

José Manuel Barroso
President of the European Commission

Brussels,
BARROSO (2012) 467109
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Dear Mr d'Almeida,

Thank you for your letter of 16 April, co-signed by thirteen other professionals, on the role that culture can play in development co-operation. Allow me to assure you that the Commission fully acknowledges the importance of culture as a key instrument for human development and at the core of social inclusiveness and economic growth.

Overall, EU funding for culture under EU development cooperation was more than €200 million for the period 2007-2013, an increase of more than 100% compared to previous allocations.

Allow me to highlight some actions launched by the Commission in the past few years, some of which were inspired by the 2009 colloquium and Brussels declaration "Culture and Creativity, vectors of development".

As party to the UNESCO Convention on the diversity of cultural expressions, the Commission launched an expert facility in the governance of culture in 2010, which will benefit more than 10 developing countries.

Protocols or agreements on cultural cooperation have been concluded with the Cariforum countries, Central America, Peru and Colombia. Negotiations are underway with Central African countries.

The Commission has also continued to provide strong support to the cultural and creative sectors in developing countries across the globe, facilitating the development of cultural industries, helping to preserve diverse traditions, and providing assistance and vocational training for culture professionals.

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Mr Francisco D'ALMEIDA
Culture and Development, France

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New calls for proposals have been launched under the Investing in People thematic programme (DCI instrument) and the ACP Culture+, Euromed Heritage, Euromed Audiovisual and Eastern Partnership Culture regional programmes (EDF and ENPI instruments respectively). Moreover, strong support for activities in the cultural sector at bilateral level is in place or being launched in several countries, including Benin, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Algeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

I understand the 2011 Communication "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change" raised some questions among cultural actors and organizations as to whether support for cultural diversity and expressions will still be part of our programmes as of 2014. Allow me to reassure you that this will of course remain the case. While the Agenda for Change does call for an increased strategic focus in EU development cooperation to achieve better impacts on the ground, we will certainly continue to promote culture as an essential vector in achieving our shared objectives in the area of human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance.

Close cooperation with civil society during the process is an important factor, and we see culture as an essential asset for dialogue, social inclusion and social stability; for the true empowerment of youth and women; and for the promotion of democracy and human rights. We intend, for example, to support future cultural projects to prevent discrimination, facilitate democratic transition and to promote reconciliation and conflict resolution. As already mentioned, the cultural sector has benefitted from increased funding levels, and new calls for proposals into these directions were recently launched.

Finally, we will continue to allocate the necessary human resources within the Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation, where two members of staff are fully dedicated to our policy of culture for development, in collaboration with colleagues in other Commission departments and in the field. To reinforce capacities in this area, we will continue to organise training seminars for EU delegations on culture for development, the first of which was held earlier this year.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'J' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves slightly upwards at the end.

José Manuel BARROSO