

Dear colleagues,

during the last year, EUNIC experienced a remarkable expansion and now includes 29 members in 25 EU countries: Since April 2007, the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture, the CGRI-DRI in Belgium, the Ministry for Culture in Cyprus, the Pierre Werner Institute in Luxembourg (as observer), the Romanian Cultural Institutes, the Slovak Cultural Institutes and the Slovenian Foreign Ministry as well as the Slovenian Ministry for Culture have joined EUNIC at the level of EUNIC heads. In addition, 14 new EUNIC national networks have been established officially in Austria (EUNIC Vienna), Bosnia-Herzegovina (the recently established cluster EUNIC Bosnia-Herzegovina), Croatia (EUNIC Hrvatska), Denmark (EUNIC Denmark), Great Britain (EUNIC London, as well as the recently established cluster EUNIC Scotland), Hungary (EUNIC Hungary), India (EUNIC India), Japan (EUNIC Japan), Poland (EUNIC Warszawa), Russia (EUNIC Russia), Serbia (EUNIC Belgrade), Slovenia (EUNIC Slovenia), Sweden (EUNIC Stockholm) and the USA (EUNIC New York). Clusters in Brasilia, Cyprus, South Africa, China and the Slovak Republic are in the process of being established and will start their activities soon.

Concerning concrete cluster work, the “ALTEREGO” project is our most important initiative and should be supported as much as possible in order to guarantee a successful outcome which will raise the visibility and high profile of EUNIC. Therefore, I encourage all partners of “ALTEREGO” in those 22 EU countries involved to participate in the preparatory meeting on 10/11 March in Brussels.

Unfortunately, the European Commission has decided not to consider any proposal for the European Literature Prize but to republish its call later this year (see attachment). We hope that the EUNIC Netherlands proposal will thus be accepted next time.

EUNIC will participate as foreseen in the Ljubljana Conference on cultural policies and practises in EU foreign relations on 14/15 May 2008. The EUNIC Presidency has commissioned a discussion paper “The CFSP in need of ‘softening’: practical steps towards a cultural dimension in EU foreign relations” which will be presented at the conference.

EUNIC has also become a network with excellent future perspectives as far as it concerns cooperation possibilities with the European Commission: Recently, EUNIC has been approached by the EC to examine cooperation opportunities in the framework of the “European Year for Intercultural Dialogue”, especially in the field of multilingualism (proposal to organise a public debate in September in Brussels).

On 24 April 2008, the EUNIC Brussels conference “Immigrant Literature – Writing in adopted languages” will take place in cooperation with the European Economic and Social Committee in Brussels, thus creating a platform for debate and exchange of views in regard to multilingualism as well as to the 2008 Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The conference features authors, experts and journalists. There will be podium discussions, public debates and readings by authors who have chosen to write in an adopted language for a variety of reasons. We are delighted that Commissioner Leonard Orban has accepted to take part at the EUNIC Conference and to deliver the welcoming speech.

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On 19 February 2008, a first exchange of views between the EC, the Slovenian Presidency and cultural institutions about the involvement of civil society in the implementation process of the “European agenda for culture in a globalizing world” took place in Brussels with participation of EUNIC Brussels on behalf of EUNIC. As foreseen in the “Cultural Agenda”, a structured dialogue between the EU, EU member states and the cultural sector will be set up by means of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Thus, the cultural sector is invited to participate directly in the decision making process on cultural policy. The opportunity to influence EU cultural policy actively is highly welcome by EUNIC which will seize this opportunity to bring in its ideas and proposals.

Yours sincerely,



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