

EUNIC Heads Meeting Copenhagen 2009

Statement of EUNIC Presidency 2008/2009

Outgoing EUNIC President H.G. Knopp

Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

First of all I would like to thank you for the trust you showed in me and my presidency over the last year. Thank you for your collegial support and your openness towards the initiatives the presidency team has set up.

Especially I want to express my gratitude to my colleagues within the presidency team, Finn Andersen and Horia-Roman Patapievic for their solidly united and open minded co-operation.

Important things have happened for EUNIC over the past year – internally as well as externally. At this point I just want to mention two examples:

- The new role of culture in the European Union's external relations
- The work of the EUNIC Task Force which was formed during the EUNIC Heads meeting last year in Berlin which has decisively impelled the Presidential Support Team and the issue of a legal status for our network.

In the following I would like to amplify on some issues brought forward during my presidency

The EUNIC Task Force

and start with the Task Force

The members met once in Paris and once in Munich. Intermittent they worked on the implementation of the meeting's results and kept you informed and updated.

The aim of the Task Force was to take up important objectives for the strengthening of our co-operation and in those lines work out ideas and suggestions.

The two most important results of the Task Force definitely are:

- The suggestion to set up a mobile **Presidential Support Team** which on one hand has to be mobile and flexible to avoid setting up new and undesirable bureaucratic structures. On the other hand it has to be able to professionalize our co-operation – especially with a view on the support of the smaller institutions which are taking over the EUNIC presidency – and award EUNIC with continuity and give it a memory. Goethe-Institut and British Council have already pledged funding for the new team over an initial period of two years. Wallonie-Bruxelles International also has

announced to support this initiative financially. The result has already been presented to you and Mr Volker Redder soon will give you more detailed information. As outgoing EUNIC President I wish the team all the best and a lot of success. I really hope that with all of your help this pilot project will become a long-term key element in our co-operation

- The second important step of procedure was the question whether EUNIC needs a **legal status**. Up till now only EUNIC Brussels is a legal entity. Our colleagues from the EUNIC cluster in Belgium have explored the objectives which advantages such a status will provide and what EUNIC has to do in order to gain a legal status. The casa South Africa – a big EUNIC project aiming at the World Soccer Cup could not be funded by the local EU delegation as the cluster hasn't had a legal status - has painfully shown that EUNIC needs a legal status not only for the co-operation within the network but also concerning the co-operation with international partners (as well as with the EU).

In my opinion the establishment of a EUNIC Task Force has paid off and proved itself as an effective tool to commonly work on difficult questions and topics in the long term. A thank you to all the Task Force members.

Conferences / Conversations

In the framework of my conversations as EUNIC President

- with Commissioner for Education and Training, Culture and Youth, Jan Figel,
- General Director „Culture and Education“ Mme Quintin,
- Mrs Ferrero Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood
- with civil society participants from South-East-Europe in Ljubljana
- or with Commissioner Leonard Orban at a conference on multilingualism in New Delhi

it has always become clear that EUNIC has become an important protagonist / factor in European cultural affairs and is seen as an important partner – not only a petitioner for project calls – of the Commission. This applies to the new role of culture in the EU's external relations as well as to the so called European „internal cultural policy“.

In the same extend as the question of European integration and identity gets more and more linked to the interest of cultural questions and aims of the European Union the national cultural institutions will and have to contribute their share.

EUNIC – meaning us as national cultural institutions which have added a European level to their co-operation – has an enormous reservoir of experience in cultural co-operation and intercultural dialogue and can rely upon a unique network of our own participants as well as partners.

Those are the things we have to build and rely upon and strengthen in the future – meaning: to take an important step away from the singular “accidental” towards a long-term strategic co-operation.

I want to refer to an experience I made at a conference in November last year. It was a panel discussion about European foreign cultural policy, organised by the French EU presidency which showed me something important: if we - all European national cultural institutions together -, do not show our engagement openly and transparently, if we do

not further develop this engagement with enough free space, with current and important themes and modern instruments, the work of our national cultural institutions will be weakened.

EUNIC Cluster

Our meetings with many colleagues from the EUNIC Clusters, may it be in Madrid, Bordeaux or just last week in Buenos Aires or at any other important meeting in Pretoria, New Delhi or Beijing, have explicitly shown me how important the local EUNIC cluster work is.

There the day-to-day co-operation of our institutes takes place, there projects and ideas are implemented and there new approaches of co-operation are created when clusters meet and develop arrangements for collaboration. In Pretoria and Zagreb for example (we will get back to this in more detail later) important discussions about aims, methods and themes of our collaboration were held. In future these initiatives need even stronger support and have to be better communicated.

The number of clusters has further increased. As of today we have a total number of 45 EUNIC cluster worldwide. Further establishments are planned. This means a new challenge for our network's co-ordination.

The last meeting between the Presidential Team and the Cluster Heads in Paris in November 2008 lived on one hand up to the aims of the meeting in terms of „Exchange and Discussion of common issues“ but on the other hand it became obvious that with a further increasement of EUNIC cluster we have to consider new ways of information exchange and discussion.

Strategies and Projects

We have to bring forward the work on common visions and aims. This has also been proposed by the present Cluster Presidents at the Paris meeting and the Zagreb cluster has already put this into practice concerning their local co-operation. On the other side we have to make up our minds about the proportionality of locally developed projects which are organised by clusters and trans-regional EUNIC initiatives.

The Goethe-Institut commissioned the foundation „Wissenschaft und Politik“ (Science and Politics) in Berlin with a study on possibilities of cultural cooperation with the BRIC States (Brazil, China, India, China). This study establishes the basis to commonly consider the possibilities of cultural cooperation with the BRIC States, based on the treaties between the EU and these countries. Furthermore we are closely looking into the conditions of cultural cooperation in the EU's East European neighbourhood countries.

The first big EUNIC project „Alter Ego“, implemented by clusters in 22 member states and one of seven flagship projects in the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) was successful. It also showed that EUNIC is able to „mobilise“ its network. But it has also shown the challenges and weaknesses of our co-operation in such a big project.

The second big EUNIC project, the 1st European-Chinese Cultural Dialogue unveiled new aspects of EUNIC's possibilities. EUNIC is able to organise a sustainable platform for a

vital cultural dialogue with partners outside of Europe and therewith create and strengthen the basis for further cultural relations between Europe and e.g. China. After the first successful conference in Beijing 2008, the 2nd European Chinese Cultural Dialogue will be continued in Copenhagen this year and – so we hope – will be enlarged to a 1st Asian-European Cultural Dialogue at the World Fair 2010 in Shanghai. This year, in Copenhagen, creative artists, artists and cultural experts will discuss vital themes as Cultural Industry, Cultural Diversity, Cultural Memory and State of the Arts.

In one of our meetings Mrs Ferrero Waldner, EU Commissioner for external relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, has especially welcomed the dialogue and suggested to expand the dialogue to other countries as e.g. Russia.

Except from the above mentioned projects, implemented by the Heads, projects – as I have just mentioned – are created within the clusters. There they are planned, developed and implemented. New York, for example, is working on the theme “European Islam” and in New Delhi the focus is on “multilingualism” and the consultation of local educational institutions concerning this theme. In five Russian cities the “IntraDance” dance festival takes place in 2009/2010, which has a total budget of 2 Mio Euros, the biggest part is financed by the EU.

Administration, Summer Academy and Final Remarks

Internally we have to face issues as questions of membership on Heads and Cluster level as well as EUNIC finances. Both are aspects of our co-operation which are as vital for our future collaboration as internal communication and co-ordination.

I want to point out the EUNIC event that is currently taking place in Budapest – the EUNIC Summer Academy for young employees of our institutions. Last year, at the beginning of the Goethe-Institut’s EUNIC presidency, it took place in Berlin and it was organised in co-operation with the local EUNIC Cluster Berlin. As today it took place at the same time as our Heads Meeting. For one week, young employees of our headquarters had the chance to get to know each other, their respective institutions and to discuss European issues of common interest. One outcome was also the creation of so called “short ways” between our headquarters and the participant’s request for the continuation and further development of the Summer Academy. This year – organised and financed by the Hungarian and Romanian Cultural Institute in co-operation with the local EUNIC Cluster – the Academy focuses on concrete aspects of our co-operation, in particular: projects. Tomorrow afternoon, via video conference, we will have the chance to get to know which ideas, considerations and suggestions our young colleagues have worked out in Budapest. I very much hope that someone amongst us here will continue the EUNIC Summer Academy 2010.

Finally I want to thank you cordially - also in the name of my colleague Volker Redder and his assistant Christine Klösch who have supported my EUNIC presidency at the Goethe-Institut - that you gave me, as EUNIC President, the opportunity to contribute to the development of EUNIC. It has been a pleasure and an exciting challenge.

I wish the new President and the whole new Presidency Team as well as the newly created Presidential Support Team all the best and every possible success with the continuation of our common tasks.

I look optimistically into the future and of course I am also ready to actively take part in our common work and face and handle the challenges and new possibilities together with you.

Thank you !