From ‘European Cultural Heritage’ to ‘Cultural Diversity’?
The Changing Core Values of European Cultural Policy

Oriane Calligaro, Maastricht University

Introduction

Since its very first steps in 1974, the action of the European Community (EC) in the cultural field has been closely related to the promotion of European identity and values. The emergence of this Community action in favour of European culture was explicitly described at the time as a reaction to a context of crisis. The economic crisis of the 1970s was undermining the process of European integration and the strengthening of cultural and ‘human’ dimensions in the Community appeared as a means of re-launching European unification. As Cris Shore has underlined, the promoters of this cultural Europe generally adopted a federalist approach to integration, considering that a body of pro-European citizens should be at the basis of the Community and not merely commercial agreements between States.1

The European Parliament (EP) proposed the vague concept of European cultural heritage as core value of this ‘humanization’ enterprise. For several decades this concept remained the backbone of the emerging European cultural policy.2 The safeguarding of cultural diversity was already presented as part of the promotion of European heritage. However, its significance and definition changed over time. Until the 1990s, it mainly referred to diversity of national cultures within a European cultural unity; the category has been then incrementally extended to encompass diversity within the European societies due to migratory flows and multi-ethnic populations. In the last decade, diversity was progressively placed at the core of the European Union (EU) cultural policy, incrementally supplanting European heritage as pivotal value of this policy.

2 For a detailed study of this policy and of the concept of European cultural heritage, see Calligaro, Oriane (forthcoming 2013), Negotiating Europe: The EU Promotion of Europeanness since the 1950s, New York: Palgrave

This paper aims to analyse this deep evolution over the long term. First, it will describe the introduction and problematic definition of European heritage in the Community’s agenda. The study reveals a political use of European cultural heritage, with strong teleological and legitimizing functions. This is what the anthropologist Cris Shore criticized as an instrumentalization of culture in a top-down process, which he describes as ‘Europeanization of Europe’ diffusing from above an elitist approach to culture. However the paper will subsequently show that the concept of heritage did not remain the vehicle for a strictly centralized European cultural policy as Shore argued. It quickly became an instrument in the hands of different actors who decided to promote their own vision of Europeanness, especially within EP and at the intergovernmental level. While remaining a symbol of European high culture in many initiatives, the concept of heritage was mobilized to defend local cultural expressions, but also local social and economic interests against the homogenizing effects of European integration. This use of heritage is not necessarily oriented against the European integration process; sustained and sometimes initiated by the EU, it can also provide a way to develop a model of integration from below.

The paper will then focus on the increasing importance attributed to cultural diversity and to ‘intercultural dialogue’ as operating mode to manage this diversity. I will present the first hypotheses of a research project that sets out to study the shift in the conceptual background of EU cultural policy. This shift from ‘European cultural heritage’ to ‘cultural diversity’ as core value reveals a crucial evolution in the EU’s self-representation and in the perception of the conditions for cohesion between European citizens. Both the approach to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue evolved in the EU discourse and policies. Diversity was first conceived as the diversity of national cultures within a common European heritage. During the 1980s, mainly under the pressure of the EP, minority languages and cultures were included in this European diversity. Since the early 2000s, the concept was further expanded to encompass the variegated cultures produced by transnational immigration. Likewise, intercultural dialogue underwent a spectacular transformation in the EU official discourse and cultural initiatives. It was introduced in 1995 as a tool to facilitate communication with the Mediterranean neighbours, perceived as geographical and cultural Others. A decade later, the European Commission recognised the necessity of an internal intercultural dialogue taking into account the coexistence within its member states of diverse – and not strictly European – cultural heritages. This evolution has

to be placed in the context of a broader European cultural policy, beyond the sole EU institutions since the Council of Europe (CoE) played a crucial role in the introduction and conceptualization of intercultural dialogue since the mid-1990s.

The growing attention attributed in more recent EU cultural programmes to diversity does mean that a reference to a common and often essentialist European heritage is abandoned. This produces an increasingly ambivalent if not paradoxical official discourse on European cultural identity with the problematic definition of who the Other is and where the boundaries of Europe stand.

The paper is based on the close examination of EP debates and resolutions, of European officials’ discourses and of EU and CoE official documents, often related to their cultural programmes.

**European cultural heritage as remedy for the crisis?**

The concept appeared for the first time in the EU arena in a Resolution adopted by the EP on 1974 on the safeguarding of European cultural heritage. On 13 May 1974, the rapporteur Lady Elles presented her Report to the EP. The feeling that the Community was going through a profound crisis permeated the debates of this EP sitting. Lady Elles started her speech with a grim observation: ‘The crisis through which Europe and Europeans are now passing is not only an economic and material but also a cultural crisis’. In her view, this general crisis of values in Europe meant that it was necessary to give the European project meaning, a meaning that would go ‘beyond the economic, financial and material considerations’. In a subsequent intervention, the Socialist MEP Cifarelli expressed a similar idea:

> The Community is quite justifiably plunged in pessimism. The action could be a ray of light, a ray of hope in our gloom. If the Commission does something in [the cultural field], it will earn much more gratitude from Europe than it will by harmonizing provisions on

---


6 Ibid. p. 9.
packaging, by invoking the Treaty to introduce new braking system for cars or by laying
down time-limits for vehicle patents.\footnote{Ibid. p. 12.}

At the time of this debate, in 1974, hopes for a new source of momentum for European integration inspired by The Hague Summit of 1969 and by the development of monetary cooperation had vanished. The economic uncertainties provoked by the end of the Bretton Woods System and the international oil and monetary crises loomed large in the MEPs’ interventions. Their concern over the lack of ‘meaning’ in the integration process reflected a perception of a growing lack of interest in and support for the EC on the part of public opinion. Indeed, certain scholars argue that from the end of the 1970s support for European integration significantly decreased due to the economic crisis and the internal impact of the first enlargement of the EC.\footnote{See Handley, David, ‘Public Opinion and European Integration: the Crisis of the 1970s’, in European Journal of Political Research, 4, 1981, pp. 335-364.} The EU institutions quickly became aware of this worrying phenomenon. The creation of the Eurobarometer surveys in 1972 by the European Commission can be interpreted as a sign of growing concern regarding the relation of the European peoples to the EC.\footnote{See Kohli, Martin, ‘The Battlegrounds of European Identity’, in European Societies, 2(2), 2000, pp. 113-137. here p.122.}

In this context of doubt concerning economic prosperity and for the need new references, Lady Elles affirmed in her presentation of May 1974 that many Europeans had rejected ‘traditional cultural and spiritual values’ and described ‘a vacuum which neither the European Communities nor the Member States [\textit{had}] so far been able to fill’.\footnote{EP: Debates of the European Parliament, Sitting of 13 May 1974 ‘European cultural heritage’, p. 7.} François Hartog remarks that heritage can function as recourse in times of crisis, one way of experiencing ruptures.\footnote{Hartog, François, ‘Time and Heritage’, in Museum International, 57, 2005, pp. 7-18, here p.15.} This is exactly the function that the Elles’ Report assigned to European heritage, considered as a possible basis for a renewed solidarity among Europeans. From this perspective, European heritage was given an almost spiritual dimension.

In view of the intention expressed of the Heads of State or government in the Declaration of Copenhagen in December 1973 to create a European identity, there can be no firmer foundation than the wealth that transcends all political parties, all national frontiers and all
centuries, a cultural heritage which brings a deeper value and meaning to our daily lives beyond the economic, financial and material considerations which so beset us.\(^{12}\)

Indeed, in their definition of European identity, the Heads of States or Governments of the Nine included European heritage.\(^{13}\)

By putting the crisis of values and the search for a European identity at the centre of her reflections, Lady Elles justified what she described as an urgent need for symbolic references for the Community. In her argumentation, the success of the whole European integration process depended on the capacity of the EC to generate this symbolic dimension. This view overwhelmingly highlighted the need for strong a commitment from the European Commission.\(^{14}\)

In the EP debates, one can observe a strong association between culture, heritage and identity, with European cultural heritage conceived as a means of epitomizing European identity. The use of heritage as a core value for a European community in formation should be viewed against the more general context of that which has been referred to as a ‘memory boom’ or ‘heritage boom’. Pierre Nora has argued that with the weakening of the national mystique, the nation no longer confers continuity to the past nor a *telos* in the future. In period of crisis, characterized by anxiety about the present and uncertainty about the meaning of the future, there emerged a need for a ‘complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past’.\(^{15}\) In François Hartog’s view, the last four decades have seen the emergence of a massive ‘heritagization’, a process through which ‘heritage affirmed itself as the dominant category, including if not overwhelming cultural life and public policies.’\(^{16}\) Hartog insists that this phenomenon has frequently served to link heritage and territory, which operate as vectors of identity.

**Which European heritage and what for?**

---


If heritage appears so pivotal in the definition of the Community, the question of the contents attributed to heritage becomes crucial. In the debate at the EP, Lady Elles acknowledged the difficulty of identifying relevant heritage:

> The identification has been left so far to Member States and presents little difficulty so far as those criteria that are of universally acknowledged importance are concerned, but it does entail difficulty when establishing suitable criteria applicable to all the Member States in view of the diversity and variety of their different cultures.\(^{17}\)

This intervention already suggested that two types of criteria could be retained for the evaluation of a cultural asset: ‘universally acknowledged’ criteria and more contingent criteria related to specific cultural expressions. The EU institutions are confronted with the extremely delicate task of proposing a definition equally operational for the conception of a policy and respectful of the sensibilities of the various national and local actors.

The EU institutions have no competence to propose any definition of European culture in general. For this reason, they have shown consistent caution when addressing the sensitive issue of the possible scope and contents of this area. This prudence is well illustrated by the intervention of the Commissioner Scarscia Mugnozza at the end of an EP debate on the safeguarding of European cultural heritage, in 1974:

> A remarkable advance has been made in giving to European culture its own dimension. What does the Commission mean when it speaks of the European dimension of culture? The European Commission wanted to avoid the term ‘European culture’ as being too vague and intractable and wanted also to avoid the other term of ‘European model of culture’ which has been suggested and much spoken of. The first concept was considered too vague, the second too ambitious or perhaps too pretentious. We should be aiming at a European dimension of culture, which is that complex of general trends and of cultural wealth common to all the Community countries and their regions which together represent the meeting point of the various cultures. We should concentrate on those aspects of our various cultures which tend to unify us because it is these cultures which can become the lighthouse to which peoples outside Europe will turn.\(^{18}\)

---

\(^{17}\) Ibid. 8.

This is an interesting example of the slippery rhetoric of European officials. The Commissioner clearly wanted to avoid the term ‘European culture’ and the reasons for this include not only the vagueness of the concept, but also the strong unifying and centralizing dimension it implied. EU institutions have long been reluctant to employ the term, fearful that it might offend the sensibilities of the Member States for whom culture remains an important means of expressing national and local identities. As the words of the Commissioner illustrate, the mention of a European cultural unity in an EU document is invariably accompanied by a reference to the diversity of national and regional cultures. As Monica Sassatelli remarks, the need to consistently counterbalance European unity with the enhancement of cultural diversity produced a discourse of ‘unity in diversity’.¹⁹ This formula was not the official motto of the EC at that time (it would become so only in 2000), but the rhetoric was already perceptible in the 1970s, as the words of the Commissioner Scarscia Mugnozza reveal. What the Commissioner’s speech reveals is also a laudatory approach to Europe as cultural and civilizational model for the rest of the world, which particularly ironic given that Scarscia Mugnozza judged the notion of ‘European model of culture’ to be ‘pretentious’.

Just as in the case of the concept of culture, the institutions have ultimately abandoned the task of proposing a definition of European heritage, as did MEP Hahn does in his Report on architectural heritage of 1982:

> Your rapporteur fully appreciates the difficulty of defining what is meant by architectural and archaeological heritage. […] It is not the task of your rapporteur to define the criteria by which a specific cultural asset or monument comes to form a part of architectural heritage. In any case, these criteria vary according to time, taste, sensibility, and the values common to a given society.²⁰

While avoiding any precise definition of cultural heritage, the various EP documents did not hesitate to underline the social and political functions that the latter might fulfill: ‘A

---


²⁰ EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Hahn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education and Sport on the protection of architectural and archaeological heritage, Doc A 206/82, 28.05.1982, p. 11.
cultural asset is not only an object of aesthetic contemplation but it is an expression of a whole set of values contributing to the individual and collective enrichment of society. As a vehicle of values, heritage became an instrument in the definition of collective identities. The link between heritage, cultural identity and identity was repeatedly emphasized. Furthermore, there was a form of hierarchy between these different elements: cultural heritage forms a part of cultural identity which then contributes to the definition of identity:

In becoming aware of its architectural heritage, society discovers the constituent parts of its cultural and other identity. Today this cultural identity constitutes one of the essential focal points for the perception and even definition of European identity. […] This is why we insist that awareness of European culture is essential if we are to define and to give substance to a European identity.

The concept of ‘European cultural identity’ had been the subject of an important conference organized in 1976 under the patronage of the CoE. This conference, at which EC officials participated, emphasized the role of cultural identity in deepening the political dimension of European integration, especially in the case of the EC. In its opening speech, the Secretary-General of the CoE explained that the conference could provide an occasion for reflection on the possible means for arousing greater European awareness in anticipation of the first elections of the European Parliament scheduled for 1979.

And indeed, the capacity of cultural heritage to give European identity a visible form convinced MEPs that it could be a means of fostering a greater political involvement on the part of European citizens in favour of the European project. Thus, MEP Hahn saw the enhancement of European heritage as part of a larger undertaking whose aim was to generate this involvement:

In the shorter term, we must endow our community enterprise, born of the integration of economic factors with more attractive energy and ideals which will win over young people and fill them with enthusiasm and offer them, in an international spirit, a concrete and

---

21 Ibid. p. 12.
tangible experience of a solidarity and common destiny which we are all already share to such a large extent.24

However, to fulfil this political function, the promotion of a European cultural identity had to highlight the specifically European character of various cultural expressions. As in the case of the political and moral principles that the EU describes as elements of its identity, the EU institutions are confronted with the universality of certain cultural expressions which they would like to define as European: ‘Although usually regarded as originating in the civilization of one country or one region, cultural assets reflect the universal values of art which cannot be reduced to purely nationalist terms’.25 Hahn sought to get round this problematic universality: ‘But this [the universal dimension of cultural assets] does not prevent us from using the general expression of European cultural identity or European culture since we are dealing in this case with our entire continent’.26 Despite the lack of substance in this statement it is useful to the extent that it is characteristic of a kind of argumentation – or perhaps better, a non-argumentation – that was consistently espoused by the EU institutions.

Indeed, in this type of reflection ‘Europe’ as a coherent entity is most frequently conceived as an already given element, requiring no further explanation. In line with this, in the case of culture, a European level is a priori accepted as relevant, just like the local, national and universal levels. Once the existence of European culture is acknowledged, the only questions that remain concern the articulation of this European culture at the various other cultural levels. According to the argument proposed by the EP, the Europeanness of culture is apparent in a certain commonality which paradoxically emerges through a variety of cultural expression:

Most forms of cultural expressions developed in Europe have had a national, and possibly regional, dimension and at the same time a trans-national and European dimension. The concept of European citizenship and identity is linked to awareness of cultural interdependence and of the continuous interaction between the cultures of European

24 EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Hahn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education and Sport on the protection of architectural and archaeological heritage, Doc A 206/82, 28.05.1982, p. 26.
25 Ibid. p.12.
nations and the capacity to identify and recognize the common elements of the various European traditions even in their most disparate forms.27

Architectural heritage is sometimes proposed as the clearest expression of this commonality. First, it is considered to be especially efficient in terms of promoting European awareness because of its accessibility to all and its immediate visual impact: ‘It is the most accessible and, at the same time, the most eloquent of all cultural expressions.’ Second, it is described as a metaphor for the European ‘unity in diversity’:

In it, everyone can perceive the unity and diversity that characterize to an equal extent European culture. Unity? The styles have varied from a century to the next and from one country to another. Diversity? The dominance of style has not proved any obstacle to glittering of national and regional contributions. The original traits suited to each country or region fit harmoniously into the common structures that underlie the styles. Everywhere, there is evidence of the same ebb and flow between the immutable depths and the changing surfaces.28

Such descriptions of Europe’s architectural heritage betray an obvious appreciation of the ‘publicizing’ quality of heritage. In the argumentation of various MEPs, heritage, and the architectural heritage in particular, merits the Community’s attention because it provides an efficient form of publicity for Europe. The great advantage of these publicity ‘objects’ is that they already exist throughout Europe, and are thus visible and accessible for an important number of European citizens. The elements of heritage that they embody are also spontaneously positively perceived by individuals. They embody cultural wealth and often foster a sense of pride. This process of positive identification is especially valuable for the European project, which has traditionally suffered from a lack of such identification:

The Community’s archaeological, artistic and architectural products afford a vision of the European nations in which their identity is no longer constituted by epic fears at the expense the neighbours, but rather by a gradual transition from one form to another in

27 EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Laroni on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on protecting the architectural heritage and preserving cultural assets, Doc A3-0036/93, 29.01.1993, p. 19.
28 EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Rubert de Ventos on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education and Sport on the Conservation of the Community’s architectural and archaeological heritage, Doc A2 192-188, 28. 09.1988, p. 18.
which the differences and the continuity, the overlapping and mutual influences reveal both the identity and diversity of European culture.\textsuperscript{29}

As this last reflection shows, heritage is deeply related to national identity. The inventory and enhancement of heritage has played an important role in the nation-building process of the European states. Here the difficulty for the EC lies in the necessity of conferring a European meaning to objects and symbols which usually display a strongly regional or national character. It is not possible to expose this European dimension instantly; rather it requires a process of interpretation and explanation. Heritage, as material object with a symbolic dimension, can thus serve as a pedagogic basis for a form of European education, a process of awakening to Europeanness:

Awareness of this interdependence, of this continual process of osmosis, is the basis of the broad, complex concept of European identity. This concept implies a process of familiarization, leading to recognition and identification. European citizens will accept and believe in the concept of European identity when they are able to identify and recognize the shared features which link the European cultures, regardless of the forms in which they are expressed. This power of identification is cultivated, developed and encouraged by all forms of education and thought, and cultural heritage can certainly be counted among them.\textsuperscript{30}

Here again, the metaphoric strength of heritage is central. Heritage thus conceived is to epitomize a vast and complex web of cultural transfers which are understood as the very essence of European identity.

**Europeanizing heritage**

How then should this notion of heritage as a means of instilling such a European education be transformed into a concrete process? Given the very limited competences of the EU institutions in the field of culture and education, we may wonder how the necessary Europeanization of heritage is to take place. Clearly, the intrinsic value of cultural assets certainly cannot be arbitrarily interpreted as European when objectively such Europeanness

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. p. 17.

\textsuperscript{30} EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Laroni on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on protecting the architectural heritage and preserving cultural assets, Doc A3-0036/93, 29.01.1993, p.17.
does not exist. Such interpretations would simply do violence to the history of art and to history itself. More than definition of heritage, it is the context within which this heritage is approached and admired that the EU institutions have sought to influence. In 1991, the CoE launched its programme of ‘European Heritage Days’ in order to familiarize Europeans with their common ‘European cultural heritage’ and give them free access to buildings normally closed to the public. The European Commission financially supported this initiative between 1994-1998, and became a co-organizer of the event from 1999 onwards.\(^{31}\) This initiative had been conceived on the model of the ‘Journées Portes ouvertes des monuments historiques’ created in 1983 by the French Ministry of Culture, under the direction of Jack Lang.\(^{32}\) Adding the tag ‘European’ to cultural events which already existed in many European countries serves an essentially symbolic purpose. What people actually admire on these occasions are for the most part local or national monuments or art collections, often constituted within national frameworks for national purposes. Inviting Europeans to discover or rediscover these symbolic places and objects simultaneously, during events strongly advertised as European, is a performative means of ‘Europeanizing’ forms of heritage traditionally perceived as national. The promotion of such Europe-wide simultaneous cultural events aims to foster a European community of experience. In certain respects these measures can be understood in the framework of Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community, in particular with regard to its temporal dimension: Doing the same rituals at the same moment creates invisible bounds in a community.\(^{33}\)

Another way of Europeanizing heritage is to place certain sites and monuments under the symbolic patronage of the EU. This is the strategy behind the recently created ‘European Heritage Label’. This initiative is the result of an intergovernmental action carried out by EU Ministers of Culture. The cultural intergovernmental cooperation gained a new impetus with the initiative ‘A soul for Europe’ launched at the Berlin conference of 2004.\(^{34}\) On this occasion, the Ministers of Culture made a common Declaration affirming their will to re-launch the EU cultural action.\(^{35}\) These meetings were the first of a series of informal

\(^{31}\) EP: Answer given by Mr. Ojera on behalf on the Commission to the written question No. 3194/98 by Mr. Sisó Cruellas to the Commission on ‘European Heritage Days’ OJEC C 207, 21/07/1999, p. 36.


\(^{34}\) See ‘Europe eine Seele geben’, Konzept der Initiative, Taken from http://www.berlinerkonferenz.eu.

\(^{35}\) Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication: Dossier de presse ‘Les rencontres pour l’Europe de la
‘European cultural meetings’, which brought together the EU Culture Ministers and representatives of civil society. At the European cultural meeting in Budapest in November 2005, the project for the launch of a ‘European Heritage Label’ was made public. Initiated by the French Minister of Culture Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres ‘in close cooperation with the European Union’, it proposed that a list of sites be drawn up. In 2006 and early 2007, experts met in order to agree on the details as to how the label would function. These points, together with a preliminary list of historical sites to be included were approved at the informal meeting of European Ministers of Culture in Berlin on 13 February 2007.

Donnedieu de Vabres described the list as follows:

This catalogue will consist of the monuments, sites, historical landscapes and more generally of the cultural assets characterized by a particular European orientation. Each European country will propose the monuments or cultural assets which have in its view decisively influenced our civilization and which occupy a specific place in the European tradition.

To date, the list includes 68 sites in 19 EU countries, among them: the Cluny Abbey in Burgundy, the Honour Court of the Popes’ Palace of Avignon, Robert Schuman’s house in Moselle, the Goethe House in Frankfurt, the Acropolis in Athens, the Place of Capitol in Rome and the shipyards of Gdańsk. The logo of the European Heritage Label, displayed at various visible points of the monument or site is clearly reminiscent of the European flag: the plaque is blue, with a white symbol evoking a triumphal arch and a yellow star etched in the middle and bears the inscription ‘European Heritage’ written in various European languages.

The idea of such an inventory of European heritage first appeared in the 1974 Resolution of the EP and was later reaffirmed in several reports and resolutions. Indeed, in the explanatory statements, the Report that accompanied the Resolution proposed the ‘drawing up of an inventory of the European cultural heritage consisting of the census of all artistic creations, i.e. theatres, museums, monuments, historic buildings, archaeological sites, etc.’ This inventory was meant to be comprehensive. The same is not

---

38 Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication (2007).
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.
41 EP. Report drafted by Lady Elles on behalf of the Committee of Cultural Affairs and Youth on measures
true of the list proposed for the ‘European Heritage Label’. The criteria of selection remains to be determined, but it seems that the fame and symbolic dimension of the sites, and to a degree also their publicity value, are the foremost considerations. This approach to heritage clearly favours the most emblematic and high culture monuments. Heritage is given an instrumental function; that of a means of publicizing the EU throughout the various Member States.

The ‘European Heritage Label’ shall become an EU-funded programme by the end of 2013.42 The official goal of the Label ‘to use the potential of cultural heritage to strengthen European citizens’ sense of belonging to Europe and promote a sense of European identity’.43 The promoters of the Label insisted that their initiative was designed in anticipation of a re-launch of the European integration process. In this regard, the date chosen for the launch of the Label – 19 March 2007, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome – is revealing. On this occasion, the French Minister of Culture announced the ultimate goal of the project: ‘To re-launch the construction of Europe, fifty years after its founding act. It is from culture that the new impetus that we need so much will come.’44 This observation recalls the famous quotation wrongly attributed to Jean Monnet: ‘If we were to start all over again, we would start with culture.’45 This apocryphal sentence, often cited by European officials, has become one the legitimizing myths of EU cultural policy. Cris Shore interprets the repeated use of this quotation as evidence of the politicization of culture on the part of the EU in order to contribute to the process of integration.46 The functions attributed to European heritage in the debates in the EP or in an initiative such as the ‘European Heritage Label’ bear out this argument. However, Shore and other authors routinely refer to a monolithic recourse to culture. In their view, culture in the EU political space is defined exclusively from above – by the institutions – and imposed through a top-down process, the ultimate goal of which is to legitimize the integration process.47 In the analysis of the different uses of heritage that follows, however,

---

43 Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication (2007), p.3
44 Ibid.
45 It seems that Jack Lang has claimed being at the origin of the quote, see Sassatelli (2008), p.227.
a different picture emerges. Thus, I argue that culture, as expressed through heritage, can also be used as an instrument to defend alternative conceptions of the integration process.

**European heritage as a political resource: the decentralized use of heritage**

*The example of industrial heritage*

Numerous discussions which took place in the EP indicate that the concept of heritage has frequently been understood as a means of promoting certain political or social values. Since these values constitute the substance of European identity, the enhancement of specific examples of heritage can contribute to the expression of different, and sometimes alternative, visions of European identity. Here again, the European case reflects a more general change at the national level. François Hartog remarks that the use of heritage is not the privilege of the national governing centre, the history-memory of which is ‘rivalled or contested in the name of partial, sectorial or particular memories (groups, associations, enterprises, communities, etc.), which all wish to be recognized as legitimate, equally legitimate, or even more legitimate.’

Pierre Nora similarly argues that the ‘materialization of memory has been tremendously dilated, multiplied, decentralized, democratized’. This phenomenon is observable in the European arena. The use made by the MEPs of the concepts of ‘industrial’ and ‘social’ heritage, which functioned as political resources, are a good illustration of this process of decentralization.

As early as 1982, in the Hahn Report, it was specified that the concept of heritage proposed by the EP included not only rural and urban landscapes, but also the legacy of ‘industrial civilization’. On 14 March 1983, the EP voted a Resolution proposed on behalf of the Socialist Group, dedicated to the protection of Europe’s social heritage. As a result the concept of social heritage acquired the same status as architectural and archaeological heritage. Until this point the latter had been foremost in the discussions of the EP. This social heritage was conceived of as constituting the traces of ‘man’s achievements in the social, industrial and rural spheres’ and encompassed ‘what we have learnt from a century

---

50 EP: Report drawn up by Mr. Hahn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education and Sport on the protection of architectural and archaeological heritage, Doc A 206/82, 28.05.1982, p. 11.
51 EP: Resolution proposed by Mr. Fajardie on behalf of the Socialist Group on European social heritage, OJEC C 068, 14/03/1983, p. 114.
and a half of history of the world of labour in Europe’.\textsuperscript{52} Having recalled the development of trade union movements and ‘all the activities contributing to the progressive liberation of man through workers’ and peasants’ struggles’, the Socialist MEP Fajardie concluded his intervention by stating: ‘This profound transformation of society which has been achieved since the start of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century is also part of our common heritage’.\textsuperscript{53} In its Resolution on social heritage, the EP insisted on the symbolic dimension of the EC’s participation in the revival of abandoned sites of industrial activities such as mines or metallurgical plants. Thus the Community acknowledged that such places could indeed become symbols of what the EP called ‘Europe’s social sphere’.\textsuperscript{54}

Therefore the reference to such a ‘social heritage’ appears as a way to confer a certain meaning to European integration. Advocates of deeper integration in the social domain are keen to elevate certain places of the social imaginary in order to instil a certain interpretation of the Community’s identity in the future. This is a clear example of the legitimizing function of the concept of heritage. A certain site’s elevation to the status of European heritage is a political issue. It suggests that a specific political, social or artistic expression is recognized by the whole Community as valuable, and as a result should be integrated in the identity of this Community. Since the identity of the EU is subject to constant discussion and negotiations, the definition of the content of European heritage is thus a central political issue.

\textit{The minority cultures and languages as an integral part of European heritage}

A further illustration of the ‘alternative’ and ‘decentralized’ political use of heritage is the attempt to introduce the question of minority cultures to the field of heritage. It is interesting that several MEPs have proposed two different motions for a Resolution during a single session: the first on European social heritage and the second on minority languages and cultures.\textsuperscript{55} The argumentation in favour of a stronger representation of the minority cultures in the Community followed the same logic as that in favour of the recognition of industrial sites as part of European heritage. The author of the motion, Socialist MEP Arfé explained that ‘these minorities represent millions and millions of people who are an


\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. p. 256.


integral part of our Europe and its civilization’ and that ‘every language has within it the secrets of our own heritage’. The traditional argument of the necessary enhancement of the Community’s human face – which has remained central in the debates on heritage – was also used in this case. Indeed, Arfé supported the idea that greater recognition of minorities offered another ‘possibility of humanizing the idea of Europe’ in the sense that it would be interpreted by European citizens as a sign of ‘the goodwill and human face of this Community’. The resemblance to the argumentation on heritage was also apparent in the recourse to the discursive device of ‘unity in diversity’. Just as the architectural heritage was seen as a means to epitomize this unity in diversity and make visible the presumed essence of Europe’s identity, so too the embodiment of European diversity through a process of protecting minority languages was presented as a condition for the unification process. This is what the intervention of MEP Jaak Vandemeulebroucke explained:

Reassessment of language and culture means, as I see it, doing some positive work on the construction of Europe since we will never have European unity without genuine respect for the various elements that make up this unity. Federalism is unity in diversity. Unity and diversity are never contradictory but complementary. I hope that the Commission will urge the Council to pay more intention to language and culture, which will constitute real work towards the construction of Europe.

The instrumental use of heritage in this debate is quite striking. The heritage concept was also used in order to support economic considerations. Reaffirming that the minority languages of the Community were a vital part of the Community’s common cultural heritage, Welsh MEP Beata Brookes underlined the extent to which EC law tended to inhibit both the development of local economic interests and the expression of local identity:

An example of the way in which Community legislation has prejudiced minority languages is the commercial legislation which makes it compulsory for the labels of products to bear at least one of the official languages of the Community. This is grossly unfair. This has recently resulted in Welsh whisky bottles labelled only in Welsh being prevented from being sold in Wales where wine bottles labelled only in French are perfectly legal.

---

56 Ibid. p. 256.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid. p. 264.
59 Ibid. p. 260.
Of particular interest here is the association of regional identity and regional economic interests and the implicit affirmation that these are closely connected. Brookes’ complaint is a good example of a more widespread criticism regarding the levelling effects of economic Europeanization and the subsequent alienation of traditional identities and life styles. Although it contributes to a cultural standardization through the homogenization of the market, the EU also presents itself – in particular through its motto of ‘Unity in diversity’ – as a defender of the multiple cultural identities in Europe. Since the concept of heritage function as a rhetorical device in this EU discourse on ‘cultural diversity’, it is taken up by actors in order to defend what they conceive as a cultural tradition or peculiarity at the European level. Yet the ultimate goal is often the defence of economic or social interests that may at times have little to do with culture. To this extent, the stronger recognition of minority languages and cultures by the Community for which MEPs campaigned through the recourse to the concept of European heritage has transcended the cultural sphere. At the close of the debate, it appeared that their efforts had at least in part paid off since the European Commission, via its Commissioner for Education and Research, confirmed the inclusion of minority languages and cultures in European heritage.

**Heritage: an instrument for a European integration from below?**

The crusade for the recognition of minority and local cultures led by certain MEPs and local actors may partly account for the increasing number of EU policies which aim to protect and affirm practices understood to constitute regional and local traditions. The anthropologists Stefan Beck and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz have studied these policies in the specific case of agricultural and culinary traditions (through, *inter alia*, the creation of European labels like ‘protected designation of origin’). Their research describes two forces at work in the process of Europeanization; homogenization through uniform market regulations and recognition of cultural diversity. They conclude as follows:

> Both currents are working together and create a situation where *culture* and more specifically *claimed culture* and *claimed tradition* become an asset: An asset for securing EU monies and subsidies, an asset for marketing campaigns, and finally an asset for identity politics that tend to strengthen regions at the expense of old nation states.61

---


61 Ibid. p.11
In my opinion, the concept of cultural heritage and the increasing emphasis on the regional dimension of heritage has played a central role in this process. This reveals a double aspect and a double use of heritage in the EU context. When the issue of heritage was first addressed by the EP, the emphasis on the diversity of heritage already existed and was further developed in various reports and resolutions. It is however true that the first concrete actions of the EU in favour, for example, of emblematic monuments such as the Acropolis, Mount Athos or the Burgos cathedral were representative of a ‘high culture’ approach to heritage. The recent intergovernmental initiative of a ‘European Heritage Label’ is a further illustration of the tendency to employ the most brilliant and visible monuments as a means of endorsing the EU. However, at the same time, the concept of heritage has also proved to be an efficient rhetorical device in terms of advocating diverse local interests: the conversion of industrial sites, the recognition of minority languages, the protection of local food products, etc. These twin aspects and uses of European heritage may ultimately point to a dual Europeanization process in the field of culture: on the one hand, we can observe a top-down process in which several emblematic cultural references are selected as representative of European culture, usually high culture, and serve as symbol of the EU as civilizational entity; on the other hand, we can equally point to a strategy which favours a grass-roots culture as a way of ‘humanizing’ the EU, bringing it closer to citizens and by-passing the national level. This latter strategy is well illustrated by two different projects supported by the EU in the framework of the programme Culture 2000, under the category ‘Cultural heritage’. Both concern the enhancement of heritage in border regions which have been sites of conflict between European nations: Silesia and the Euroregion of the Neisse-Nisa-Nysa, located in Germany, Czech Republic and Poland. Both projects aim to bring together local actors of the respective countries in order to foster cultural cooperation and also to strengthen economic ties. As Beck and Scholze-Irrlitz note, basing their observations on the work of the anthropologist Hermann Bausinger, these border regions are an ideal example for the ‘integralist policies’ of the EU: ‘Here the EU can demonstrate easily that zones of heated and violent conflict can indeed be transformed into zones of peaceful collaboration’.

---


The cultural programme here is understood as a means of conflict resolution, or at least of reconciliation of national cultures in the context of an enlarged Europe. This objective of reconciliation and conflict prevention is at the very heart of the diversity concept as it evolved in the European cultural policy from the 1990s onwards. This is this new approach to diversity prompted by deep geopolitical and social changes in Europe that we will now study.

A changing European diversity and its new policy tool, the ‘intercultural dialogue’

In order to understand the evolution of the EU action in the cultural field and the increasing importance given to diversity, it is necessary to look beyond the institutional limits of the EU. Indeed, international organizations like the UNESCO and the CoE constantly contributed to the conceptualization of European culture and heritage. The CoE played a central role in the introduction of the concept of intercultural dialogue, which became central in the EU cultural policy in recent years.

The 1980s saw a diversification of the concept of European heritage with a growing interest for local traditions and minority cultures. This interest is also to be found in the action of the CoE. In 1995, the CoE Member States signed the ‘Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities’. This convention had been designed in the wake of the war in the ex-Yugoslavia. It was the first legally binding multilateral instrument designed for the protection of minorities. The text is mainly based on the recognition of cultural diversity in Europe and in the European societies and affirms the need to promote tolerance and dialogue to ensure peace between and within the European countries. The concept of intercultural dialogue is mentioned in the article 6 of the Convention:

The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and cooperation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media.64

Interestingly, the concept appeared in an official document of the EU the very same year but was given a completely different meaning and purpose. It is in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. In the third part of the Declaration, entitled ‘Partnership in Social, Cultural and Human Affairs: Developing Human Resources, Promoting Understanding between Cultures and Exchanges between Civil Societies’, the following commitment is expressed:

The participants recognise that the traditions of culture and civilisation throughout the Mediterranean region, dialogue between these cultures and exchanges at human, scientific and technological level are an essential factor in bringing their peoples closer, promoting understanding between them and improving their perception of each other.65

This dialogue between cultures takes place within the framework of ‘common values’ and ‘common heritage’ constituted by the classical antiquity, the Roman, Hellenist and Byzantine legacies. The recognition of this common heritage on both sides of the Mediterranean is surprising if we consider how much these historical roots had been used in the previous decades in the EU’s official discourse to define a specific European identity.66 If this heritage also belongs to the Southern shore of the Mediterranean, how can it be used to differentiate a European identity vis-à-vis neighbouring cultures? The use made in the following years of the concept of intercultural dialogue reveals this ambiguity.

The concept gained in importance after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. A few months after, the General Assembly of the UN adopted a Resolution on ‘Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations’. In this context and as a contribution to the debates on the relations between the ‘West’ and the ‘Islamic world’, the EU designed a ‘Programme of Action for Dialogue between Cultures and Civilizations’ in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.67 One of the results of this agreement was the creation of the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures. One of the principles of this dialogue is defined as ‘a better understanding of the Other’ and the long-term objective in a peaceful coexistence with this Other. The report drafted by the High Level Advisory Group (composed of preeminent intellectuals from both sides of the

---

Mediterranean) for the Anna Lindh Foundation explicitly stated that the objective of the dialogue between the EU and the Mediterranean countries should be to ‘share with all the ambition of constructing a common civilization beyond the diversity of inherited cultures’. A first ambiguity can be highlighted here: Does this common civilization already exist, as previous official texts affirmed, or shall it be ‘constructed’, as a European heritage was constructed in the previous decades? A further ambiguity of this dialogue, underlined by Isabel Schäfer is that ‘the common cultural heritage continues to be invoked while at the same time firm policies on security, migration and enlargement are pursued, which draw a clear frontier in the middle of the Mediterranean.’ To this extent, the intercultural dialogue as defined in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership contributes to the definition of a European identity against a cultural Other while paradoxically referring to a common civilization to be either re-discovered or openly ‘constructed’.

In the same period, the concept of intercultural dialogue became more and more pivotal to the CoE’s approach to cultural diversity and reveals a different understanding. The CoE offered for the first time a relatively precise definition of intercultural dialogue in its 2003 ‘Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention’:

This term defines tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy, and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective, in transformations and in new forms of cultural expression. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious. In this context, for instance, inter-faith and interreligious dialogue must be viewed in terms of its cultural and social implications versus the public sphere.

In the CoE’s approach, intercultural dialogue is a valuable instrument at both inter-state and national levels. On the one hand, it is indeed understood as a response to Huntington’s concept of clash of civilization and as a potential promoter of international stability, as

---

affirmed in the 2003 ‘Faro Declaration on the Council of Europe’s Strategy for Developing Intercultural Dialogue’:

We reject the idea of a clash of civilisations and firmly believe that, on the contrary, increased commitment to cultural cooperation – in the broad sense of the term – and intercultural dialogue will benefit peace and international stability in the long term, including with respect to the threat of terrorism.71

On the other hand, the CoE also highlighted the significance of the concept for the social cohesion of the continent and for the resolution of cultural conflict within the European societies. Like in the case of the EU’s discourse in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the CoE placed the intercultural dialogue within the context of a shared history. To this extent, it seems that a minimum of commonality is necessary to imagine an intercultural dialogue.

We should deepen a sense of our shared history and common future (sic) among the peoples of our 48 states, within their diversity, so as to avoid the emergence of a sense of division within greater Europe. We should therefore encourage a balanced vision of the identities which make up “Greater Europe”.72

The balance between unity and diversity is therefore a central concern of the CoE’s discourse, as it is in the EU’s approach to European culture. Taking into consideration cultural diversity is all the more pivotal to the CoE’s conception of culture as the organization gathers 47 countries, including Turkey and the Russian Federation. Judged by its members, the CoE is based on a conception of Europe ‘with its historical influences in the Greater Mediterranean area, and including Asia Minor, the Arabian peninsula, and Northern Africa and extending via the old trade routes into Asia’.73 The CoE stands therefore for a ‘Greater Europe’. However, one may wonder: A greater Europe with respect to what other Europe? The other, smaller Europe is doubtlessly the EU. The CoE and the EU are indeed the two international organizations that take Europe as the

foundation of their identity, as their raison d'être. However, because of the reality of their membership, they necessarily refer to a different Europe.

With the Eastern European enlargement, often called in the literature the ‘bing bang enlargement’, the EU saw its cultural and geographical reality deeply transformed. The accession of Eastern and Central European countries was justified in the EU official discourse as a ‘return to Europe’. To this extent, the belonging of these countries to a common European culture was taken as granted. However, EU officials could not deny that this enlargement made necessary to re-think and re-design the EU’s discourse on European cultural identity. The newly appointed Slovak Commissioner for Education and Culture, Jan Figél, openly recognized this fact. His 2004 proposal of a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (EYID) was based on this observation. He conceived this initiative as a response ‘to the substantial changes in EU composition and the internal perceptions of people.’

Further motives for this project were given in 2005, in the Commission’s ‘Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and the Council Concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)’. The initiative was clearly placed in the context of the European diversity and the need for integration, not only between the EU Member States but also within the Member States. There was among the EU officials a growing perception that the traditional approach to European common heritage, which had been criticized from the very start, had become hardly defendable in the cultural complexity that characterizes contemporary Europe. The EU’s official discourse of culture and identity had to take into account the changes that were deeply transforming the cultural landscape of European societies: the increasing mobility of EU citizens within a common market extended to 25 and soon 27 countries, the presence on the enlarged EU territory of ethnic minorities like the Roma and the growing migratory flows that concern all Member States. The concept of intercultural dialogue appeared as a useful rhetorical tool to initiate this shift:

Intercultural dialogue is intimately linked to the fundamental ambition underlying the construction of Europe, namely to bring together the peoples of Europe. This vocation on the part of the Union requires dialogue to be voluntarily declared a priority, in order to call

upon European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, to play a full part in managing our diversity, which is enriched by increasing variation and by the changes and additions brought about by globalisation.  

For the first time, an EU official document in the field of culture addressed not only EU citizens but more generally ‘all those living in the EU’, those described in the EU jargon as ‘third country nationals’ and who often carry a non-European cultural heritage. Although not explicitly mentioned, the phenomenon of migration is encompassed in the document, also through the vague reference to ‘the changes and additions brought about by globalization’.

Timidly referred to in the original document, migration and ethnic diversity moved to the foreground in the event itself, the 2008 EYID. To explain this deep evolution, it is again necessary to look at the CoE’s action. The CoE became the main contributor in the process of defining the vague concept of intercultural dialogue. It did so through the drafting of a ‘White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue’, which was based on a large consultation with various stakeholders and NGOs from 2006 to 2007. In its approach to intercultural dialogue, the White Paper made proposals regarding the cultural cooperation between the CoE’s Member States and also between Europe and neighbouring regions, which corresponded to the original approach of the EU. However, the most important part of the document is dedicated to the intercultural dialogue within European societies with a focus on the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities. The starting point of the reflection is the observation that both the assimilationist and multiculturalist models largely failed. The ‘interculturalist paradigm’ is presented as a third way:

Neither of these models, assimilation or multiculturalism, is applied singularly and wholly in any state. Elements of them combine with aspects of the emerging interculturalist paradigm, which incorporates the best of both. It takes from assimilation the focus on the individual; it takes from multiculturalism the recognition of cultural diversity. And it adds the new element, critical to integration and social cohesion, of dialogue on the basis of equal dignity and shared values.  

---

Although the explicit comparison with previous paradigms does not appear in EU official documents, it seems that the European Commission followed this approach in its design of the EYID. Pavol Kossey, a cabinet member of the EU Commissioner for Education and Culture in charge on the EYID affirmed:

I believe that the concept of multiculturalism has not approved itself. It causes many problems. [...] It is de facto not possible to live together in a multicultural society without knowing each other, without understanding each other – because that causes a feeling of being endangered, a feeling of insecurity. [...] Intercultural dialogue is therefore inevitable, that we really live together and not side by side.\textsuperscript{77}

Migration, religion and minorities were among the eight official main topics of the EYID.\textsuperscript{78} Most of the seven pan-European flagship events organized dealt directly with migration and focused particularly on urban settings characterized by their ethnic diversity and on urban cultural expressions strongly influenced by immigrant cultures like hip hop.\textsuperscript{79} One of the highlights of the year was the organization of the first European summit on Roma issues in Brussels, under the joint-patronage of Commission President José Manuel Barroso and the French Presidency of the Council of the EU. Finally, during the EYID, the EU and the CoE launched the joint-programme Intercultural Cities, dedicated to the management of cultural diversity and aiming at implementing a ‘model for intercultural integration’.\textsuperscript{80} Today, more than 60 European cities take part in this programme.

A good understanding of how the EU institutions use the intercultural dialogue concept and how it is concretely implemented in cultural programs will require a specific research. What can be already observed is the surprising transformation that the concept underwent in the EU official discourse over the last ten years. It was first introduced in 1995 as part of a fuzzy rhetoric on the dialogue between Europe and the Mediterranean civilization. The intercultural dialogue was to be established with an Other situated beyond the boundaries of Europe and therefore contributed to reinforce these boundaries. The Eastern European enlargement doubtlessly made necessary to reassess previous approaches to European cultural identity and heritage. It is revealing that a Slovak EU Commissioner is at the origin

\textsuperscript{77} Quoted in Endres (2010), p.19.
\textsuperscript{78} European Commission, Highlights of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, 2008, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., p. 28-41.
\textsuperscript{80} CoE, The Intercultural City: what it is and how to make it work, Introductory document for cities participating in the Pilot Phase of the Intercultural Cities Programme, Joint action of the Council of Europe and the European Commission, (DGIV/Cult/IC(2008)01), Strasbourg.
of the EYID, first initiative that proposed to apply intercultural dialogue within European societies. However, at this early stage, in the years 2003-2006, the EU official texts only mentioned vaguely the major impact of migratory flows and of ethnic minorities on European cultural diversity. A few years later, largely as a result of the CoE’s reflections on intercultural dialogue, these topics were placed at the very heart of the EYID and are now pivotal to the EU cultural action.

**Conclusion**

Despite the strongly variegated contents attributed to European culture in the action developed since the 1970s, one can observe that the EU cultural action was originally based on a federalist rationale. The goal of this action was and remains a stronger involvement of the citizens in the integration process and a stronger solidarity between these citizens of extremely diverse origins and backgrounds. The creation of a European *demos* and the strengthening of democratic mechanisms that are pivotal to a federal perspective are at stake in the European cultural policy.

However, the inconstancy of the values promoted in this policy certainly jeopardizes the achievement of these lofty ambitions. The long-term exploration of the core values structuring the official EU discourse on culture highlights a deep ambivalence. For obvious reasons, the EU institutions are not in a position to propose a definition of European cultural identity. They do not have the political legitimacy to do so and a consensual approach to European culture, considering the diversity of Europe’s inhabitants, is simply unreachable. However, one can observe a clear temptation to promote a common European heritage, based on common historical roots. To advertise artistic collections or historical sites as European is a way to embody the abstract concept of European identity and to reach out European citizens. To this extent, Cris Shore’s description of a political use and even instrumentalization of culture at the EU level is accurate. For Cris Shore, this instrumentalization is mainly the work of Commission’s officials with a strong federalist stance and aims at a cultural homogenization of EU citizens, in a process quite comparable to the unification of modern nation-states. Laudatory, essentialist and teleological discourses on European cultural identity, referring to high culture and glorious expressions of European genius present indeed certain similarities with nationalist discourses. They have not disappeared from the EU discourse on European culture. The recent initiative of
European Heritage Label still corresponds to a top-down designation of charismatic national contributions that are worth belonging to European heritage. The initial understanding of the intercultural dialogue concept, in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also contributed to draw a map of European heritage, this time through the definition of other civilizational entities. Two complementary processes pivotal to the definition of collective identities are at work here: the search for commonalities in the inside and the differentiation from Others outside.

However, beside this centralized use of European heritage, alternative definitions have emerged in the 1980s, especially under the impulse of the EP. This allowed for an expansion of the concept of European heritage, which progressively encompassed variegated local cultural expressions. To this extent, it would be wrong to see the political use of cultural identity as a strictly top-down process steered from Brussels.

Moreover, the EU cultural action is embedded in a larger political context in which European culture is debated. The evolution of the definition attributed to diversity and intercultural dialogue in the EU discourse cannot be understood without taking into consideration the initiatives of the CoE in this field. The EYID organized in 2007 by the EU and to which the CoE conceptually contributed confirms an important change in the contents of EU cultural policy. The issues of migration and of ethnic and religious diversity, that were largely ignored in the previous programmes, became central preoccupations of the EU action in the cultural field, beyond the EYID. This has an impact on the cultural expressions and settings taken into account. This new approach makes necessary to give attention to new popular and grass-roots artistic movements developed in urban settings, which strongly differs from the symbols of high culture to which to EU dedicated its first cultural initiatives in the late 1970s.

Therefore the EU cultural policy now combines extremely different approaches to culture. It can focus either on the promotion of an essentialist common cultural heritage or highlight the diversity of cultural heritages that now constitute the enlarged and globalized Europe. The balance is fragile and one can wonder how such a cultural action can preserve its coherence over the long term. Moreover, one can also question the potentially paradoxical mechanism at work in the new EU discourse on cultural diversity. The official recognition and celebration of diversity within the EU as consensual value might become
the rhetorical and apologetic counterpart of the reinforcement of the EU’s external boundaries through various processes: the growing opposition to enlargement and the definition of Turkey and/or Islam as culturally non-European, the focus on the fight against illegal migration and the construction of a ‘fortress Europe’.

Bibliography


Calligaro, Oriane (forthcoming 2013), Negotiating Europe: The EU Promotion of Europeanness since the 1950s, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, New York University series ‘Europe in transition’.


European Parliament (1974a), Resolution presented by Mr. Premoli the Liberal and Allied Group on measures to protect the European cultural heritage, 13 May 1974, Official Journal of the European Communities (OJEC), C 62, 30/05/1974.

European Parliament (1974b), Report drafted by Lady Elles on behalf of the Committee of Cultural Affairs and Youth on measures to protect European cultural heritage, Doc. 54/74, 3 May 1974.


European Parliament (1982), Report drawn up by Mr. Hahn on behalf of the Committee on Youth, Culture, Education and Sport on the protection of architectural and archaeological heritage, Doc A 206/82, 28.05.1982.

European Parliament (1983a), Resolution proposed by Mr. Fajardie on behalf of the Socialist Group on European social heritage, OJEC C 068, 14/03/1983.

European Parliament (1983b), Resolution proposed by Mr. Fajardie on behalf of the Socialist Group on European social heritage, OJEC C 068, 14/03/1983.


30
_______ (1993), Report drawn up by Mr. Laroni on behalf of the Committee on Culture, Youth, Education and the Media on protecting the architectural heritage and preserving cultural assets, Doc A3-0036/93, 29.01.1993.

_______ (1999), Answer given by Mr. Ojera on behalf on the Commission to the written question No. 3194/98 by Mr. Sisó Cruellas to the Commission on ‘European Heritage Days’ OJEC C 207 , 21/07/1999.


Taken from: http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/actualites/dossiers-presse/label-europeen/intro.html


