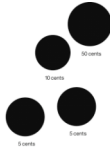


70!
Cents!
for!
Culture!



Campaign Summary

(to January 2006)

Following President Barroso's strong endorsement of culture as the binding element of an expanding EU at the *A Soul For Europe* conference in Berlin (26-27.11.2004), the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) recruited the support of key members of the European Parliament's Culture Committee, from across the political spectrum, for a campaign to increase the EU's budget for culture from roughly 7 cents per citizen per year to 70 cents.

MEPs from the Culture Committee sent a joint letter supporting 70 cents to President Barroso and Prime Minister Juncker (then President-in-office of the Council of Ministers of the European Union). At the campaign launch in the European Parliament in March 2005, political leaders of the EP, Commissioner for Culture Ján Figel' and representatives of the arts, business and cultural NGOs endorsed the campaign.

Throughout the first half of 2005, EFAH and its partners worked hard with MEPs to get the aims of the campaign reflected in the European Parliament's negotiating position towards the Council on the *Financial Perspectives*, the EU's budgetary framework for 2007-2013. The campaign analysed and commented on each step and each public document along the way and mobilized the cultural sector to engage directly with the decision-makers. The Böge report, the Parliament's position on the Financial Perspectives, which was adopted on 8th June 2005 included a specific recommendation to increase the budget for the Cultural framework programme from 408 million over the 7-year period to 500 million Euros. This would represent a gain of about 10 cents and leave cultural spending at about 17 cents per citizen per year, more than doubling current expenditure. This was the only budget line outside security issues to see such a proposed increase.

The campaign was taken further in the first legislative reading of the *Culture 2007* programme. Under the leadership of rapporteur Vasco Graca Moura (Conservative Member for Portugal), the Parliament voted a programme budget of 600 million Euros, which would amount to 19 cents per citizen per year, i.e. a gain of a further 2 cents. The final adoption of an enhanced programme for Culture 2007 hinges on the approval of the overall EU budget for 2007-2013 by the various national governments.

However, their negotiations failed spectacularly at the end of the Luxembourg presidency (July 2005) and were not taken up again until well into the subsequent British EU Presidency. For a few months therefore EFAH and ECF could only monitor the situation and keep the campaign flag flying. The next peg for advocacy action was the Council meeting of 15/16th December. EFAH and ECF sent an open letter to all EU Heads of State or Government appealing to them to reject the British proposal for the relevant budget heading.

The Council, however, adopted a position, which represents a significant step backwards – a budget for cultural cooperation even lower than the current one (i.e. less than 34 million Euro per year).

In January 2006 the play returned to the stage of the European Parliament: It voted to reject the December Council position with a view to negotiating a deal with the Council closer to its own position of June 2005. The focus of the campaign thus became to ensure that the MEPs will also put up a fight for the culture budget amongst the many other issues at stake.

The EP-Council negotiations are due to reach their proper 'doing business' phase towards the end of February. Optimists consider a conclusion possible by the end of March. Others look to June.