



**Euronest Parliamentary Assembly  
Assemblée parlementaire Euronest  
Parlamentarische Versammlung Euronest  
Парламентская Ассамблея Евронест**

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## **RESOLUTION**

**on culture and intercultural dialogue in the context of the Eastern Partnership**

## **EURONEST PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY – RESOLUTION**

### **on culture and intercultural dialogue in the context of the Eastern Partnership**

*The EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly,*

- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Vilnius on 28 and 29 November 2013 entitled ‘Eastern Partnership: the way ahead’,
- having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit held in Warsaw on 29 and 30 September 2011,
- having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 23 October 2013 on ‘the European Neighbourhood Policy: towards a strengthening of the partnership. Position of the European Parliament on the 2012 reports’,
- having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU’s external actions,
- having regard to the European Parliament’s resolution of 14 January 2004 on ‘preserving and promoting cultural diversity: the role of the European regions and international organisations such as UNESCO and the Council of Europe’,
- having regard to the relevant working documents issued by the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education, such as the working document of 15 October 2013 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing the Creative Europe Programme and the working document of 16 October 2013 on Erasmus+,
- having regard to the draft opinion of 5 November 2013 of the European Parliament’s Committee on Culture and Education on the EU foreign policy in a world of cultural and religious differences,
- having regard to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,
- having regard to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention and the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflicts with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention,
- having regard to the Constituent Act of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of 3 May 2011,
- having regard to the Joint Communication of 15 May 2012 of the European Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy entitled ‘Eastern Partnership: A Roadmap to the Autumn 2013 Summit’,
- having regard to the resolution of 3 April 2012 of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly on strengthening civil society in the Eastern Partnership countries, including the question of cooperation between government and civil society and the question of the reforms aimed at empowering civil society,

- having regard to the 2014 resolution of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Parliamentary Assembly on protection of cultural property in the OSCE area,
- A. whereas the main richness of Europe is its cultural heritage, which must be preserved for the benefit of the people;
- B. whereas culture can and should be a facilitator for development, inclusion, innovation, democracy, human rights, education, conflict prevention and reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect;
- C. whereas cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue, which are the building blocks of cultural diplomacy, can serve as instruments for global peace and stability; whereas artists act as de facto cultural diplomats by exchanging and confronting different aesthetic, political, moral and social values;
- D. whereas cultural goods, including sports and youth activities, contribute to Europe's non-material development and economy and help to create a knowledge-based society, in particular through cultural industries and tourism;
- E. whereas new media and communication technologies, such as the internet, can act as instruments for cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue and for facilitating access to cultural content and education;
- F. whereas, just like biodiversity in nature, the diversity of European cultures is part of the living heritage that is vital to the sustainable development of our societies, and whereas it should therefore be safeguarded and protected against any risk of extinction;
- G. whereas cohesive multicultural societies that manage their diversity democratically and sustainably help to foster plurality are more open and better placed to form part of the richness that cultural diversity represents; whereas personal mobility in the shared European area, as well as both established and new migratory flows and exchanges of all kinds, foster such cultural diversity;
- H. whereas the objective of safeguarding and promoting each and every facet of the European Union's cultural heritage has been bolstered under the Lisbon Treaty;
- I. whereas cultural diversity is one of the fundamental principles of the European Union, as enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, which states that 'the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity';
- J. whereas preserving and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity within and between Member States is a fundamental value and, at the same time, one of the major tasks of the European Union; whereas the European Agenda for Culture defines the strategic objective of promoting culture as a vital element of the EU's international relations;
- K. whereas the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of Cultural Diversity allows Parties to the convention to take appropriate measures to protect cultural activities, goods and services in order to foster diversity in terms of cultural expression, both within the territory of the Parties and under international agreements;
- L. whereas all languages in Europe are equal in value and worth, form an integral part of

Europe's cultures and civilisations, and contribute to the enrichment of humanity; whereas respect for linguistic diversity makes a positive contribution to social cohesion by boosting mutual understanding, self-esteem and open-mindedness, and whereas linguistic diversity increases access to culture and contributes to creativity and to the acquisition of intercultural skills, as well as promoting cooperation between peoples and countries;

- M. whereas the notion of linguistic diversity in the EU and Eastern European partner countries embraces not only official languages, but also co-official languages, regional languages and languages that are not officially recognised within these states; whereas all languages reflect a mentality, a style of creativity and historical, social and cultural knowledge and skills, which are part of the richness and diversity of EU and Eastern European partner countries and form the basis of European identity; whereas the linguistic diversity within a country should therefore be seen as an asset instead of a burden and should be supported and promoted accordingly;
- N. whereas the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which has been ratified by 24 EU Member States and by all five Euronest Parliamentary Assembly partner countries, considers that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society;
- O. whereas the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, which has been ratified by 16 EU Member States and signed by four Eastern European partner countries, provides both a frame of reference for the protection of languages in danger of dying out and a means of protecting minorities;
- P. whereas some endangered European languages spoken by cross-border communities enjoy very different levels of protection depending on the state or region in which speakers of the language concerned live; whereas in some EU and Eastern European partner countries minority or regional languages exist which are endangered or dying out, but in other, neighbouring countries are official, majority languages;
- Q. whereas, given the urgent nature of the situation they are facing, special attention should be paid to those languages that are in danger of dying out, by recognising multiculturalism and multilingualism, implementing policy measures that combat existing prejudices against endangered languages and adopting an anti-assimilation approach;
- R. whereas teaching individuals in their mother tongue is the most effective way for them to learn; whereas if children are taught in their mother tongue from the start, and in parallel with an official language, they acquire a natural skill that they can use to learn more languages later on, and whereas linguistic pluralism is an advantage for young Europeans;
- S. whereas more than 300 different national minorities and linguistic communities live on the European continent;
- T. whereas the European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, and whereas these values are common to the

Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail (Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union); whereas these values are also part of the Eastern Partnership;

- U. whereas the Presidency Conclusions of the European Council held in Copenhagen on 21 and 22 June 1993 state that respect for and protection of minorities is a requirement for applying for membership of the European Union;
- V. whereas the national minority communities represent a special contribution to European culture;
- W. whereas it is crucially important for the future of the EU and the Eastern European partner countries, for their stability, security and prosperity and for good neighbourhood relations that the issue of national minorities, intercultural and interethnic relations be addressed; whereas majority and minority peoples share a mutual, yet asymmetric, political and moral responsibility for the integration, preservation and development of minority communities' identities, cultures and languages;
- X. whereas every individual should have the inalienable right to choose freely whether they belong to a national minority, and they should be put at no disadvantage as a result of that choice or their exercising the rights connected to that choice; whereas no EU Member State or Eastern European partner country may question the right of persons belonging to national minorities to choose freely an identity or multiple identities;
- Y. whereas it is the prime responsibility of the Member States to protect all cultural heritage of great importance against intentional destruction in the event of armed conflict;
- Z. whereas cultural heritage reflects a nations' history, traditions and national origins;

#### **Respect for cultural rights: key principles**

1. Stresses the importance of the cultural dimension and of intercultural dialogue for the full development of the Eastern Partnership;
2. Calls on the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries to honour the commitments that they have entered into by acceding to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, be it on their own territory or in connection with international agreements;
3. Calls on all EU Member States that have not done so to follow the example set by participating Euronest Parliamentary Assembly countries, which have all signed and ratified the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities; further calls on all EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries that have not yet done so to ratify and implement the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages;
4. Firmly believes that the rights of members of national minority communities must be guaranteed in order to create appropriate conditions for their development, and that such rights must be comparable with those enjoyed by members of majority communities in EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries; notes that, since national minorities do not have legal personality, they cannot be legal subjects and cannot therefore be party to contracts or covenants; underlines, however, that they must be the

object of collective protection and that their members must enjoy the capacity to act – either as individual legal subjects or within the framework of various entities with legal personality – in defence of the respective national minorities’ identity and cultural rights; stresses that these rights are not territorial or connected to territory and that their recognition and protection must be legally regulated both at the level of each nation state concerned and at transnational (international) level (Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation No 1735 (2006) on the concept of ‘nation’);

### **Cultural dialogue and cultural cooperation**

5. Emphasises both the need to adopt a comprehensive approach to cultural mediation and cultural exchange between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries and the role of culture in fostering democratisation, human rights, conflict prevention and peace-building;
6. Expresses its concern at the fact that protracted conflicts in the territory of Eastern European partner countries have not yet been resolved in an international, legal framework; stresses that the existing situation remains a serious obstacle to the democratic development of such regions and negatively affects exchanges and mutual benefit processes among Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries in the cultural sphere, among others;
7. Regrets the destruction of historical, religious and cultural monuments in the territories of Eastern European partner countries, and in particular where prolonged conflicts exist; calls on the EU Member States and EaP Member States to compel those countries that are in conflict to refrain from destroying monuments, replacing their original parts and illicitly importing, exporting or modifying them, as such actions decrease the cultural and historical value of such monuments;
8. Commends, in this context, mutual exchange initiatives, calls for further efforts aimed at fostering intercultural contact among people living in areas of protracted conflict and echoes the need to spread the ideas of peace and trust and to start a genuine process of reconciliation between the parties on either side of such conflicts;
9. Stresses the need to devise effective strategies for intercultural negotiations between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries, and considers that a multicultural approach to this task may facilitate the conclusion of beneficial agreements, thereby putting the EU and Eastern European partner countries on an equal footing;
10. States that cultural and educational exchanges between EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries can potentially strengthen civil society, foster democratisation and good governance, encourage the development of skills, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide building blocks for lasting cooperation;
11. Encourages the EaP countries to develop programmes for educational exchange, following the example of the EU Erasmus programme, which has proved to be a useful tool not only in the area of education, but also for intercultural exchange, resulting in better understanding of different cultures;
12. Encourages the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries to step up

their cooperation efforts in order to further improve national legal frameworks for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage and cultural assets, in accordance with national legislation and international legal frameworks, including measures to combat illegal trafficking in cultural assets and intellectual property; recalls, in this context, the efforts currently being made in the EU to recast the directive on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State (COM(2013)0311) (Vergiat report);

13. Calls for coherent strategies to foster youth mobility, the mobility of cultural professionals, artists and creators, cultural and educational development (including media and ICT literacy) and access to artistic expression in all its forms in the EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries; calls for an increased budget for these activities;
14. Encourages cooperation with practitioners, mediator organisations and civil society, in both EU Member States and Eastern European partner countries, in drawing up and implementing external cultural policies and in promoting cultural events and exchanges that improve mutual understanding whilst taking due account of European cultural and linguistic diversity;

#### **Access to EU programmes**

15. Underlines the European Union's pivotal role in strengthening intercultural dialogue with the Eastern European partner countries, with the aim of supporting solidarity and social and political cohesion; suggests efforts to promote confidence-building between, and the coexistence of, communities that have traditionally lived next to each other, by teaching and encouraging learning about one another's identity, languages, history, heritage and culture and regional identities, with a view to achieving better understanding of and greater respect for diversity;
16. Recalls the importance of the Cultural Cooperation Protocols and their added value in bilateral agreements with Eastern European partner countries; urges the Commission to present its strategy on future cultural cooperation protocols and to consult all stakeholders, including the European Parliament, the parliaments of the EaP countries and civil society, about this strategy;
17. Underlines the importance of cultural diplomacy and welcomes the Erasmus+ and Europe for Citizens programmes, which contribute to enhancing linguistic competence, cultural awareness, active citizenship and mutual understanding; stresses the importance of the Creative Europe programme in the cultural and creative sectors; underlines the importance of increased funding for these programmes;
18. Fully supports the increased involvement of EaP countries in the aforementioned programmes and encourages synergies and youth initiatives in the fields of education, multilingualism, sport, media, tourism, volunteering and training as integral parts of EU-EaP cooperation and dialogue;
19. Values all public-private cooperation in which civil society – including NGOs and European cultural networks – plays a strong role with regard to addressing the cultural aspects of EU relations with Eastern European partner countries;

20. Supports the increasing involvement of Eastern European partner countries in EU cultural, mobility, youth, education and training programmes and calls for young EaP participants in particular to be granted access to these programmes;
21. Calls for the creation of a cultural visa for nationals, artists and other professionals in the cultural field who are from Eastern European partner countries along the lines of the existing Scientific Visa package, which has been in force since 2005, in order to further facilitate mobility in the cultural sector beyond the ongoing visa facilitation talks; urges a timeframe to be set for introducing this cultural visa programme;
22. Instructs its Co-Presidents to forward this resolution to the President of the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the EEAS, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Eastern Partnership countries.