

"ESSEN DECLARATION:"
TEN AXIOMS FOR THE CULTURE INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE

EU PRESIDENCY CONFERENCE: "CULTURE INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE – A
COMPARASION OF DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS"
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Essen Declaration: 10 Axioms for the Culture Industries in Europe

The "Essen Declaration: 10 Axioms for the Culture Industries in Europe" is one outcome of the EU German Presidency Conference: "Culture Industries in Europe – A Comparison of Development Concepts" held from May 19th to 21st 1999 at the Zeche Zollverein, Essen. The conference was supported by the Ministry of Economy and Business, Technology and Traffic and by the Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs, Urban Development, Culture and Sports of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, in co-operation with the Federal Foreign Office. It was organised by STADTart, ERICarts and the University of Dortmund.

The conclusions of the congress have been synthesised into "The Essen Declaration".

Preamble

The purpose of the axioms which make up the "Essen Declaration" is to strengthen the culture industries in Europe at the turn of the 21st century and to provide a fresh impetus for local and regional development. The term "culture industries" refers to all businesses and independent contractors operating in the fields of culture, the arts and media (private-sector culture industries, products and services); it is a term which clearly calls for constant redefinition to take account of local, regional and national contexts. The axioms underline the economic and cultural importance of the private culture industries and point to many ways in which these industries might be strengthened by economic, culture and urban-development policies, particularly in the context of local and regional development strategies.

For the participants of the conference, the 10 axioms represent both a fundamental statement on European, national and regional policy in a variety of sectors, as well as an instrument to promote existing initiatives on the ground. The axioms are addressed to the various actors in the field of culture industries as well as to decision-makers in the ministries and institutions responsible for promoting economic development, employment and culture.

1. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES represent a distinct economic sector:**
The sub-markets of the Culture Industries are a rich mosaic of often interwoven sectors of the economy; in terms of the Culture Industries, Europe's cities and regions display distinct and individual profiles. However, the statistical systems and categories conventionally used fail to capture the breadth and diversity of the structures found within the Culture Industries. Consequently, the Culture Industries must come to be seen as a distinct entity for economic, culture and urban-development policies. Only when this is achieved will it be possible to give full recognition to the significance of the Culture Industries for the economy and for society in general, for labour-market policy, for urban development and for infrastructure.
2. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES are future-orientated:**
The Culture Industries are distinguished by high levels of creativity and innovation in a market in which the majority of goods and services are essentially not substitutable. These industries develop both substantive content and new technologies. In its core areas employment in the Culture Industries calls for broadly-based vocational training

cultural knowledge and high qualification levels, and a high degree of commitment.

3. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES can secure and create sustainable employment at regional level:**

The Culture Industries create jobs outside the public sector. The various sub-sectors of the Culture Industries sector, in which small and medium-sized businesses predominate, are highly labour-intensive and tend to be firmly embedded in local milieus and regional networks.

4. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES can help to reinforce endogenous regional potential:**

The Culture Industries are dependent to a very considerable degree on traditions and cultural diversity, on "know-how" and on innovative networks in the towns and cities and in the regions of Europe. In an age of globalisation, the products and services supplied by these industries accentuate regional profiles and in turn also improve the underlying conditions affecting general economic development.

5. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES deploy Europe's historic heritage:**

In the competitive global marketplace Europe's greatest potential is its history and traditions. Europe's rich and diverse cultural landscapes are the product of centuries of creativity on the part of artists, craftsmen and women, technicians, and their clients. The Culture Industries build upon these potentials, while at the same time contributing to developing them for the future. In many areas of cultural employment, the Culture Industries protect cultural landscapes and thus preserve a contrast to the levelling effect of mass global consumption.

6. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES need an active culture policy:**

The Culture Industries promote cultural development at local level. However, the Culture Industries can neither sell their products nor provide services in the absence of a diverse cultural environment supported in part by the public sector.

7. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES need an active economic policy:**

Sector-orientated strategies and policies need to be developed for a number of sub-markets of the Culture Industries in order to improve the conditions for Culture Industries in the cities and regions of Europe. This will also contribute to securing existing structures and to developing innovative potential. New businesses starting up in the Culture Industries sector need dedicated support programmes and individual assistance, for example in the form of customised information and advisory services or access to venture capital.

8. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES require support from urban-development policy:**

Urban environments for working and living at locations with international appeal are preconditions for successful Culture Industries. Both small and medium-sized businesses are eager to utilise the built cultural heritage for their own activities and for programmes offered for tourists. In turn the Culture Industries reinforce the centres of European cities by making them livelier and safer.

9. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES require integrated urban and regional policy:**

Linking the three policy fields providing support for "Culture", "Economic Development" and "Urban Development" can create synergy effects for many areas of urban and regional development. Developing such strategies and projects calls for new forms of co-operation and for networking to bring together these distinct policy fields.

in cities and regions. With the reform of the EU's structural funds, the cultural sector has been given a new status. It is now vital to ensure both at European level and within member states that more of the funds made available through the structural funds are now channelled into promoting this sector.

10. **The CULTURE INDUSTRIES require a fitting context in Europe:**

The future development of Culture Industries is dependent on the context provided by legal and formal frameworks and by infrastructure – all of which must give full recognition to the specific characteristics of towns and regions – and on the existence of flexible partners both in public administration and in the financial sector. The trade in cultural goods and the exchange of services provided by the Culture Industries call for balanced rates of taxation and levels of social security contributions and uniform copyright law, etc. European policy can support these processes by harmonising the legal and economic frameworks within which they take place.

Essen, May 1999