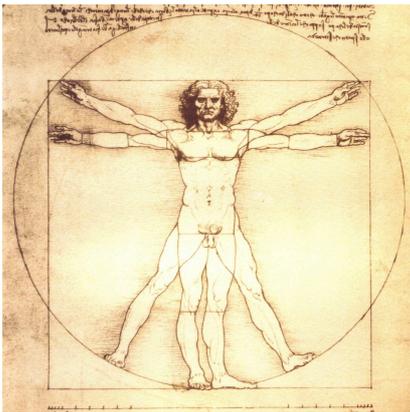


CULTURE IS A NECESSITY FOR a democratic, sustainable, beautiful Europe.

Introduction to the reflection papers
by Luca Bergamo, CAE's SECRETARY GENERAL

1. IT IS A TRANSITION, NOT A CRISIS



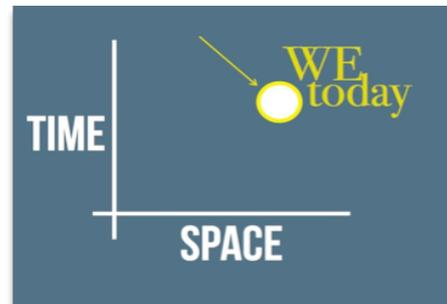
In November 1966 youngsters from all over Italy run in rescue of Florence's cultural treasures when the flooding threatened the city. It happened because they were used to look at their world with a larger span in time and space than what we are used to do now.

For too long we have surrendered to a short-term approach to work, politics and even to our private life.

For too long we have accepted that everything can be replaced by something newer, more efficient, shinier or smarter. Up to the point of being more and more incapable of nurturing our human relations.

The historical moment we are living in requires to think of broader perspectives, made of longer periods, wider spectrum of topics and of the world.

What does the picture of today look like, where are we in space and time? What is it that composes the framework within which cultural actors operate across Europe and what is the responsibility of the culture sector in it? What can be their contribution in helping this region of the world to recover from a turbulent season of its history?



These and others are the questions to which I believe honest answers should be given as basis for a robust advocacy strategy in the coming years.



In 1810 the life's average duration was below 40 years and the average income per year was between few hundreds and three thousands USD. The picture in 1810 was similar to what we could see when backtracking the situation to the first human societies. In less than 200 years the world population's life expectancy and average wealth have dramatically changed.

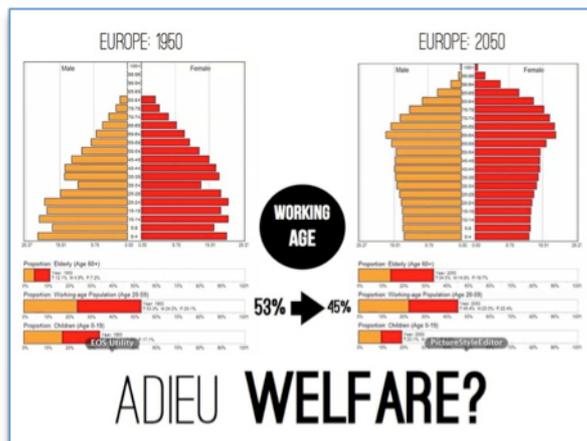
In the present time the differences between the world regions both in life expectancy and in average income seem wider although, looking more closely at the transformation that begun after the second world war, a clear convergence towards a longer life and average higher income can be traced (except for Africa – blue in the picture).

Parallel to this enormous transformation during which the average lifetime almost doubled, we have seen an impetuous growth of the world population and a substantial change in its distribution. Decisions taken by the Western world were shaping the whole world destinies, while its population was about 21,5% of the total in 1800 and about 30% in 1900. In 2050 this percentage will drop down to about or less then 10% as China and India share of the global trade will jump from 5% up to about 30%.



A period of almost continued domination lasting centuries that we can date back to the early XVI century is coming to an end. New emerging transitional players and powers challenge the role of the national States as regulators of our lives, as embodiment of citizens' sovereignty and as main vehicle to mitigating the effect of capitalistic economy on the inequality by redistributing the global wealth through what we call welfare.

Together with all that, Europe is called to deal with the impact of a changing population where the producers are now a shrinking minority. Moreover, long-term unemployment dramatically impacts on large groups of the younger generations that find growing challenges in building their future as well as perceiving themselves as full citizens in a society that largely connects social identities with being recognised as a producer.



Since 2008 European citizens are told that we're living in a crisis. We are told that to recover from the crisis we need to restore the conditions for an economic growth, on which a fair re-distribution of wealth can be

achieved. Although every year, since this so-called crisis started, we have been told that it will get better the following, reality has proven different.

What we are not told is that the basis on which we built our wealth no longer exists: people living longer, the natural resources are running out, and the jobs are becoming scarce. These conditions are not all reversible. There is no going back. From the identity crisis brought in through economic and social policies; to the crisis of ethics where scientific progresses increase our ability to influence our

destiny; to the environmental crisis where our abuse of the natural world ultimately threatens our survival, our crises are complex and interrelated.

The inconvenient truth is that we are not living a crisis but a TRANSITION which outcome is yet to be understood. On the contrary is clear that our society's fate is about to change in profundity and if we want to progress on the founding values of the European project such as democracy, human rights and rule of law, equal rights and opportunity for all, peace and prosperity, good education and standard of lives, ... we must strive for and bring to life a new vision and narrative for our futures.

This is Europe in the early part of the 21st Century, 500 millions people on a turning point. The project, and the peace it brought to the continent, are endangered by a growing distrust in its capacity to solve today's problems, which often depend more on the attitude of national decision/opinion-makers than on the existing and clear limits of the European Union institutions approach to problems.

For decades in Europe, the governments have been redistributing accumulated wealth to their citizens to mitigate inequalities, support them and better fulfil their needs through public services and a growing private consumption. Nevertheless, over the last two decades inequalities have kept growing in most European countries as the gap between the very few wealthy and the many of those standard of living slides progressively towards poverty, has been widening. Culture participation dropped down drastically since the so-called crisis begun.

New challenges stands in front of European governments: today they are called to ensure the individual and collective well-being of the citizens that is not only resulting from the redistribution of economic power but from ensuring the necessary condition for social cohesion, human rights fulfilment, personal and collective well-being.

2. CULTURE AND EUROPE: OUR MAJOR ASSET

The European Union is the first and the most ambitious attempt at establishing a new form of democracy where local and global dimensions can coexist. Building a common European identity is an extraordinary challenge and is now under attack. It requires ancient and well-rooted countries and nations to reduce their sovereignty not based on the hegemony of one language, culture or religion, but on the willingness to organise cultural life around an intrinsically complex identity.

Despite European integration has prioritised the economic dimension, Europe is first and foremost a cultural and political project and its future depends on cultural factors in the broad sense: on how different countries and nations can come together around a single political, social and economic project based on and respectful of cultural diversities, fulfilment of human right for the current and future generations, acknowledgment of the limits to growth and adoption of a sustainable way of living.

It is a possible future for which Europe has the needed assets, tangible and intangible (democracy, rights, rule of law, freedom of expression, welfare/solidarity, education, environmental sensitivity, public spaces, etc.) As important, Europe has developed a potentially suited culture to bring it to life.

Nevertheless, without a substantial shift toward prioritizing the need to build on our society's shared assets -tangible and intangible- and invest in adequate skills and mindsets, this opportunity will be missed.

That implies a complete new approach not only based on economic resources. An approach that requires investing first in the development of social capital, which ultimately depends on the cultural level of the citizens and on the quality of their everyday life experiences.

Enhancing people cultural capacities such as co-operation and creativity, openness to diversity and curiosity, lyricism as much as logical thinking is essential to develop a fully sustainable society where human rights, civil liberty and shared well-being can be achieved. Art and science powerfully contribute to the enhancement of such capacities as well as cultural life, education and research, architecture and civic engagement do from another angle.



It is time for all decision-makers as well as for all of us to be aware that a broader discourse around the **development of the societal cultural assets** is needed and concerns all and each of us as well as most of the policies that impact on the public sphere. It is time to better understand the impact of decision concerning a wide spectrum of policies on the societal cultural assets and capacities and to **assess**

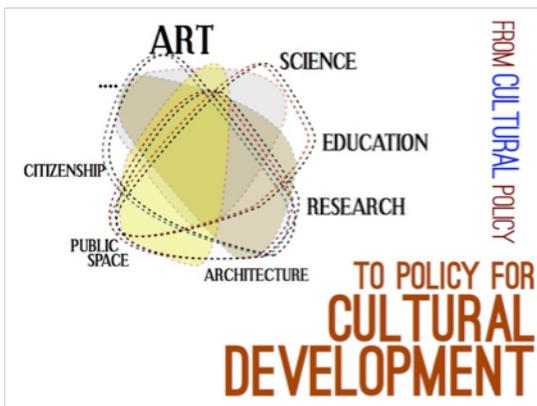
their cultural impact, similarly to what we already do while assessing the environmental impact of many choices. **THE LIFE WE LEAD HAS AN IMPACT ON THE ACCUMULATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL**

3. WHAT MUST BE DONE?

The launch of the European agenda for culture in 2007 marked a turning point in the way advocating for culture and arts had been viewed: since then, stakeholders (European Commission, Member States, civil society and European Parliament) have in fact been testing new cooperation methods and partnerships.

However today we live in a different world. In this period of profound transition, promoting the role of culture calls for inward changes including a new way of thinking about culture and its role in society. Culture enables evolution and human development and should be understood as one of the key components towards a new social contract and citizenship.

With regards to policymaking, the cultural world should therefore no longer identify a field of action limited on one hand by the artistic life and at the other hand



by the heritage protection. Cultural policy, intended as the set of measures concerning the protection and development of the artistic life and the heritage, should be replaced by something that we can call Policy for Cultural Development, based on a notion of culture that incorporates a large set of human activities through which individuals and communities forge and consolidate capacities and resources that

are essential to compose the social fabric.

For a quite long period most cultural networks and operators have worked to influence decision-makers by providing advice and valuable knowledge on most matters concerning the *Cultural policy*. Their analysis, debate and action often failed in focusing on their responsibility towards the society at large and therefore progressively disconnected the sector from the rest of the civil society.

Taking that into consideration, it should not be a surprise that the majority of citizens do not consider cultural policy as a priority, with all the related implications, in period of shrinking public spending.

In order to bring the notion that culture is a necessary element for development much closer to the core of decision-making and public debate, it is now time for the cultural operators and their representative organisations to:

- Put the role they have in fostering the societal cultural development at the core of their reflections and actions;
- Link up with citizens' organisations and the civil society at large in search of convergences (the impact of each on to the accumulation of social capital – as described above).

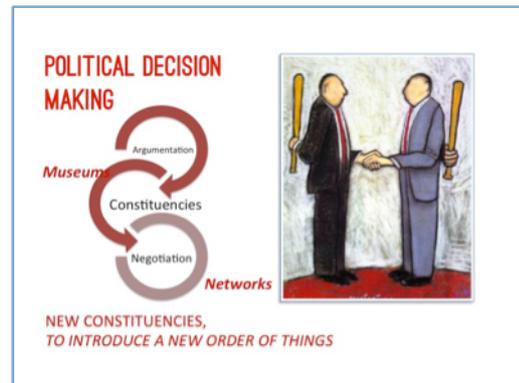
A new way of thinking culture is a necessity. Nevertheless, it will not suffice to reverse the tide of political and private decisions that have an impact in reducing the resources available to cultural activities.

Despite good will, political decision-making is still much more about balancing demands coming from different and often opposed constituencies than taking a rational long-term decision. Building the case is essential to attract new constituencies that would recognise themselves as such and this is the most important condition to impact on decision-making.

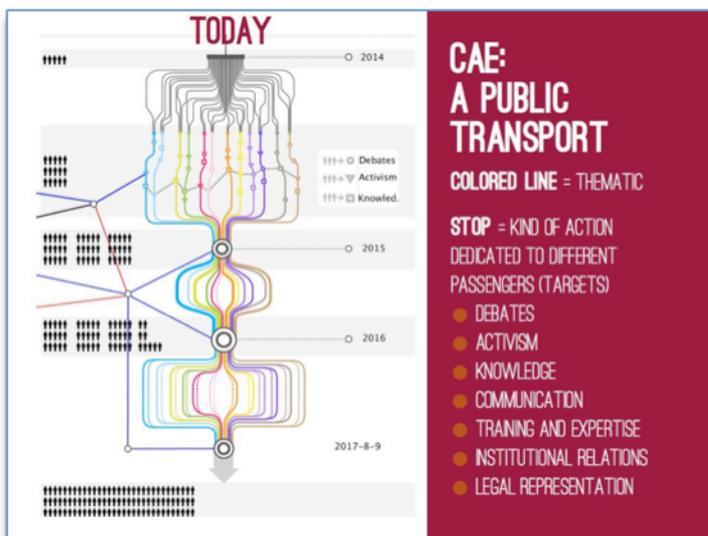
As said before the past years discourse over culture having been somehow 'self-centred', today's constituencies in favour of new and more effective policies to foster cultural development are still fragile.

A new way of thinking culture as a necessity paves the way to the surge for a Europe-wide movement for culture. Such a movement is more than ever a necessity to help our society stepping out from its depression. Once again, the people working in the field of culture, the artists, cultural organisations and their communities and representative organisations can play a major role in thinking and influencing the process.

From 2014 on CAE traditional advocacy will be integrated with a new large set of actions. Using a metaphor, CAE will also function as a 'public transport network' (PTN) to facilitate interconnections between organisation, to foster convergence



around common messages and providing support to convey them and to maximise our global impact on public opinion and decision making both at European and national levels.



The vehicles running on this PTN - both those managed by CAE and those managed autonomously by its members - will follow the 'lines'. It means that will tackle major societal issues

seen through the lens of culture (from learning to citizens rights, from welfare to human footprint on the planet etc.). Along the lines the vehicle's stops, consisting in activities such as debates, knowledge building and dissemination, training and expertise, activism and campaigning, communication initiatives and targeted projects, will provide organisations or individuals with the opportunity to hop-on and join whenever they feel ready to. At the same time CAE, acting as a facilitator, will provide the 'drivers and passengers' with the possibility of bridging the gaps

between the various fields of activity, building up passages between rough areas of interest so they can move forward together.

Paving the way for a new stronger partnership, giving space to experimentation whilst welcoming and integrating the newcomers, CAE aims at developing a participative common agenda with united actions expressed by a single voice, the voice of culture. The higher degree of coordination among those engaged in providing to culture the right role in the public sphere the more we'll contribute to multiply the impact of each and all of us, making the best use of the diversity that characterizes our sector.

The reflection papers provide some food for thought in relation to thematic that are relevant in the new way of thinking culture so needed. They also allow the identification of possible lines for CAE's work in the future. They are just an initial and a bit unsteady step towards the sharing and the participatory accumulation of knowledge in fields where broader alliance can be tested and consolidated. Our gratitude goes to all those that contribute to their development: Relais Culture Europe, On the Move, UCLG/Agenda 21, Gallup Europe, SMartBE and ISTAT.

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