



**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PLENARY SESSION OF THE  
CULTURE AND LIVE PERFORMING ARTS  
SOCIAL DIALOGUE COMMITTEE, 20.06.2008**

**Chair:** Mr. Richard Pulford (PEARLE\*) and Mr Matti Hollopainen (PEARLE\*)

**1. Approval of the agenda / approval of minutes of last working group session**

Agenda item 2 was expanded to also include an update from Marta Pradanos on activities in DG Employment. It was noted that Richard Pulford might have to leave the meeting prior to the end and that in this case, Matti Hollopainen kindly agreed to assume the chair. The agenda of the meeting is approved.

**2. Approval of the minutes of the last working group session (21 April 2008)**

Following a few minor corrections, the minutes of the working group session are approved.

**3. Update on relevant Commission activities, DG EAC and DG Employment**

**a. Structured Dialogue: feedback from DG EAC on the constitutive meetings of the cultural platforms**

Anna Athanasopoulou from DG EAC was present at the meeting, in order to offer the group some feedback from the constitutive meetings of the two new civil society stakeholder platforms on *Access to Culture* and on *Cultural and Creative Industries*. She outlined the function of the platforms (along with the existing “*Rainbow Platform on Intercultural Dialogue*”) to be partners within a structured dialogue at European level to progress on the overarching objectives of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC), namely to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; to promote culture as a catalyst for creativity (in line with the aims of the Lisbon strategy); and to promote and implement culture within the EU’s International Relations. She described the role of the platforms within the overall framework of the OMC: they should provide a coordinated voice for civil society; contribute actively to the setting of the agenda; provide links through their membership to work with authorities at local, national and regional level and deepen links between the EU institutions and civil society across the EU. In this context, the independence of the platforms; the practice-based input which they can offer; the structuring of their work around the priority areas of the OMC; and the complementarity of this work to the ongoing work of the platform members, are of particular importance for the success of the platforms. She briefly described the structures (platforms and thematic subgroups) that have emerged after the constitutive meetings of the platforms.

The social partners expressed their support for the initiative and their commitment to being active within the new structures, also representing the social dialogue committee. Social partners raised questions on the financing of the platforms –in particular with a view to invite people whose office is not based in Brussels-, the organisation and structure, the interaction between the platform and the council, and the possibility to involve other sectors or bodies not involved in the constitutive meetings in the platforms. Anna Athanasopoulou answered to all those questions stating that the platforms were to decide themselves on their agenda, organisation and structure. The Commission would finance travel expenses and organisation of a plenary meeting once a year. The EC also says that it would be possible to invite other

stakeholders and that in addition there would be opportunities for interaction at the Cultural Fora in '09 and '10.

**b. Update on current and upcoming activities in DG Employment**

Marta Pradanos (MP) updated the social partners on the latest initiative of DG Employment. She highlighted in particular the forthcoming “Social Package” to be published on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July and the range of proposed communications and activities which it encompasses. She also highlighted upcoming negotiations around the issue of better integration of disfavoured workers. There is also a timetable of work underway for the planned communication on Social Dialogue. This includes consultation on the elements to be addressed, kick off of an impact study in July, meeting with sectoral employers' European social partners, work with the different social dialogue committees, with a synthesis for January, followed by an Impact assessment report and Draft Communication in March 2009. The Communication is due in October '09.

**4. Mobility: touring to the USA: presentation by DG Justice on the US visa waiver programme**

This item was moved to number four on the agenda, in order to facilitate the presence of Ronald Hendrix (RH) from DG Justice. RH briefly outlined the “Visa Waiver Programme” which is a reciprocal programme between the EU Schengen Zone and the United States. This means that coming to the US for tourism or “business” (this is narrowly defined and includes attending meetings, for example) for up to 90 days requires no visa. The Schengen zone exempts the US from visas in general, though work permits are still required. There is also cooperation on addressing issues like information sharing, air marshals and terrorist listings. New systems are being introduced to increase flexibility. On the EU side, the aim is to get all Member States into it and a memorandum of understanding is being prepared to this end.

This also means addressing the new issue of “ESTA”s (Electronic System Travel Authorisation). These have been introduced for people travelling without visas and are voluntary from the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. Essentially it consists of the same questions that appear on the form to be completed on the airplane at present, but there are some extra and it has to be done over the internet. If you don't get the Esta, you would have to apply for a visa. It is presently open for discussion and the EU is deciding whether it constitutes a visa. The commission is also examining the possibility of an EU-Esta, as part of its border control work.

The social partners highlighted some of the difficulties experienced by artists: one difficulty is that even when they are travelling for “business” in the sense meant in the visa waiver programme (eg: a meeting with a producer) they may find themselves viewed with suspicion and turned back, due to the presence of an instrument for example. For artists who are travelling to work, obtaining a visa is a long, complicated and often expensive process, which greatly hinders the kind of travel and touring that may be fundamental to their work. The social partners also drew RH's attention to the previous correspondence with Commissioner Frattini on this issue. RH undertook to look at the letter and the questions raised and to see what progress has been made. He will communicate this back to the group. The social partners also agreed to resend their letter on this issue in view of the change of the commissioner in DG Justice.

**5. Theatre Technicians Forum:**

Mr Matti Hallopainen took the chair following Richard Pulford's departure.

**a. Theatre technicians forum**

Johannes Studinger (JS) updated the social partners on the unsuccessful project proposal and the grounds why it had been refused. These were not considered fundamental to the project and it was felt that it would be possible and worth reworking it, in the light of the commission criticism, in order to resubmit it for the following call. AD and JS are to liaise on this following the summer break and will update the group at the next meeting.

**b. Presentation of the Leonardo project “live performance technics”**

Chris Van Goethem (ACOD Belgium) who is a member of the group active on this project, gave an update on the evolution of the project and online tool and a demonstration of how it is applicable in practice. He highlighted that the tool facilitates life-long learning and the transfer of innovation.

**6. Enlargement project:**

**a. State of Play on the Visits:**

There was a short update on the state of play with the visits from Romania and Bulgaria. There had been a successful visit of the Romanian unions to Paris where they liaised with the French actors’ and musicians’ unions. The visits of the Bulgarians have not yet taken place. On the employers side the Bulgarians had visited Madrid and Paris. A delegation from Romanian theatre directors was planned to take place towards the end of August.

**b. Future project focussing on Malta and Cyprus and the Southern region of Europe – exchange of views**

TD (FIM) proposed to set up a project, in follow-up of the other enlargement projects focusing on Cyprus and Malta. He thought that perhaps the Balkan countries could be included in this project as well. It was clear that further discussion was needed to refine the proposals further. AD highlighted that there is a strong interest on the employers’ side to focus on the Mediterranean area. The proposal should be further discussed at the next meeting in order to be ready for the next plenary session.

**7. Health and Safety Guidelines for Performers: Presentation by FIA**

Dearbhal Murphy (DM) from FIA presented the FIA Health and Safety Guidelines for performers. In the discussion that followed there emerged a clear view that health and safety is an area where there is a joint responsibility both of artists and the unions that represent them; as well of the employers, to ensure the best situation possible and reduce material and human cost associated with inadequate health and safety standards and practice. On a practical level, there is still scope to raise awareness among artists. It was underlined that there is a lot of legislation and regulations in the different countries and that also different initiatives have been undertaken in the sector across Europe. . All in all, it was felt that there was scope for action by the social dialogue committee to take work in this area forward. In particular, there is room for some stock-taking and research into the present situation and this could go on to the work programme for the committee in the coming months and years.

The next steps identified were first to identify a plan of action. It was proposed to discuss this in the next working group . The social partners agreed to proceed on this basis.

**8. AOB**

There was no other business.