



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 30 April 2013

7983/13

**CULT 36
AUDIO 35**

INFORMATION NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Council

Subject: Better connections for a better Europe
- *Information from the Portuguese delegation*

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Portuguese delegation on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under "Other Business" for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 16-17 May 2013.

Better connections for a better Europe

In view of our next EYCS Council meeting in Brussels, the 17th May, Portugal wishes to submit a double proposition, with the purpose of contributing to improve the net of relationships between the Ministers of Culture of the EU MS and between European cities.

1. IMC – Integrated Method of Communication

Considering the role of culture as an important game changer for public policies and its fundamental contribute to European construction, we propose to establish a method of communication that would allow us to exchange views and be informed about the relevant cultural policy issues in our different countries. Transnational issues arising from globalisation, digitisation, Internet, intellectual property, or others, could be tackled in a coordinated manner in a more efficient way if we create a direct method of communication. This method would complement our meetings and add speed and consistency to our work and at the same time increase its outreach, throughout Europe, fostering European construction.

2. The Agora Project

In parallel we propose to the Council to launch a European programme with the aim of creating a relationship framework for initiatives coming from different places in Europe: The Agora Project. Each year the Presidency of the Council would invite an intellectual or group of intellectuals to elaborate a manifesto related to an issue of current European interest. This text would be published on-line and open to interpretation at a local level for the construction of a programme of cultural activities. A non-limited number of initiatives throughout Europe, conveying different interpretations of the yearly manifesto, could join the Agora Project.

A virtual space would at the same time be created. This site could be associated to the network of the “Dialogue Cafés”. A pan-European net would then be established, revitalizing and reinventing connections between the European people, while highlighting the concrete communities that embody public squares from ancient Greece to contemporary polis.

The aim is to capture and disseminate the spirit of tolerance and inclusiveness contained in European diversity, taking advantage of the creative energy of intellectuals and artists, and of new technologies that allow you to create online virtual spaces easily accessible regardless of geographic location.

If MS support this proposal, the Presidency would invite the author(s) of the first manifesto for the next EYCS council for initiatives to start on Europe’s Day, the 9th May 2014.

Both the **IMC project** and the **Agora project**, one at a political level and the other based on community-led initiatives, aim at improving European cohesion taking advantage of digital tools.

The costs associated to both initiatives are limited to the digital platform and marketing.

If we reach a consensus on these issues the proposals could be carried out in articulation with the Commission.
