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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

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Subject: Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on
Culture and Social Cohesion
- *Final mandate*

Delegations will find attached the mandate for the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on Culture and Social Cohesion, as finalised further to the discussions at the joint Cultural Affairs Committee/Audiovisual Working Party meeting on 10 December.

Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member States' experts on

Culture and Social Cohesion

set up under Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022

Priority B. Cohesion and well-being

- Mandate -

1. The Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, under priority B ‘Cohesion and well-being’, provides for the creation of an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Group of Member States’ experts focusing on culture and social cohesion, considering that “access to culture and participation in cultural life promote individual empowerment, democratic consciousness and social cohesion through exchanges with other people and civic engagement”.
2. The OMC Group on Fostering the Contribution of Culture to Social Inclusion (2017–2018) stated in its report *From Social Inclusion to Social Cohesion – the Role of Culture Policy*¹ that “just as ‘segregation’ is a condition for the whole city and not only certain areas, ‘social exclusion’ is a process running through the whole of society”. This points to the need to complement the work for social *inclusion* with perspectives on social *cohesion* with a strong territorial approach, in line with the New Urban Agenda² that identifies culture and cultural diversity as an important contribution to the sustainable development of cities, human settlements and citizens.

¹ OMC Report “From Social Inclusion to Social Cohesion - the Role of Culture Policy” <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e1b88304-f3b0-11e9-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-107489153> (published 18 October 2019).

² United Nations, Habitat III, <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

3. The OMC Group on Culture and Social Cohesion will build on the work and recommendations by its predecessor group, especially regarding the place-centred approach. The group shall explore further questions on the contribution of culture and the arts to social and territorial cohesion, while more specifically addressing issues such as segregation, demographic challenges, geographical disparities in health and well-being and access to culture as well as the need for inclusive public spaces for exchanges with other people and civic engagement.
4. The OMC Group will have the following tasks:
 - Present and discuss existing policies and tools to promote:
 - access to culture, with a particular focus on non-urban areas;
 - cross-sectorial cooperation that involves the cultural sector in order to foster social and territorial cohesion;
 - Identify best practices of cross-sectorial cooperation including culture as a cross-cutting issue in local and regional development to foster social and territorial cohesion;
 - Explore funding possibilities under the Creative Europe Programme and other relevant EU programmes, including European Structural and Investment Funds;
 - Look particularly at the gender aspect of social and territorial cohesion;

- Actively seek synergies with other similar initiatives and avoid any overlapping, taking into account also previous, parallel and upcoming relevant work in addition to that of its predecessor group, such as:
 - other OMC Groups;
 - the upcoming Voices of Culture dialogue on the role of culture in non-urban areas;
 - the upcoming OECD-European Commission project on maximising the impact of culture and cultural heritage for local development³;
 - the ongoing Partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage of the Urban Agenda for the European Union;
 - work conducted in other international forums, such as the Council of Europe's initiatives around the Indicator Framework on Culture and Democracy⁴.
- 5. The OMC Group may decide, where appropriate, to involve external experts, such as researchers and representatives of local/regional authorities and civil society, also taking into account the recommendation by its predecessor group to include policy-makers from government departments other than culture.
- 6. Based on the above-mentioned activities, the OMC Group will prepare a report including examples of good practices and innovative actions as well as policy recommendations on:
 - culture for social and territorial cohesion;
 - access to culture, with a particular focus on non-urban areas.

³ 2019 annual work programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme - C(2018)6687 of 16 October 2018.

⁴ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/indicators-culture-and-democracy>

Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022

B. Cohesion and well-being

Topic:

Social cohesion

Working methods:

OMC group followed by a Presidency conference

Rationale:

After reviewing the report of the OMC group on 'Fostering the contribution of culture to social inclusion' (2017/18), a follow-up OMC group will be given a new mandate to explore specific topics of particular interest in more depth, such as the need to include culture as a cross-cutting issue in the fields of social policy, health policy and local development, among others. Subsequently a conference will be organised to disseminate the results achieved and insights gained. If required, further steps should be discussed afterwards.

Target outputs:

The aim is to identify best practices of cross-sectorial cooperation, which have relevant social and economic impact. Funding possibilities under the Creative Europe Programme and other relevant EU programmes will be explored.