# Which Culture(s) for Europe? The Contrasting Conceptions of the Council of Europe and the European Union from 1949 to the Present Day

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*Abstract:* Two European organizations of a very different nature have taken action to promote and support European culture: the Council of Europe and the European Union. This article aims to show that, despite common symbolic references and mutual influences, the two organizations' conceptions of culture do not coincide. A socio-historical and comparative analysis of the emergence and evolution of their respective cultural programmes allows us to reconstruct on the long term their visions and usages of culture. These divergent visions will also be observed in the two organizations' interactions in the cultural domain, which oscillate between competition and collaboration. In contemporary academic debates, the question of the historical and cultural boundaries of Europe are often explored in close connection to the EU's political agenda and institutional frame. As a contribution to the "provincializing" of the EU, a socio-historical approach including an understudied European organization, the Council of Europe, makes it possible to critically reassess the understanding and usage of culture in the context of European integration.

*Keywords*: European Cultures, European Integration, European Organizations, Socio-historical Approach to European Union.

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«As Europeans, we have a particularly rich cultural heritage born of our long shared history. I welcome the opportunity to celebrate that heritage and to take pride in all that makes up our common European identity»[1]. These are the words spoken by the Maltese Minister in charge of culture on 9 February 2017 as the European Council and Parliament decided to establish a European Year of Cultural Heritage for 2018. Defined as both a heritage and a goal to be achieved, a common European culture has become a legitimizing principle for a unified Europe and the object of European public policies and cooperation. Two international institutions have played an organizing role in this field: the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU). While the CoE

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[1] Owen Bonnici, cité dans un Communiqué de presse du Conseil européeen, SN 52/17, 9 février 2017.

has had authority in cultural matters since its creation in 1949, the EU has acquired such responsibility very progressively from the 1970s onward. Both institutions, which have extremely different organizational structures and objectives, have therefore had to develop definitions and approaches to delineate a concept characterized by shifting and controversial boundaries, namely European culture. While rejecting the idea of an immutable and unequivocal definition, the CoE and the EU have nevertheless, through the adoption of documents and the implementation of various initiatives, drawn the fluid contours of a culture considered common to all their members. Through the social and historical analysis of their respective initiatives in the cultural sphere, this article reconstructs and compares the conceptions put forward by the two international organizations, both of which claim to be the offspring of European culture and to ensure its safeguarding. Is it a question of promoting a culture defined as common in its content - "European culture"- or, more modestly, a European way of looking at culture and harmonized European action in the field (Dumoulin 1999; Sticht 2000)? Which geographical and historical Europe is being referred to in the initiatives put forward? What activities, assets, monuments, and social phenomena are encompassed in the concept of culture? In other words, what are the theoretical and practical boundaries of these actions and who delineates them?

In exploring these issues, this article follows a critical social and historical approach, the aim of which is to contribute to the analysis of the European Union's processes of symbolic justification already explored by anthropologists (Shore 2000; 2006), sociologists (Delanty 1995; Delanty, Rumford 2005) and political scientists (Larat 2006). These authors have revealed the creation through European institutional initiatives of a *grand narrative* on European identity and culture based on a teleological and Eurocentric point of view that seeks to transcend divisions and pluralities in Europe (Delanty 2010: 6-8 ; Delanty, Rumford 2005: 36-39). They also highlighted that this quest for a common cultural tradition defined as European has unavoidably excluded certain traditions, such as the Orthodox and Arab-Muslim traditions (Delanty 1995: 158) and therefore the numerous Europeans with immigrant roots and different cultural traditions (Shore 2006: 18-19). These objections, though justified, are essentially limited to the analysis of actions put forward by the EU - which seems to claim "monopoly on the idea of Europe" (Delanty 1995, 1958). However, though the EU is the most powerful and most studied player, the Council of Europe, which claims the same symbolic referent, *Europe*, suggests a different conception. Comparing their positions enables us to shed light on the reasons behind distinct institutional rationales and initiatives.

Moreover, existing studies often indicate the EU as a monolithic entity, hiding the fact that tensions may emerge between its institutions and agents. The CoE and the EU are indeed composite organizations open to external influences. Specific groups and players within these organizations have promoted cultural initiatives which, at times, have met with fierce opposition, especially as regards the EU. Similar initiatives have often found inspiration and support in non-governmental organizations (Autissier 2005) and have drawn on UNESCO's work globally (Brossat 1999). Finally, let us add that the CoE and the EU have regularly cooperated in this sphere and that their interactions, ranging from open rivalry to close collaboration, have resulted in contrasting conceptions of the type of culture to be addressed in their respective

activities. While the EU's activity in the cultural sphere is the subject of abundant literature, that of the CoE has attracted less attention. The few works on the subject focus on a limited historical period, from 1949 to 1968 (Guillen 1997; Brunner 2010) or have been published by the CoE itself (Grosjean 1998). The approach to European culture by various international organizations (e.g.. EU, CoE, UNESCO) has been the focus of several publications but without the links between them ever being explored (Brossat 1999; Sticht 2000; Autissier 2005; Sassatelli 2009). Many authors have emphasized the CoE's "think tank" role as concerns cultural cooperation in Europe (Dubois 2001: 5; Sassatelli 2009: 58) without analysing the impact or mechanisms of its influence. Recent historical research has shed light on the role of informal networks in the interactions between the CoE and the EU in the cultural sphere (Patel, Calligaro: 2017). Focusing on the two organizations' sharing of ideas and concrete actions, the present article examines the definitions of culture suggested by both over the long-term and shows how they are based on distinct conceptions.

The analysis of their approaches draws on concepts forged by cultural sociology in its effort to categorize cultural objects, their audience and promotion (or not) by public authorities. The concept of "legitimate culture" refers to those cultural objects and practices valued by the ruling class and which are considered the only ones worthy of public intervention (Bourdieu: 1979). The existence of a legitimate culture implies a hierarchy of cultural products expressed in a series of dichotomies: elite/mass, scholarly/popular, high/low, etc. (Fabiani: 2003). "High culture" includes artistic and architectural heritage, masterpieces and avant-garde creations, while so-called popular or minority cultures draw on an anthropological understanding of culture that encompasses lifestyles and ways of thinking specific to a given social group. This distinction helps to understand the orientation taken by the CoE and the EU in their respective cultural activities, which reflect very different rationales. The CoE, like the EU, first set forth to highlight "high" European culture. However, in line with its role as a defender of rights (political, social and economic), which it progressively affirmed, it very quickly sought to promote the diversity of cultural expressions, minority cultures and socially or geographically marginal cultures. On the contrary, the aspiration for greater political integration based on a common historical and cultural foundation, which from the outset encouraged the promoters of the EU's cultural action, led them to favour a heritage and elitist culture, despite a slow diversification of content. This approach is close to the French conception of cultural policy, which has persistently promoted the legitimate culture of the elite to the detriment of popular or minor cultures (Dubois 2003). The coalitions within the European institutions that have promoted community-based action in the cultural field have often been driven by French policy-makers (Littoz-Monnet 2003) and the administrative units that successively inherited the cultural sector from the European Commission have lastingly adopted this "high culture" approach, causing much criticism within the European community. While some aspects of culture in its anthropological meaning encompassing local or minority cultures and traditions, urban and popular practices, etc. may appear in some areas of intervention such as tourism, social cohesion, and regional or environmental policies (Dubois 2001; Staiger 2013), they remain marginal in the cultural action of the EU *stricto sensu*. The Council of Europe, in its divisions dedicated to culture and heritage,

soon broadened the spectrum to the socio-economic dimensions of culture, to the extent that today a properly cultural sector tends to disappear from its activities having been subordinated to the general objectives of "Democratic Governance".

This development is traced by focusing the analysis on the interactions between the two organizations as well as on the origin and conceptual basis of their flagship cultural programmes[2]. After the presentation of the first decades of the Council of Euorpe's cultural action and the conditions for the emergence of European community cultural initiatives, interactions between the CoE and the EU are being studied, from the competition of the 1970s and 1980s to the collaboration initiated in the course of the 1990s. The last section deals with developments observed from 2000s. While culture in the action of both organizations is now secondary to the attainment of socio-economic goals, their approach to culture remains divergent: whereas the CoE focuses on the demonstration and promotion of diversity, within the EU institutions, emphasis on economics does not entail abandoning the use of culture as an identity marker.

*The Council of Europe: from 'Propaganda' through Culture to the Democratization of Culture (from 1949 to the 1980s)*

The Council of Europe has been competent in cultural matters from the outset. Article 1 of its statute emphasizes the possibility for its members to «conclude agreements and adopt common action in cultural matters»[3]. During the first session of the Consultative Assembly in 1949, parliamentarians reflected on ways in which the Council of Europe could develop this cooperation. Their discussions reveal that the promotion of European culture was then subordinated to the objective that still animated the majority of them - the emergence of a European awareness within the population as the condition for the advent of a federal Europe (Council of Europe: 1949). This militant spirit of the early days explains a very political conception of culture in the Council of Europe of the 1950s, which is reflected in its first cultural initiative of European scale. In 1952, the Belgian representative of the Committee of Cultural Experts, set up in 1950 and made up of government representatives of the member states, proposed organizing a travelling series of art exhibitions aimed at «illustrating the great movements of civilisation that have in various periods over the past contributed to create Europe's cultural and artistic unity».[4] The designers of these exhibitions described them as a «valuable source of spiritual propaganda [...] which would help to arouse the European conscience without being subjected to criticism

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2 The analysis does not take into account the audiovisual policy, which right from the start was assigned to distinct actions and programmes in both organisations. See Polo (2003) and, concerning the interactions between organisations in this field, Patel and Calligaro (2017).

3 Statute of the Council of Europe, 1949: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/RoP/Statut_CE_2015-EN.pdf

4 Council of Europe Archives, Dos. 20015-1, 24.09.1952, *Lettre de Julien Kuypers à Camille Paris, Secrétaire général du Conseil de l'Europe.*

from political or nationalist quarters»[5]. Culture therefore appeared as a means to spread federalist propaganda with little risk of triggering national governments' animosity, while capturing the public's attention through the «spectacular staging of European unity».[6] The fine arts were thus endowed with an ability to illustrate Europeanness. They were, however, limited to an educated audience and did not appeal to the masses[7]. Held in Brussels in 1954, the theme of the first exhibition, "Humanist Europe", confirmed this orientation in favour of a learned culture.

The same year as its first art exhibition, the CoE adopted a founding text, the European Cultural Convention. The first agreement in cultural matters to be ratified by a European organization, it proposed to «adopt a policy of concerted action aimed at safeguarding European culture and encouraging its development»[8]. The text essentially deals with «common cultural heritage», which includes «objects of European cultural value», but also «languages, history, and civilisation». Common culture is also embodied in «cultural activities of European interest». This pivotal text therefore adopted a broad definition of European culture, at once a material and immaterial heritage received from the past that must be safeguarded, and activities to be encouraged in the present. The CoE Art Exhibitions, still organized today, were the first initiative carried out within the framework of the Cultural Convention. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the exhibitions illustrated the major artistic movements of European 'high culture', from Mannerism to the avant-garde movements of the 20th century (Council of Europe, 2004). The geographic area delineated by these exhibitions was broadened by the 1964 exhibition, "Byzantine Art-A European Art" held in Athens. As the exhibition title suggests, the key issue for the Greek organizers was to demonstrate the Europeanness of an art set at the «crossroads of the Greek and Eastern worlds», which had been a major factor in the emergence of European art.[9] These exhibitions therefore appeared as an opportunity for host countries to show their Europeanness to fellow member states and to an educated audience. The CoE's first *modus operandi* thus consisted in a recurring celebration of elements of European culture.

At the beginning of the 1970s, without giving up its action in the field of cultural heritage, the CoE adopted an even broader conception of culture. This evolution drew on numerous conferences and platforms organized by the CoE, which became an essential part of its activity (Grosjean 1998: 99). In these European forums, government and association representatives met on a regular basis to develop new standards and practices in the cultural sphere. In the process, without completely losing its "European" epithet, culture acquired a more local and social dimension. In response to the post-

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5 Council of Europe Archives, Dos. 20015-1, 29.08.1953, EXP/Cult/Art(53)1, "Memorandum presented by the Belgian delegation on the organisation of an exhibition devoted to humanist Europe", p.1.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Council of Europe Archives, Dos. 20015-1, 25.10.1952, EXP/Cult(52)27 Appendix D, "Proposal concerning the organisation of a series of European Exhibitions", p. 1.

8 European Cultural Convention, 1954:
http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/treaty/018

9 Council of Europe Archives, Council for Cultural Co-operation, "Byzantine Art - A European Art" Report on the 9th Art Exhibition of the Council of Europe held in Athens, 27 April 1965.

1968 protests against the cultural order, the concepts of "cultural development" and "cultural diversity" were placed at the heart of debates[10]. They were later included in the recommendations of the Parliamentary Assembly, which proposed to adopt a more anthropological approach to culture that went beyond architecture and the fine arts:

> Cultural policy can lo longer limit itself exclusively to taking measures for the development, promotion and popularization of the arts; an additional dimension is now needed: respect for […] the rights of minority groups and their cultural expressions. In such a cultural democracy, special efforts must be made on behalf of hitherto underprivileged groups (Council of Europe 1976).

In the 1980s, this democratization and extension of the cultural field manifested itself in the increasing involvement of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, the political assembly of local and regional representatives of CoE member states. In collaboration with the CoE's Committee for Culture and Heritage, it organized a series of conferences on cultural policy, including "City and Culture" in 1983 and "Culture and Region" in 1987 (Grosjean 1998: 41).

*The European Community: 'High Culture' in the Service of European Integration (the 1970s and 1980s)*

Contrary to the Council of Europe, the European Economic Community (EEC) had originally no authority in cultural affairs. In accordance with the Treaty of Rome, cultural goods and services were to be treated as any other market economy product. This approach dominated until the 1980s (Littoz-Monnet 2007). For member states opposed to action in the cultural sphere, the existence of the CoE and its authority in this matter was a forceful argument. Indeed, the EEC's initiatives, besides being outside its mandate, would have been redundant (Brossat 1999: 320). Therefore, the European Council's 1972 memorandum *Pour une action communautaire dans le domaine de la culture* was essentially limited to economic regulation. However, in 1973, the European Commission established a division in charge of "Problems of the Cultural Sector", which quickly prompted "positive" action by the EEC in the field (Grégoire 2000). The same year, the establishment of a committee on Youth and Cultural Affairs within the European Parliament (EP) created additional space for the advancement of this agenda. In 1974, this committee submitted a resolution to support European cultural heritage, mentioning the CoE's activity as an example (EP 1974b). It also made reference to the 1973 declaration of the European Council in Copenhagen, which placed the promotion of European identity on the EEC agenda (European Council 1973). Heritage was presented as the foundation of this identity by the European parliamentarians:

> In view of the intention expressed in the Declaration of Copenhagen in

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10 Final declaration of the European symposium *"Prospective du développement culturel"*, 7-11 April 1972, Salines royales d'Arc and Senans, organised by the European Cultural Foundation with the support of the Council of Europe and of the French Ministry of Culture.

> 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 (EP, 1974a).

This political use of culture as a symbol of a common identity remained a leitmotiv in debates on EEC action in the cultural field, which intensified throughout the 1980s. At the European Council, the idea was gaining acceptance. The Solemn Declaration on the European Union signed in Stuttgart in 1983 included «cooperation on cultural matters and joint activities in the dissemination of culture» (European Council 1983: 6). The same year, strong impetus was also given at the intergovernmental level by the creation of an informal cultural council led by, among others, the French and Greek ministers, Jack Lang and Melina Mercouri (Littoz-Monnet 2007: 49). The intergovernmental project which was to become one of the EU's flagship programs - European Capitals of Culture - was launched in this context. Starting with Athens in 1985, it was followed by Florence in 1986, Amsterdam in 1987, Berlin in 1988, and Paris in 1989, on the bicentennial of the Revolution. The "high culture" of these emblematic cities served to illustrate a series of historical heritages: Ancient Greece, the Italian Renaissance, the French Revolution, and so on (Sassatelli 2009: 89-94). In that respect, the CoE's Art Exhibitions and the European Capitals of Culture originally pursued the same objectives, namely to draw, by means of a travelling event, a historical and geographical map of European culture. This patrimonial approach was also reflected in the activities of the European Commission. In 1984, it granted a subsidy for the restoration of the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis, the "cradle of European democracy", which, according to some MEPs, the EEC had the duty to preserve (Calligaro 2013: 87-88). The European fund created that same year to safeguard European heritage was essentially dedicated to symbolic monuments, mostly Greco-Roman or Christian (Ruel 2001). The showcasing of these monuments contributed to the writing of a grand European narrative aimed at glorifying the origins of a community formed prior to its institutions, founded after 1945, and partly justifying its existence.

### *The CoE and the EU: Competition and Cooperation in Cultural Affairs (from the 1970s to the 1990s)*

These cultural European initiatives, although modest, caused concern within the Council of Europe. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted numerous recommendations to emphasize its prerogatives in the field, stressing that the EEC, responsible strictly for economic matters, had no legitimacy in cultural affairs, which could not be defined as a market sector[11]. Parliamentarians condemned the EEC's choice to «promote exclusively elements common to all Europe, to the detriment of cultural diversity». At that time, the CoE was reorienting its own action according to the concepts of cultural development and democracy. All their objections

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11 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Recommendation 704 (1973) Recommandation 607 (1975), Recommandation 940 (1982), Recommendation 850 (1979).

were summarized in the pejorative term "Euro culture" (Council of Europe 1979: 29). In their view, because the CoE embodied "Greater Europe", it was in a better position to promote European culture (Council of Europe 1982). Indeed, the EEC's action was limited to its members, therefore excluding a large number of European countries while reducing the concept of European cultural heritage (Council of Europe 1986: 3). Some of these remarks were soon echoed within EEC institutions, including the EP. In the 1980s, through a series of resolutions, the EP urged broadening the spectrum of culture promoted by EEC initiatives, insisting on the importance of industrial heritage but also on regional languages, cultures and traditions (EP 1982a; 1982b; 1982c). The question of how much importance should be given to these minority cultures became critical when the time came to develop the first cultural programmes, once the necessary authority had been secured in 1992.

The Treaty of Maastricht indeed granted authority in cultural matters to the EU, institutionalizing a process already well under way. Article 128 stipulates that «The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore», revealing a duality - cultural diversity/ common heritage - as difficult to comprehend as to carry out (Theiler 2005: 69). The European Commission was nevertheless given the mission to conceive a programme on this basis. Its early suggestions attracted criticism from the Economic and Social Committee (1992) and the EP (1994), whose members condemned its overly narrow definition of culture, *i.e.* limited to "high culture". Acknowledging the weakness of its expertise, the Directorate General for Information and Culture (DG x) then sought advice from the CoE. During the 1993-1995 period, the DG x invited officials from the CoE's Direction for Culture and Heritage to discuss EEC's plans for cultural programs (Council of Europe 1995: Interviews with Baer, Bouratsis and Weber). In 1995, it was the turn of the EP Committee on Culture to invite the CoE to discuss programmes put forward by the European Commission (Council of Europe 1995: 27). As a result of this cooperation, the EU made its first financial contributions to cultural programmes of the CoE. In 1991, the latter had launched the European Heritage Days initiative, drawing directly on the programme begun by the French Ministry of Culture in 1983 (Interview with Weber). Once a year, based on a common theme, sites usually inaccessible are made available to the public, on the same day, in every member state. The adoption of this programme illustrates the transposition, at the European level, of ways of celebrating heritage typical of the French cultural policy. As early as 1994, the European Commission granted financial support to the project, which became a joint programme of the two organisations in 1999 (Council of Europe 1999). The programme highlights European culture as being first and foremost a heritage (museums, art collections, institutional monuments, archaeological sites, etc.) scattered in various regions or nations. Its Europeanness is therefore essentially performative: the places celebrated become "European" because they are visited within the framework of an event described as European and organised at a European level.

Despite criticisms and discussions with the CoE, the first EEC programmes, adopted in 1996, confirmed the elitist approach of the previous decades. Three programmes were launched in the years 1996-1999: Kaleidoscope (contemporary creation), Ariane

(support for the translation of European books), and Raphael (cultural heritage). Echoing the arguments formulated some years before by the Economic and Social Committee and the EP, the European Committee of the Regions, established in 1994, repeatedly criticised these programmes, once again condemning the narrowness and elitism of the culture targeted (Committee of the Regions, 1997). Kaleidoscope offered financial aid to cultural organisations essentially operating in the field of institutionalized artistic disciplines such as dance, theatre, and the visual arts, associated to a demanding type of creation and appealing to sophisticated audiences. The Raphael programme, too, presented a narrow definition of heritage, limited to "high culture", and failed to acknowledge the diversity of local cultural expressions (Committee of the Regions, 1996).

During the same period, the CoE was consolidating its own approach centred on the local and social aspects of culture. Launched in 1992, the programme "Culture and Neighbourhoods" was meant to demonstrate, on the basis of pilot projects, how cultural policies could contribute to the socio-economic development of urban areas characterized by great cultural diversity (Council of Europe, 1993). Among the programme's priorities was the management of this diversity, which had increased with the migration phenomenon (Grosjean, 1998, 45).

*From 2000 onwards: Contrasted uses of Cultural "Heritage" and "Diversity" by the CoE and the EU*

Respect for the diversity of national and regional cultures has been enshrined in the Treaty since 1992 (Art.128). The 1990s and 2000s have seen the rise of the cultural diversity concept in EU texts, where the diversity of cultural goods is presented as an economic asset to be preserved and promoted (Barnett, 2001, 416; Staiger, 2012, 28).[12] With the European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World adopted in 2007, the economic potential of culture has become the main focus of the Commission's action, overshadowing the symbolic and identity dimension of its activities in the field (Littoz-Monnet 2015)[13]. This Agenda for Culture has also established as an objective the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, a new concept for EU internal policy. The 2004 eastern enlargement invited the EU to reconsider its understanding of cultural diversity. The new member countries brought with them a historical legacy sometimes marked by Ottoman influence, Orthodox or Muslim religious traditions and the presence of large ethnic minorities such as the Roma. As early as 2005, the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EC) of the European Commission proposed for 2008 a European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The aim was to foster awareness of the increased cultural diversity within the EU, given its territorial enlargement and international migration. The concept of intercultural dialogue was presented as «a response to major changes in the composition of the EU and in the representation of its peoples and as a tool for managing our increasingly

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12 For a discussion on the place of cultural diversity in EU trade policy, see Vlassis 2016.

13 The evolution of the European Capitals of Culture programme, increasingly aimed at tourism and economic development, prefigured this shift from the 1990s (voir Sassatelli 2009, 95-98).

rich diversity» (European Commission 2005). The concept was actually borrowed from the CoE, which had it in its texts and programmes since the mid-1990s (Endres 2010). The CoE was an official partner of the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and provided its conceptual basis: the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (Council of Europe 2008a), which was largely dedicated to the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities, notably through culture. Immigration, religion and minorities were thus among the main themes of the European Year. A majority of the seven flagship events dealt with immigration, giving prominence to urban areas characterized by high ethnic diversity and highlighting cultural practices associated with these places, such as hip hop. In addition, one of the year's main events was the organization of the first European summit on the Roma population (European Commission 2009: 21-48). That Year dedicated to intercultural dialogue led to joint projects of the two organizations, based on previous CoE initiatives, such as the European Academic Network on Romani Studies, created in 2011 to support research on Roma culture, or Intercultural Cities dedicated to cultural diversity in urban areas (Council of Europe 2008b). The initiatives of the DG EC in the field of "cultural revitalization" of minority practices and disadvantaged areas (Dubois 2003: 23) often took place in partnership with the CoE, remaining at the margin of the DG EC action. The cooperation revealed the resistance of the DG EC to a socio-economic approach to cultural action, perceived as too far from the traditional definitions of culture. Indeed, in 2011, the European Commission did not renew its funding for the Intercultural Cities project, considering that culture, understood as artistic activities, was not sufficiently accounted for in this program focusing on social cohesion and the integration of migrants (Interview with Guidokova).

The last major cultural program adopted by the EU, the European Heritage Label, indicates that a heritage approach to culture remains strong. The initiative was launched in 2005 by the French Ministry of Culture, citing as a model the CoE which had, as early as 1987, designed a Cultural Routes label for transnational routes or series of sites and cultural goods scattered across Europe and embodying different aspects of European heritage (Ministry of Culture and Communication, 2007). Following the designation in 1987 of the first route, the Santiago De Compostela Pilgrim Route, the project was institutionalized up to a partial agreement between member states in 2010. The symbolic and identity dimension of the program is clearly stated:

> The Cultural Routes demonstrate, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries of Europe contributes to a shared cultural heritage. […] They act as channels for intercultural dialogue and promote a better knowledge and understanding of European history[14].

A program manager describes the itineraries as "cultural tourism products", the aim of which is to foster the creation of networks among local tourist boards and cultural organisations and to ensure the development of areas, urban or rural, through the economic impulse that heritage may generate (Berti 2013). The themes of the 29

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14 See a presentation of the programme on the European Institute of Cultural Routes website: http://culture-routes.net/cultural-routes

existing itineraries are very diverse: megalithic cultures, Vikings and Phoenicians, Jewish heritage and the legacy of al-Andalus, pilgrimage routes, Huguenots and Waldenses, Napoleon, Mozart, Art Nouveau and totalitarian architecture. The itineraries thus map Europe in space and time, shedding light, beyond classical heritage, on transnational migratory and cultural phenomena, religious minorities and negative legacies such as those of Fascist and Soviet totalitarianisms.

The European Heritage Label of the EU, if similar, stems from a different logic. Between 2007 and 2011, the French Ministry of Culture developed the project with the aim of «highlighting the European dimension of cultural goods, monuments, archaeological sites, intangible heritage and places of remembrance, testimonies to history and European heritage» and of «strengthening in European citizens a common sense of identity and of belonging to a common cultural area» (Ministry of Culture and Communication 2011: 10 ). These objectives reflect the persistence of the belief in the identity potential of cultural heritage, a belief still shared at the EU level, which turned the project into an official programme of the DG EC in 2011 (EP, 2011). On the recommendation of a panel of experts, the European Commission awards the Label to sites «selected for their symbolic value, the role they have played in the European history and activities they offer that bring the European Union and its citizens closer together».[15] The symbolic and narrative dimension of the sites chosen is central. The Label essentially allows sites to exhibit a "seal" of Europeanness and the EU to Europeanize a selection of heritage elements. Some sites illustrate traditional elements of the European narrative, such as the Acropolis of Athens and a Roman city in Austria for classical culture, Cluny Abbey and the Tallinn Gothic Town Hall for medieval Europe. Others are archives of Europe's democratic progress: the Polish Constitution of 1791 or the Charter of 1867 abolishing the death penalty in Portugal. Some places refer to the Nazi oppression (Westerbork camp in the Netherlands), resistance to this oppression (Franja's supporters' hospital in Slovenia) and resistance to Stalinism (shipyards in Gdańsk). Finally, this European heritage also refers to the founding fathers of the Union, with the museum houses of Robert Schuman and Alcide de Gasperi. These places, put end to end, constitute a narrative punctuated by the stages of an integrated Europe that would have its roots in the ancient world, would have expanded over the centuries resisting the divisions brought about, notably, by the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, and thanks, among other things, to the vision of founding fathers. The political use of heritage is conspicuous here.

Although a historical narrative is also present in the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, it lacks this linear and teleological dimension. It is polycentric and integrates cultural and geographical "peripheries", giving Europe relatively porous historical and cultural boundaries. While cultural heritage remains a subject of great attention for the EU, which will dedicate a European Year to it in 2018, the place held by this concept in the policies of the CoE has continued to be questioned in recent years. Its Art Exhibitions, which used to «focus on Europe and its unity», have been renamed "We, the others" to reflect the shift in the organization's priorities towards «democracy,

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15 See a presentation of the programme on the European Commission website:
  https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/heritage-label_en

human rights, and respect for difference and diversity»[16]. Generally speaking, in a context of budget reductions, the CoE is reforming and reducing its activities[17], increasingly focusing its cultural action on socio-economic objectives (Interviews with Weidmann and Guidikova).


*Conclusion*

While both claiming to have their roots in a common European culture and despite their cooperation, the CoE and the EU have adopted contrasting conceptions of culture. Geography and the institutional nature and objectives of the two organisations account for these distinct approaches. A socio-historical perspective and the comparison between the two organisations allow a critical analysis of the different political logics that preside over their definition of European identity and culture as well as their approach to culture as an object of public intervention. The players who promoted EEC cultural action pursued integrationist aims. At first limited to the arts and heritage, culture had to be put at the service of political unification by providing a symbolic foundation and bringing citizens closer to this vision. While this political use of culture existed within the CoE, it was soon joined by a more anthropological understanding of culture aiming at local and individual development. The rhetoric of economic and social development has become central to the EU's discourse, which now focuses on the capacity of the cultural sector to contribute to employment and growth. This largely benefits the 'creative industries', often producers of mass culture. However, when the European Commission, beyond its functions as harmonizer and economic regulator, sets out to highlight the common culture of Europe, the scope remains relatively circumscribed, favouring historical heritage and established art forms. Without further pretending to define European culture, the symbolic programmes of the DG EC nevertheless offer a relatively centralized view of culture through emblematic places and creations, revealing the persistence of a political use of culture. Within the CoE, whose expertise in cultural policy was recognized at an early stage, culture in its patrimonial and artistic sense is now marginal within an approach in the service of policies directed at democratization, social cohesion and local development.

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16 Description of the Art Exhibitions' new concept on the organisation's official website: http://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/art-exhibitions

17 The Council of Europe's reform on the organisation's official website: http://www.coe.int/t/reform/timeline_en.asp

*Interviews*

Jean-Michel Baer, Head of Cultural Action and Audiovisual Policy, DG x, European Commission (1994-2003), 31 October 2014.

Aristotelis Bouratsis, Unit Head for Audiovisual Policy, Culture and Sport, DG x, European Commission (1994-2000), 6 November 2014.

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