, Danish. I'm not one, but many. I'm like Europe, I'm all that. I'm a real mess.' The European Union, by contrast, has for various reasons traditionally had a slightly different take on European cultures. The EU has never messed around like Xavier, but rather faithfully stuck with the idea of Europe as being a well-defined mosaic of nations, where cultural politics has been left to Member States themselves.

In 1957, Belgium, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (which six years earlier had established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)), signed the Treaty of Rome, intended to build a European Economic Community (EEC) based on a wider common market covering a whole range of goods and services. While there was discussion of cultural aspects in the early attempts at creating a European community, the Treaty contains only two minor sentences referring to culture. Thus, prior to the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the EU according to Shore (2006: 12) 'had no legal basis for direct involvement in cultural affairs'.

The heightened status of culture began to reach the roundtables of international politics in the late 1960s. One moment of great importance was the first conference of European Ministers of Culture in Helsinki in 1972, organized by UNESCO. In his speech poignantly entitled 'The Age of Culture', the distinctively European-minded Jacques Duhamel (1924-77), then French Minister of Culture, began by saying that 'there is hardly a country in Europe without an awareness of a diffuse but crucially important phenomenon, concerning the place of culture as both an agent and an object of the great transformation affecting contemporary societies' (Duhamel, 2002: 83). This sounds very much like the political talk of today and even more so considering what Duhamel had to say about the basis for this view: 'only a broadened conception of culture can respond to the current situation where, in every country, almost all the population are now affected by cultural development and the sense that it is intimately bound up with economic development' (Duhamel, 2002: 85).

As far as I can tell, there is no direct evidence that, after Duhamel's speech, European politicians or EU officials actually went home and began pondering a European cultural policy. But it is reasonable to believe that the conference had some impact on the political climate in Europe. The European Council, after a meeting in Copenhagen, on 14 and 15 December 1973, published a Communiqué highlighting the importance of culture and cultural identity for further integration at the European level. It stated: 'the nine member countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on the European identity' (European Council, 1973). Although the Council did not elaborate on this intrepid statement it was a clear signal of where things were going. The historian Bo Stråth argues that the Council's turn towards concepts like identity and culture marked an important shift in the official discourse of European integration (Stråth, 2002).

Records of EU activity in the cultural policy arena during the 1970s indicate that Stråth is correct. According to the historical timeline presented by Nina Obuljen, in 1976, the European Commission (EC) submitted to the Parliament a document articulating for the first time the need for coordination of cultural activities. By the end of 1977, the EC published *Community Activities in the Cultural Sector* (European Commission, 1977) primarily dealing with regulations in favor of free circulation of goods and cultural exchange. In 1976 and 1979, the European Parliament adopted two resolutions inviting the EC to submit formal proposals for the treatment of culture at community level. In 1982, the first conference of the Ministers of Culture of the EC adopted the declaration, signed in 1983, which sought to explore the possibilities of cultural cooperation with special emphasis on audiovisual media (Obuljen, 2004: 129).

The European Council adopted between 1984 and 1986 several resolutions dealing with cultural matters, including European films, the mobility of artists and networking of libraries, among others. The

European Capitals of Culture was launched in 1985 by the Council of Ministers on the initiative of the then Greek Minister of Culture, Melina Mercouri. In 1987 the EC officially established the Council of Ministers of Culture and the ad hoc Commission for Cultural Issues. The Television without Frontiers Directive, which abolished most legal barriers to the transmission and reception of television signals between the Member States, was adopted two years later. Moreover, it imposed a controversial quota regime which was intended to aid European producers by curtailing the inflow of audiovisual material from overseas (Theiler, 1999).

In 1991 the first framework for the financial support of the audiovisual industry, MEDIA I, was established. In 1992 article 128, later article 151 of the Treaty of Amsterdam from 1997, was included in the Maastricht Treaty, representing the first time a treaty article explicitly related to culture. In 1995, the Erasmus programme was included in Socrates I, aimed at creating a European educational network from kindergarten age to university levels. In 1996 and 1997, the EU implemented three new programmes with financial support: Kaleidoscope (contemporary creation), Ariane (books and reading, including translation), and Raphael (cultural heritage). There was also a new framework programme called MEDIA II, to support the production and distribution of European audiovisual works.

As the millennium approached, the Culture 2000 programme was established, offering economic support to inter-European collaboration on cultural projects. With a five-year budget of €167 million, the purpose of Culture 2000 was to simplify action by using a single instrument for financing and programming cultural cooperation. The programme aimed to promote cultural diversity and dialogue. In 2003 the programme was extended unchanged for the years 2005 and 2006. After years of tough discussions on how to continue from Culture 2000, the EU finally settled for its Culture Programme 2007-2013.

The Ambiguities of Intercultural Dialogue

The 2007 Communication on a 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World' was founded on three common sets of objectives. The first is 'promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue'. Specific objectives are the promotion of the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of artistic expression beyond national borders (European Commission, 2007). Additionally, the year 2008 was heralded as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

Secondly, the agenda emphasizes the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy, the EU's development strategy for stimulating economic growth and creating new jobs. Cultural employment in 2005 was estimated at 4.9 million people in the "EU 27" (the current Member States of the EU) and accounted for 2.4 per cent of total employment (EuroStat, 2007: 51). Of particular interest is the objective of developing creative partnerships between the cultural sector and sectors like research and tourism.

Thirdly, the EU seeks to promote culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations. Closely following the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2005), the Community and the Member States have reaffirmed their commitment to developing a new and more proactive cultural role for Europe in its international relations and to integrating the cultural dimension as a vital element in Europe's dealings with partner countries and regions.

One of the major key phrases in the Communication is intercultural dialogue. In practice, a few specific policy aims have been identified to ensure the implementation of this phrase. These include using public and private resources to promote the **mobility of artists and professionals** in the cultural field, as well as their works. Intercultural competences can, according to the EU, be enhanced by developing cultural awareness and expression, by cultivating social and civic competences and by improving communication in foreign languages. The agenda will also support European cultural bodies and stimulate creativity by giving recognition to major European cultural achievements through European prizes in architecture, cultural heritage and music, as well as supporting the well-established European Capitals of Culture (European Commission, 2007).

Moreover, the EU designated the year 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) to raise the profile of such exchanges and to help establish a sustainable strategy. Due to their claim that

'Europe is becoming more culturally diverse', the EU states on EYID 2008's website that 'intercultural dialogue has an increasingly important role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship'. Following an open call for proposals, the European Commission therefore co-financed a small number of 'emblematic actions' on a European scale in order to raise awareness of the objectives of the EYID and underline the benefits of intercultural dialogue. A total of €2.4 million was dedicated to the co-financing of these actions. The Commission received almost 300 proposals competing for a small number of flagship project grants. These, in turn, came out of a variety of cultural expressions from all over Europe.

However, assuming that a precondition for making intercultural dialogue work is a clearer notion of how the dialogue is set, and under which circumstances dialogue is no longer an option, the Communication is less accurate on the meaning of intercultural dialogue. The assumption is based on the claim that any cultural policy in some way or another must embed the history and social characteristics of the region the policy is intended to serve. Paradoxically, as pointed out by Delanty and Rumford (2005: 60), the EU today is caught in the situation of having to define a European commonness that is universal but nevertheless distinct from the global. At the same time, the EU is committed to protect and even to enhance its internal diversity of cultures and social milieus.

Professor of Social Anthropology, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2006), highlights two fundamentally distinctive ways of dealing with, and identifying, cultural variation. *Diversity*, he concludes, is largely associated, by organizations like UNESCO and in the European debate on immigration and multiculturalism, with phenomena such as rituals, food, folktales, and arts and crafts. The organization of society, including its political structure and human rights, its gender roles and educational system, its labour market and its health service – in other words signifiers of *difference* – are kept separate from the notion of diversity. While there is considerable support for diversity in the public sphere, difference is increasingly seen as a main cause of social problems associated with immigrants and their descendants (Eriksen, 2006).

To illustrate the relevance of why the EU should take this dichotomy into consideration it can be useful to take a closer look at an essay by Professor Francis Fukuyama (2007). His point of departure is how, after the Second World War, European institutions like the EU have made a lot of effort to integrate the European nations. Being a product of elites, this effort has nevertheless failed to resonate among the European public. The outcome of intercultural dialogue imposed from above is thus not multicultural synchronization, but destabilizing ambivalence. As an alternative, Fukuyama proposes a two-phased solution. 'The first prong of the solution,' he writes, 'is to recognize that the old multicultural model has not been a big success in countries such as the Netherlands and Britain.' To continue the idea of cultural diversity as a common good needs more energetic efforts to integrate all sorts of people into a common liberal culture. To do this, Fukuyama argues, multiculturalism based on group recognition and group rights, must be abandoned.

The second prong of the solution, Fukuyama continues, 'concerns the expectations and behaviour of the majority communities in Europe'. To him, national identity continues to be understood and experienced in ways that sometimes make it a barrier for newcomers who do not share the ethnicity and religious background of the native-born. The construction of national identity, and the stories that a community tells about itself, need, according to Fukuyama 'to be reopened in the light of Europe's new diversity'. Here the majority communities in Europe have the chief responsibility. Fukuyama illustrates this give-and-take approach by making a reference to the cultural reorientation debate in Germany around the millennium shift. His main example is the idea of *Leitkultur* – 'core culture', or the notion that German citizenship entails certain obligations to observe standards of tolerance and equal respect (Tibi, 2000). In other words, the line between acceptable diversity and unacceptable difference should be settled by law, not feelings.

Such a turn suggested by Fukuyama sounds reasonable from a Habermasian point of view, but can it refine the EU's idea of "intercultural dialogue"? Compare the harsh and sometimes violent reaction to the publication of 12 satirical cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005 (see Kunelius et al., 2007), with the reaction to similar caricatures printed in French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in 2006. In the latter case, under the title 'Mahomet débordé par les intégristes' ('Muhammad overwhelmed by fundamentalists'), the front page showed a cartoon of a weeping Prophet Muhammad saying 'C'est dur d'être aimé par des cons' ('it's hard to be loved by

idiots'). The newspaper also reprinted the 12 cartoons from *Jyllands-Posten*. In addition to verbal protests, the Grand Mosque of Paris and the Union of French Islamic Organizations (UOIF) sued the magazine, claiming the edition included racist cartoons. When the case came to trial, Executive Editor Philippe Val was acquitted by the court. The court concluded that two of the three cartoons were not an attack on Islam, but on Muslim terrorists, and that the third cartoon with Muhammad with a bomb in his turban should be seen in the context of the magazine in question which attacked religious fundamentalism.

These cases have a number of parallels and contrasts relevant for the discussion on where diversity ends and difference begins. While *Jyllands-Posten* belongs on the political right, *Charlie Hebdo* is undoubtedly leftist. In the past, the magazine has made a mockery out of the Pope, Jesus, Buddha and other religious figures. Approval has been voiced across Europe of the Muslim organizations for using the tools of democracy to convey their discontent. Philippe Val himself, who called the trial victory a 'revenge' for the murder of Theo van Gogh and the cancellation of Mozart's *Idomeneo* by the Berlin Opera (Boe and Hervik, 2008: 225), can hardly be described as a right-wing islamophopbe; rather, Val is more of an anarchist. A collection of his writings has been published under a title that may be translated into English as *Good Screwings with bin Laden*. Alas, as conclusively stated by Carolina Boe and Peter Hervik (2008) who analyzed the two cases comparatively, simply taking the issue to court did not unravel the underlying conflict.

Towards a Shared Europe

As a result, Fukuyama's questions are more resolving than his answers. Nevertheless, he and Thomas Hylland Eriksen undeniably illuminate the need for a revision of the phrase intercultural dialogue. Both the Communication, and its broader policy context, confirms that the EU's view on diversity seems to be more about food and language than conflicting morals and divergent interpretations of freedom of speech. Faced with a culturally ever more complex Europe and challenges like the Muhammad caricatures and the reaction to them, it is clear that focus on intercultural dialogue is of little use if not equipped with edges sharp enough to make it work as a tool of diplomacy. Taking into consideration the claim from Spini (2003: 71) that Europe needs a shared memory rather than a common memory (while the latter is merely aggregating memory, a shared memory requires communication), the solution could however come from below.

The case in mind is the StrangerFestival – 'Europe's biggest event for young video makers and fans sharing stories'.[2] Held in July 2008 in Amsterdam it brought in more than 1000 videos and more than 250 participants. In the background paper for the festival it says that the impact at European level will be 'greater awareness of the diversity of values and norms amongst European youth' and 'tested methodologies on how visual culture functions as a tool for intercultural dialogue' (ECF, 2007). Furthermore, it is explicitly stated that the StrangerFestival does not assume Europe to be a multicultural carnival: 'Cultural diversity does not only bring positive learning and discoveries, it can also trigger prejudices, drum up support for populism and create fear and hostility. The Stranger project deals with today's Europe and its challenges in the only way**,** which works among young people: honestly, talking about things with their real names' (ECF, 2007).

In an interview, Tommi Laitio, the former Programme Coordinator of StrangerFestival, says that the festival grabs the heart of European cultural variety:

> *The goal of StrangerFestival was never to find harmony or to make all the participants friends, it was to demonstrate to the participants and the organizations the creative potential there is in young people in solving situations there and then. We consciously chose to start the interaction with personal testimonies, that is, videos entered in the competition, and then moved on focus on the physical encounter, making people work with each other. This way we recognized their personal accounts as valuable and started the interaction from the notion of self-definition.[3]*

One example of this is the winner of the InsideOut Award, 11-year-old Zarina Pashtova from Kabardino-Balkaria, a part of the Russian Federation located in the North Caucasus. This prize category was about the fine line between being included or excluded, about stereotypes and prejudices and ways to overcome them. In Zarina's video the author herself blow up a balloon against the background of various activities

she does together with other kids. 'The meaning of my video,' Zarina says, 'is that a human being's inner world, is extremely vulnerable, and you cannot leave people by themselves, because then they would get lost in their own solitude and forget about us. We have to value every human being.'[4]

As a result, more events like the StrangerFestival could shed new light on European identity construction between diversity and difference. Seeing identity as one's sense of self, European identity is a multifarious concept. Whether from the point of view of values, expressions or anthropological issues, the cultural divisions of Europe are substantial. Yet there are some common denominators. In *On the Road to a Cultural Policy for Europe* Croatian author Dubravka Ugrešić writes that 'an effective European cultural policy would promote shared values and solidarity. It would demonstrate that Europe values the work of its most creative citizens, the artistic community which is able to transcend borders.' Ugrešić also argues that 'by encouraging creative solidarity among its citizens, such a cultural policy would go a long way towards ensuring the participation of an informed civil society' (Ugrešić, 2005: 26-27).

In light of a 2006 study of European culture policies, Ugrešić's argument broadens. The authors show that the EU 27 evidenced a wide array of policy priorities. Supporting artists is a main objective of cultural policy in the Nordic countries, Austria, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The importance of art education and social cohesion is particularly prioritized in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, some Baltic countries, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands. The protection and development of heritage remains highly important for Italy, Greece, Cyprus and Malta. Other trends indicate that the economic effects of culture are becoming more of an objective in shaping cultural policies. This is strongly emphasized and implemented in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands (Klamer, Petrova and Mignosa, 2006).

Books like *Dynamics of National Identity and Transnational Identities in the Process of European Integration* and *Cultural Transitions in Southeastern Europe* (Švob-Đokić and Šmejkalova, 2004; Marushiakova, 2008; see also Mach and Pozarlik, 2008), furthermore show the necessity for a wide-ranging redefinition of the European landscape as known to many Europeans. After more than 15 years of transition from communism and various repressive regimes to capitalism and democratic liberalism, including the terrible Yugoslav wars and 'constant state of emergency' in the 1990s (Keulemans, 2005: 22), the Southeastern European region has changed radically. Especially notable, writes Švob-Đokić, 'is the gradual awakening and rationalization of the cultural situation. There is a strong tendency to fully identify with European cultural values. Redefinition of cultural identities and selection of true values is still under way' (Švob-Đokić, 2004: 3). The search for new national identities, while striving to tackle the forces of globalization, is a double-edged quest.

Rather than being 'trapped' in the overabundance of bureaucratically defined ideas of national culture and culture policy, often steeped in politics, artists would be better off being enabled to explore their artistic talent with help from more open-ended amenities. As an example, Ugrešić uses James Joyce, the Irish rebel writer who left his home, his church and his country, and even literary tradition to finish 'the biggest literary monument of European modernism' with the novel *Ulysses*. Now, the question is, she asks rhetorically, 'would our cultural managers be able to recognize his genius?' The real need for a European cultural policy thus lies in the fact that many great artists are not representative of national mainstream culture. Even though European cultural life in general relies heavily on state funding (for example, 94 per cent of Germany's overall arts budget of over €8 billion in 2007) (*Deutsche Welle*, 2008), transnational festivals of all sorts and shapes – from Rock am

Ring to StrangerFestival or Prague International Poetry Festival – are first-class examples of the fact that, in the age of globalization, people and artists need more space to manoeuvre culturally than the nation-state can provide for them.

Conclusion

This article has been an attempt to investigate the content the EU's new agenda for culture in a globalizing world with special emphasis on the phrase "intercultural dialogue". By establishing the Communication in a delimited global context and as the final achievement of a rather recent history of cultural politics in the EU, I have in this article discussed the substance of this phrase, and under which conditions is it likely that it will affect European culture as policy instrument. To conclude, as discussed with reference to the research done by Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Francis Fukuyama, the EU's use of "intercultural dialogue" lack precision when it comes to its applicability as both guiding concept and political instrument.

In contrast to the StrangerFestival, which allows Europeans to express their feelings on the verge between diversity and difference in a cultural landscape too complex to be contained in national categories, the EU pay almost no attention to how cultural variation is in need of finer analytical categories to be useful in policy documents. In light of how European cultures blend and retract as response to each other and other impulses from cultural globalization, the idea of intercultural dialogue in the EU's Communication is therefore believed to have a small role to play in fostering European identity and citizenship unless profound changes are done.

Notes

1 Thanks to the two anonymous reviewers from *Journal of Intercultural Communication* for valuable feedback.

2 www.strangerfestival.com/

3 Personal communication. See also Laitio 2007.

4 Pashtova is also an alumna of UNICEF peace and tolerance camp of 2007 and her thoughts can be read at www.unicef.org/russia/media_9359.html

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