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ABSTRACT

The European cultural and creative sector contributes to economic growth, employment, innovation and social cohesion. Only in the European Union is responsible for more than seven million jobs. Thirty million worldwide. The potential of culture in terms of economic growth and job creation is indisputable. This is a perspective on culture that cannot be neglected. But this cannot be the only aspect of culture to be taken into account.

In January 2014, the European Commission launched Creative Europe, a programme that brings together the former Culture Programme and MEDIA programme, with a €1.46 bn budget for the 2014-2020 period (9% higher than its predecessors) and which will support Europe's cultural and creative sectors. It represents about 1% of the European Union budget. Yes, 1% .

This program includes several objectives, such as strengthening the common European heritage by supporting cross-border cultural projects, the funding of national projects for the promotion and film distribution, the improvement of competitiveness in the audiovisual sector and intercultural dialogue, among many others.

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It's a meager budget. It always is. All of us would like it to be bigger and we must join efforts for this to happen. But today I am concerned about the use we want to give to this budget.

Without questioning the right of each Member State to decide its own priorities in cultural investment, we must think the role of the European Union in this area. Where we invest and which projects should we support? What kind of culture we want for Europe and for its citizens?

We need a cultural policy that serves to structure and develop a true democratic culture that will not be based exclusively on a cultural "industry". The existence of "creative elements" is not enough for us to speak of culture.

There was a time when "culture" meant a set of disciplines that, according to a more or less consensus, defined a heritage of ideas, values, art and knowledge. I think that the success of a cultural policy will pass by leave a cultural paradigm subordinated to consumption and the politically correct.

Culture should not be a "permanent festival". While it may include it, the culture cannot be reduced to entertainment. At the risk of being accused of being elitist, which is not at all true, I would say I don't like the lack of ambition of contemporary culture. We have an obligation to do better.

And we should do this reflexion: today, this "new culture" that we want the most comprehensive and accessible as possible, runs out in the fun and entertain of its consumers. It is a "mass culture" or "Culture-World", as Lipovetsky said, which includes everything and where everything is equivalent, without any criterion to rank. A "mass culture" that hinders the development of independent individuals and able to judge for themselves.

Culture does not mean quantity or accessibility, but quality and sensitivity in the aesthetic sense. A solid culture is what underlies the defense and promotion of human rights, gender equality, democracy, the rule of law and, of course, intercultural dialogue. Promote mutual respect and dialogue is only possible if we are prepared to discuss and defend our points of view at the same time we manage to understand the interests and specific cultural contexts of this "other" that stands before us.

I understand culture as confrontation of ideas, as creativity and possibility of change. Culture will only make sense if it is committed to its time, if it keeps us lucid and awakes society from lethargy and indifference cultivated by this other "spectacle culture". Or else, we risk to have a world without people, only spectators.

In fact Culture, for me, means freedom. Or at least, the complaint for lack of it. And the political mission is the privileged space to ensure that freedom of being. Today we can say that the new policy requirement is not so much the question of equality but the right to recognition. The right of being recognized. And it makes all the difference. It is not enough to ask for equality. We want to be recognized.

In general, the desire to be recognized is a requirement for minorities. In the case of equality between men and women it's absurd because women represent 54% of the European population. And our role it's fundamental in a

new Europe. And when I said “our role” I mean men and women. Our fight is not against men. It’s against preconception and common sense.

I really believe that education plays a fundamental role in changing this state of affairs and is responsible for the development of both personality and the creation of ideas which dictate attitudes, actions and perspectives on the world, guiding us through life and shaping our career choices.

Essentially, power relations, discrimination and the guarantee of equality are defined through education. It can be used as a tool to form prejudices that lead to discrimination, or we can teach students to understand a multicultural and diverse society in which men and women are equal. School does not just serve to certify knowledge – it is also a fundamental institution for the promotion of equality.

Women lead the number of students who completed in 2014, higher education in the EU with 58% against 42% of men. It was found that men were just ahead of 72.8% in the engineering, manufacturing and construction, compared with 27.2% in women. In the sciences, mathematics and computer science also have the majority, but there are other areas where women are in greater numbers.

The percentage of female graduates was particularly high in Estonia and Poland, with 66% in both Member States. The less variation between men and women was observed in Germany with 51% of women and Ireland with 52%.

Women dominated in the field of education in all Member States, ranging from 62% in Luxembourg to 97% in Romania. Also in the health and well-being are the women to lead with 75% of the total EU, with percentages ranging from 90% in Estonia and 65% in Cyprus. That’s why we point out that while women represent the majority (60 %) of higher education graduates in the EU, their employment rate and promotion trajectories do not reflect their full potential.

In case of Culture we need measures to encourage the specific promotion of women in the fields of culture and the production and dissemination of artistic and intellectual works, combating the structural and widespread discrimination experienced by women in this sphere, fostering a balanced representation of women and men in public artistic and cultural activities, and providing for financial support and positive actions to correct situations of inequality in these areas.

We want Member States to ensure that the goals of education systems include education in respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and in equal rights and opportunities for women and men and that their systems’

quality principles include the elimination of the obstacles to genuine equality between women and men and the promotion of full equality between them.

I defend a holistic approach to formal and informal education in schools, and of a sensitive approach to the inclusion of human rights, human dignity, gender equality and the development of self-esteem and assertiveness which encourages autonomous and informed decision-making for girls and women, both at a personal and at a professional level.

Education for gender equality must complement civic education for democratic values, and be embedded in a rights-based gender-sensitive learning environment, where girls and boys can learn about their rights and experience democratic processes in schools and in informal learning environments by, for example, participating in the democratic governance of their schools and showing the importance of focusing particular attention on the principle of equality between women and men at all stages of education.

We have some dangerous data, for example: did you know that 13 million is the number of women who have suffered from domestic violence over 12 months? That 3.7 million is the number of women who have suffered from sexual violence over 12 months? That 1 in 20 women have been raped since the age of 15? That about 18% of women in the EU were the victims of persecution after 15 years of age?

Did you know half of all women in the EU (53%) avoid certain situations or places for fear of being attacked physically or sexually? Or that 30% of women who experienced sexual victimization by a former partner or by a current partner were also victims of sexual violence in childhood?

Did you know that 1 in 3 women (33% of the 62 million women in Europe) in all 28 EU member countries have suffered some form of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 (rape, mutilation, harassment, beating or death)? That 500,000 women and girls in the EU have been subjected to female genital mutilation (180,000 are at risk of the same abuse every year - United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Belgium)?

We know all this. And while we are here some women are rape and killed. And you know why? Because they are born women. And their body is used as a weapon of war. They killed women's body. They destroy their souls. In fact, what I want, what I really want, is to be able to be a woman without this being a defect, a symptom of weakness or bad luck of nature. Let me be who I am without fear of being born a woman.