

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

Road map to promote Belarus within the Eastern Partnership initiative in the sphere of culture

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RÉSUMÉ: This document presents an analysis of the situation in the sphere of culture in Belarus within the scope of the priorities and tasks of the Eastern Partnership initiative. This analysis serves as a basis to set priorities and basic directions of actions for Belarus. Special attention is paid to the problem of the absence of an adequate system to monitor and evaluate the way these priorities are being reached. Based on the latest elaborations in the field of studies of the sphere of culture, which are carried out by the UNESCO and European structures, we offer a system of criteria and indicators, which are to be used within the scope of the Eastern Partnership, - the method of open coordination. It includes the necessary nearest steps for various subjects included in the process of integration of Belarus in the all-European space through the sphere of culture. These steps are aimed, first of all, at creating an institutional base for the implementation of the cultural policy of Belarus built in the all-European cultural processes.

1. The general framework and circumstances of building the "road map" to promote Belarus in the field of culture

The Eastern Partnership initiative is the initiative of reconsideration and re-formatting of the policy of Europe towards to its Eastern neighbors. As for Belarus, it is a search and attempt to launch a new format of relations and a new strategy of interaction. In spite of the fact that the EaP was initiated by the EU, its advancement and expansion of the innovative potential lies in the sphere of interests and possibilities of the partner-countries and, first of all, Belarus. The party even more interested in the development of such relations is the pro-European and democracy-oriented part of Belarusian society which is traditionally localized in various structures and associations of civil society. Such a high interest is explained by the format and possibilities of the Eastern Partnership.

The purpose of the Eastern Partnership is rapprochement with the European space. Belarus' civil society is a consecutive supporter of the European vector of the development of the country and a bearer of values of democracy, human rights, and state independence. Therefore, processes of Europeanization lie in the direct sphere of interests and attention of this part of Belarusian society.

The new policy of good neighborhood which is being formed through the Eastern Partnership, is being carried out through the expansion of spheres of cooperation, interaction points, adjustment and coordination of countries' movement trajectories. It means that cooperation becomes a tool of Europeanization, not an award for Belarus' implementation of the conditions to carry out European reforms. The instrumental approach expands possibilities of pragmatic cooperation between the EU and Belarus at the state level. The inclusion of civil society is a guarantor to preserve the values component (democracy, human rights, national culture) within the scope of the instrumental and pragmatic format of relations.

Civil society tries to become a bona fide partner in the development of Belarusian-European relations, joining procedures of monitoring and achievement of the purposes and orienting points of the initiative reference; it sees its place in the strategic planning (formation of agendas) of mutual relations and a new Eastern policy of Europe, as a whole. The Civil Society Forum is a place which will make it possible to completely include civil society in the dialogue at the interstate level. However, this place is still being formed, and it will have to be filled with the contents, while the working processes will have to be launched.

Today, the work of the Civil Society Forum is not built in this dialogue yet: the work with sessions on platforms is not synchronized, the substantial inclusion in program monitoring, strategy planning, and evaluation is not provided.

The suggested road maps on various platforms are a substantial offer on the part of civil society, which will allow it to bona fide join the dialogue on interaction of the partner-countries and EU.

Questions of rapprochement of the cultural space of Europe and Belarus lie within the scope of the fourth platform of the Eastern Partnership initiative «Contacts between people». At meetings of this platform (at the interstate level) in June and November 2009, the core objectives and a work program for 2009-2011 were formulated. As for the sphere of culture, the priorities are as follows:

- * to establish a dialogue on questions of the policy in the field of culture, with the use of the existing tools;
- * to expand participation of the partner-countries in the EU cultural programs.

In order to implement these purposes, the work program which sets the most important directions and ways of activity, is accepted¹:

1. Development of a political dialogue in the field of culture through the implementation and application of the UNESCO Convention which is an integral part of *acquis communautaire*. The major means of the implementation of the Convention is the Cultural Policy Reviews (under the aegis of the Council of Europe) which allow to carry out monitoring of the cultural policy.

¹ Platform 4 'Contacts between People'. Core objectives and proposed Work Program 2009-2011
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/platforms/docs/platform4_261109_en.pdf

2. Strengthening of participation of the partner-countries in the EU European cultural programs. For this purpose, a special program of the Eastern Partnership to develop culture (Eastern Partnership Culture Program) is being prepared; it is to strengthen actors' possibilities in the cultural sector, to strengthen regional connections, and to assist the inclusive cultural policy. Together with the preparation of the program, the partner-countries should implement their own measures (actions) in order to prepare culture facients for the fullest inclusion in the European cultural programs.

3. The organization of an expanded session of the Cultural Contact Points carried out within the scope of the European cultural program, with inclusion of representatives of the partner-countries, which should spur a distribution of the information on the existing possibilities and means.

4. Distribution of principles of the EU audio-visual policy, in particular - encouragement of a cultural variety at international forums and advancement of the European standards on the policy in the sphere of the mass media.

2. Problems and directions of development in the sphere of culture for Belarus

The priorities outlined in the EaP Platform 4, act as the *general framework* in the formation of the "road map" for Belarus. At the same time, for a concrete definition and formulation of priorities of advancement in the cultural sphere in Belarus, it is necessary to designate a number of moments.

For the formation of priorities and “flagging” of the road map, the *specificity of the situation* in the cultural sphere in Belarus is important. The advancement within the scope of this platform should be grounded on the analysis of the situation and actual problems and tasks in the cultural sphere in Belarus. Thus, for example, our country was among the first ones who ratified the UNESCO Convention. This circumstance is a favorable factor for the use of this document as a tool to organize a dialogue in the sphere of the cultural policy, and it can act as a support for advancement within the scope of the EaP. Thus, it is necessary to outline several main problems which have to do with the implementation of the purposes of the Convention.

First, a considerable segment of Belarusian culture (both modern and traditional) is marginal as for equal possibilities to produce objects of culture, their distribution, and consumption. The basis for such exclusion and marginalization is that this segment (internally various) does not support the general modern ideology offered for the development of Belarusian society, and representations about the history and traditions of Belarusian culture. Since the moment Belarus became independent, the problem of identity of the Belarusian people and Belarusian culture (reconsideration of their borders, historians, history, and the future) has been an argument in the political opposition of various forces, but still has not become a subject of a public dialogue and convention. As a result, questions of the cultural policy - variety preservation, granting of conditions and implementation possibilities, etc. - are

solved through the prism of political loyalty. The present political regime allows development and favors only a certain segment of cultural life – the one which continues the Soviet traditions and does not try to reconsider them. It concerns both manufacture and consumption of objects of culture (music, literature, painting, etc.) and social aspect of distribution and reproduction of culture - a variety of ways of life, development of different cultural identities. Displays of alternative interpretations of traditions, modern life, or the future, drop out from the frameworks of officially recognized «Belarusian culture». They do not get into the “75% of Belarusian music” at radio and TV, have no state support, face difficulties while fundraising, renting premises, or receiving permissions for an organization of events, etc. This circumstance essentially limits representativeness of various Belarusian cultures in interaction with cultures of other peoples and countries.

Liberalization of the attitude to "other" displays of culture, outlined recently, expands the limits of loyalty and borders of allowed displays of culture. However, it does not put and does not solve this question essentially: the inclusion and exclusion borders remain a subject of political will, but not that of a public dialogue concerning culture. In public consciousness and a public dialogue, there are no representations about heteronomy, a variety of Belarusian culture, and it is the basis and source of constant marginalization of these or those segments under the influence of factors of a political character.

The second problem, connected with the above mentioned one, is the state monopoly in the implementation of the cultural policy or in management of processes in culture. The formation of the cultural policy in Belarus is taking place today not within the scope of a dialogue and interaction of various subjects, but in the mode of the implementation of the state policy. Definition of priorities, tasks, problems, and ways of solution is a prerogative of one subject. Procedures of coordination and interaction with various interested subjects - creative unions, public associations, etc. - are feigned with the help of “public associations” created and supported by the state. The practice of creation of state-run public associations, inherited from the Soviet times, is supplemented with special means of survival of the real unions and associations created in the days of Perestroika and the first years of independence as a result of self-organization of culture facients. The precedents of creation of the pro-state Union of Writers and the Union of Poles show the technique to provide public support of the state policy. The problem is that culture facients and art figures, public structures and representatives of various ethnic and denominational cultures are excluded from the solution of questions of the cultural policy.

This problem is especially actually seen concerning the preservation of the cultural-historical heritage. The absence of a dialogue of various public forces and of subsidiarity in restoration and preservation questions, creates conditions when the heritage is destroyed more often, rather than restored.

Accordingly, in interstate and intercultural relations, Belarus appears only in the form of one subject. Private contacts and arrangements are not provided with legitimacy on the territory of the country.

The third problem characterizing the condition of Belarusian culture, is limitation of resources and infrastructure for full-fledged enculturation to modern technologies, availability of new and rare samples of culture. This limitation is set by many factors of a political-economic and socio-cultural character. Thus, the complexity of conducting economic activities on the territory of Belarus affects the quality and variety of cultural products which are available for inhabitants of the country. In Belarus, there is practically no practice of patronage of arts and sponsorship (due to the official absence of very rich people and other restrictions of such activity). Demonstration of rare works of art is conditioned by a recoupment possibility. At the modern level of Belarusians' incomes and the level of requirement and interest in such products and events - acquaintance with masterpieces becomes extremely difficult. As a result, the spectrum of world culture the Belarusians can get to know, is essentially decreasing; possibilities of a dialogue and mutual enrichment decrease. Technical and infrastructural neediness for demonstration of modern works of art limits enculturation not only to elite, but also to mass culture (qualitative music platforms, concert halls, 3D cinemas in Belarus meanwhile are rare and often do not meet the requirements of global stars). The recent political initiative aimed at restricting and controlling the Internet, also becomes an obstacle to an easy access and distribution of products of culture.

A separate line within the scope of this problem is the level of development and cost of services of telecommunications (Internet, TV), as well as abilities to consumption of users: the material possibility of households to afford the Internet, TV; functional literacy to use these sources - work with the computer and Internet, knowledge of foreign languages, etc.

These problems do not pretend to provide a complete description of the situation in Belarus – they only specify the most important points from the point of view of development of the cultural diversity, access to various forms of cultural self-expression, which have appeared in Belarus and other countries of the world².

Realizing the contents and depth of these problems, we understand that inclusion in the all-European cultural space, joint European-Belarusian advancement to expansion of a cultural dialogue demands active inclusion of all three parties: the Belarusian state and its structures, Belarusian civil society, the European structures and programs. «Active inclusion», in this case, assumes that the road map on Belarus within the scope of the EaP Platform 4 should be developed taking into account all these parties. In particular, the development, coordination, and implementation of the plan of actions for civil society is a guarantor of the bona fide dialogue and

² Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) Article 7 – Measures to promote cultural expressions.

overcoming of the described problems. The offer presented below reflects representations of civil society about the most actual reference points, tasks, and necessary steps in the direction of strengthening of interaction of Europe and Belarus in the cultural sphere.

The basic direction of Belarus' inclusion in the all-European cultural space is **distribution of norms and standards of a dialogic, multi-subjective cultural policy and overcoming of marginalization of separate spheres of manufacture and consumption of products of culture, as well as participation in cultural life.**

Movement in this direction should be focused on achievement of some **priorities** which are directly connected with the implementation in Belarus of the UNESCO Convention and development of a cultural dialogue through the available and created tools:

- * Creation of favorable and unobstructed environment for displays of the cultural diversity and access to various forms of cultural expression.

- * Development of a dialogue concerning the questions of the cultural policy between the state sector, civil society, and private sector, in order to surmount monopolization of this sphere.

- * Expansion of cooperation within European programs in the cultural sphere, at level of participants and addressees, and at the level of formation and evaluation of programs.

- * Increase of contacts in the field of culture among the EaP partner-countries; strengthening of processes of formation of the region of the Eastern Partnership with the help of the cultural basis.

These frame reference points, in a certain measure, are wider and are aimed at a longer term than the directions pre-planned by the EaP agendas. At the same time, the steps planned there - preparation of reviews on the use of the Convention, the launch of a special EaP program on culture, inclusion of the partner-countries in the dialogue of Cultural Contact Points, advancement of media standards - are necessary tools in the achievement of the declared above priorities. These priorities are completely in the midway of the UNESCO Convention on protection and encouragement of a variety of forms of cultural expression, which, on the one hand, is signed by Belarus and, on the other hand, is a part of *acquis communautaire* which regulates the development of the sphere of culture on the European space and sets norms of interaction of the EU countries with the third countries.

3. Criteria and indicators of Belarus' promotion according to the described priorities.

The question of criteria and indicators of advancement to the planned priorities becomes especially important if we are inclined to use the method of open coordination (MOC) when implementing the general priorities in the cultural policy.

The MOC is applied in the European Union as “soft rule” in the spheres which need to be united and harmonized. Advantages of the use of this method and its principle are such that they do not mean to catch up with Europe in development of the sphere of culture, but to join the process of development of the all-European cultural space (including the partner-countries), accepting the general priorities and development reference points.

The application of this method in the cultural sphere is fixed in the European cultural program (European Agenda for Culture) accepted by the resolution of the Council on 16 November 2007, “The new method offered by the Commission for cooperation in the sphere of culture, the adapted application of the MOC, taking into account the specificity of the sector, will allow to create a flexible and non-compulsory framework for cooperation in the achievement of the strategic targets of the European cultural program and for a more effective exchange of the best practices»³. The use of the MOC means the implementation of researches of all countries which have decided to take part, with application of identical quantitative and qualitative indicators, so that it would be possible to compare the countries among themselves with the help of the received data. The use of the MOC in a new sphere demands working out of a general system of criteria to evaluate a situation in the partner-countries.

The priorities allocated above lie within the scope of Belarus’ inclusion in the general space of European culture, and, first of all, distribution on our country of the principles and approaches in culture development the European countries are focused on. Therefore, on the one hand, the criteria and indicators of advancement of Belarus to the designated priorities, should be coordinated with the all-European ones and be built in the general system of researches and monitoring of the sphere of culture. On the other hand, Belarus (and the other EaP partner-countries) have their own specific circumstances and conditions of development of the sphere of culture, which are connected to overcoming of the Soviet approach to national culture and management of this sphere.

While formulating criteria and searching for indicators, one more important point is in the balance between quantitative (statistical) and qualitative indicators. The former give a chance of an objective estimation and exact comparison, definition of trends, etc. At the same time, the majority of aspects of cultural life is difficult to seize or is leveled during a statistical estimation. Thus, for example, it is possible to fix a growth or decrease in the quantity of cultural events, exchanges, or restored monuments. But such an approach has no possibility to consider the quality of such restoration: whether the cultural heritage is preserved or, on the contrary, is irrevocably lost. As for the dialogue on problems of culture, we can fix meetings and the number of participants. But these figures cannot say if these meetings and conversations were a dialogue or its imitation. Qualitative researches and estimations always appeal to these or those values and ideals. They cannot be

³ RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture (2007/C 287/01).

objective like statistical data. They can be made objective through positioning of various interests and values in the cultural sphere. Therefore, within the scope of the method of open coordination, it is important to have not only the general system of evaluation, but also an organized public discussion of the results of research, where various groups of interests, public or political forces, reveal their attitude and position in relation to the cultural sphere.

Today, the problem of working out a uniform system of indicators in the cultural sphere is set actively and solved within the scope of the European cultural program: the work of the Eurostat statistical work group in the sphere of culture is renewed; the European statistical system on culture is organized (ESSnet-culture, European Statistical System network)⁴. Neither Belarus, nor EaP countries have to develop their own evaluation system; they just have to join the already implemented solutions and work. At the conference dedicated to questions of statistics in the field of culture, which was carried out within the scope of solutions on the European cultural program, it was recognized that the most developed and adequate to the actual problems now is the structure of statistics in the field of culture, developed by the UNESCO in 2009⁵.

This statistical system makes it possible to widely enough cover the sphere of culture, including in it not only the areas traditionally perceived as cultural, but also the activity connected with them, both economic and social. Besides, through the system of direct indicators, it allows to compare various countries. The structure of statistics offered by the UNESCO, uses a pragmatic definition of culture, which is based on representation of culture as a set of areas, and its task is to measure cultural activity, goods and services, which are produced by industrial and non-industrial processes. Cultural processes are considered in frameworks of a “cultural cycle” which includes creation, manufacture, distribution, demonstration / perception / transfer, consumption / participation.

Within the scope of this consideration, two measurements of culture are introduced: economic and social. It means that it is necessary to take into account and evaluate aspects of manufacture and consumption, which are fixed in the international economic indicators (manufacture volumes, volumes of rendering services, moving of the goods, import / export, employment in manufacture and services, etc.), and aspects of social expression of culture, which are often carried out informally, without economic transactions. Social measurement of culture is split in two spheres: participation and intangible cultural heritage. The first one includes various characteristics of pastime – the time one has watched TV, read books, used a computer and the Internet; visiting of cultural places such as cinemas, theaters, concerts, objects of the cultural heritage; as well as amateur cultural practices for an identity formation - membership in associations of national and ethnic culture, youth

⁴ Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF CULTURE STATISTICS. Note prepared by Eurostat.

⁵ THE 2009 UNESCO FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURAL STATISTICS (FCS), 2009.

or other communities. The sphere of the intangible cultural heritage includes the knowledge of languages and their use, a degree of cultural identification and participation in the identity reproduction. Social measurement of culture is grounded on a specially developed system of indicators⁶ and specialized researches - researches of pastimes, researches of households, etc.

The developed methodology allows to receive a big number of coordinated and comparable data which reflect many aspects of development of the sphere of culture. At the same time, this system of indicators lacks political-legal measurement, i.e. the availability of a legislative base for participation in discussions of questions of culture of various subjects, the absence of restrictions on cultural manufacture and consumption on political grounds, the development of the public sphere, etc. At the same time, these indicators are extremely actual for Belarus and other partner-countries which overcome the Soviet representations about the development of culture and management of culture. Conditions of socio-political transformation of the Soviet system and instability of the “democratic course” of these countries demand an analysis and regular monitoring of the legal base which provides introduction in Belarus of the European attitude in the cultural sphere. It concerns, on the one hand, the supply of the implementation of the UNESCO Convention with the legal tools - coordination and consistency. On the other hand, it is necessary to have an examination of new accepted decrees and laws from the point of view of development of the sphere of culture.

Thus, the UNESCO system of indicators, added with a political-legal measurement, can be accepted as a basis of criteria and indicators to evaluate Belarus’ advancement to the specified priorities. Each of priorities can have the following criteria of evaluation:

1. Creation of favorable and unobstructed environment for displays of the cultural diversity and access to various forms of cultural expression.

* Characteristics of manufacture and consumption in the cultural sphere (a complex of economic indicators reflecting characteristics of manufacture and consumption – the number of the made goods and services, the volume of this sector in the economic structure and gross national product, forms of ownership and the structure of investments into this sphere, import and export volumes, professional and qualifying structure of those who work in the cultural sphere, the structure of preparation and education in the cultural sphere; volumes of visits to cultural objects, expenses on rest and culture within the scope of general consumer expenses, circulation of newspapers, the number of daily newspapers, etc.)

* Availability of forms of cultural expression (indicators of language literacy - possession and use of languages, quantity of studied foreign languages; indicators of availability of participation in cultural practices - quantity and number of cultural

⁶ A complete list of cultural practices is in the International classification of activity for statistics in the field of pastime (ICATUS), developed by the UN in 2005.

communities and associations, characteristics of their activity - participation in actions, means of distribution of information, etc., volumes of students' and other cultural exchanges, structure and volume of using the Internet; economic availability - a parity of available and desirable expenses on culture and rest, level of incomes of the population and the price for various categories of the cultural goods and services).

* Legal base for activity in the sphere of culture and cultural consumption (legislative security of freedom of worship and creed, associations, etc., infringements in the field of access to cultural expression, presence or absence of the factor of political loyalty - black lists, etc.)

2. Development of a dialogue concerning the cultural policy between the state sector, civil society, and the private sectors, in order to overcome monopolization of this sphere.

* Presence and regularity of activity of platforms on discussion of problems of culture, as well as the structure of participants, principles of management of platforms, themes, etc.

* Representation in the mass media of problems of culture, various opinions, etc. (special editions, possibilities of distribution of available editions, etc.)

3. Expansion of cooperation on European programs in the cultural sphere, both at the level of participants and addressees, and at the level of formation and evaluation of programs.

*Quantity, volume (terms, financial volumes, number of participants) and a thematic variety of projects within the scope of the European programs

*Characteristics of partnership within the scope of projects (associated partners, applicants, etc.)

*Number of Belarusian experts included in program monitoring and monitoring of projects in the sphere of culture

* International mobility of art workers and other areas belonging to the sphere of culture: statistical data about cultural actions of an international character (quantity of actions of foreign origin, volume of payments on the intellectual property right in the external balance of payments, degree of participation of national cultural figures in the international activity, comparison of the degree of internationalization between various branches of culture and other statistics).

4. Increase of the number of contacts in the field of culture among the EaP partner-countries, strengthening of processes of formation of the region of the Eastern Partnership with the help of the cultural basis.

* All criteria on the previous priority (participation in European programs), specified for the region of the countries of the Eastern Partnership

* Number of ethnic or national communities (diasporas, associations) in the partner-countries and characteristics of their activity (carried out actions, number of participants, coverage, etc.)

* Representation in the mass media of culture of the partner-countries

4. The situation in the sphere of culture within the scope of the priorities of the Eastern Partnership.

The organization and condition of the system of research, analysis, and data gathering about the cultural sphere in Belarus is not adequate to tasks of monitoring and evaluation of Belarus' advancement to the general space of the European policy in the cultural sphere.

The criteria and indicators offered above are not a casual set, but are focused on the system representation of the sphere of culture within the scope of processes of European integration. Attempts of analysis of a situation on the basis of these criteria face a number of problems:

1. Problems of a methodological character. The gathering of statistical data organized in Belarus and in many respects inherited from the Soviet times, is based on other methodological bases, unlike the statistics structure used by EU and UNESCO. Coincidence of separate indicators, which make it possible to give comparable estimations for inter-countries' reviews, only blacks out the methodological problem. It is shown in following moments:

a. In Belarusan statistics, a social measurement of culture is not provided with the necessary procedures of gathering of the material. Thus, in studies of this aspect of the sphere of culture, regular researches of households and pastimes, as well as sociological researches of problems of the cultural identity and social participation, are traditional. In Belarus, only the first ones are carried out - researches of households, but even they do not include many indicators necessary for a differentiated estimation of "consumption" in the sphere of culture. The only thing we can learn from their results is a share of means spent on products and services in the cultural sphere. As a result, having fixed a change of the structure of manufacture of the goods and services in the sphere on the basis of economic industrial indicators, we cannot say how much this change corresponds to consumption, while satisfaction characteristics remain absolutely unknown. Thus, we cannot provide an adequate evaluation of the degree of «usefulness of environment for displays of the cultural diversity».

b. Data about social inclusiveness, practices of formation and development of the cultural identity (cultural diversity) are gathered by various departments and are not attached methodologically to the general conceptual basis. Questions of public associations and their activity, education, mass media, tourism, and labor migration, etc. - all these are various aspects of the preservation of the cultural variety and

access to native and other cultures. As Belarusian statistics and the majority of scientific researches implemented by the state order, are based on an industrial principle, various indicators become attached to manufacture or economic processes in each of branches separately. As a result, even the available data on various spheres cannot be placed in one picture. For example, the classification of specialties by vocational training of workers in the cultural sphere mismatches the classifications fixing employment in this sphere.

c. A part of the classifications used in statistical data mismatches the European ones. It concerns, for example, the classification of trades, ways of allocation of branches of economy, etc. These circumstances make even the available data incomparable, and, accordingly, there is no possibility to correlate the situation in Belarus with the situation in other European countries. Here it is necessary to notice that the Belarusian statistics system gradually changes its standards and brings them into accord with the European ones, but still, wide circles of experts are not involved in this process.

d. Gathering of information on the cultural sphere is adhered to the economic and industrial reporting. Accordingly, only the segment where activity is carried out on the legal bases, gets to this reporting. In its turn, as it was marked above, a considerable part of the cultural diversity is marginalized and not formal. It is not covered by any "reports" and completely drops out of the account and analysis. Even though volumes of this activity, probably, are not comparable to those which are covered, but still these segments should be included in the analysis in order to trace and understand tendencies and innovations in the cultural sphere, as well as to study the availability and variety.

2. Problems of transparency and availability of data. The system evaluation of the situation needs access to a considerable quantity of data and materials which are rather various - statistical data on various areas and branches, materials of economic, sociological, culturologic, and social-psychological researches, which concern most different aspects of the sphere of culture (economic, social and political-legal measurement), data and materials on international contacts and projects, expert opinions on various questions, standard-legislative base, etc. Thus, each of types of data or materials has its restrictions in access and transparency:

a. The data presented by the Ministry of Statistics in popular collections, usually have the most general, not differentiated character. Specialized editions are prepared by direct orders of departments and ministries, and reception of such data is limited by the necessity of an official inquiry which should be provided by difficult procedures of coordination. In the conditions of a variety of such departments, the task becomes practically not solvable. When there are the methodological complexities mentioned above, access to databases is necessary. However, such a possibility is even more complicated by permissions and coordinations. Thus, for independent analysts, as well as for a public presentation, the majority of data, fully and deeply representing the sphere, are not accessible.

b. For access to the materials connected with the international interaction in the field of culture and implementation of European programs, it is necessary to have their own legitimizing procedures, as well as skills of work with such materials. On the other hand, the specificity of the existing relations between Belarus and Europe results in the situation when many projects and actions carried out on the territory of Belarus and sponsored by Europe, are implemented on the semi-legal bases. The transparency requirement here faces safety issues. Thus, the real estimation of the actions, their scales and effects, is difficult to carry out.

c. In Belarus, there is no public space for presentation and criticism of analytical and research works, which would form transparency of not only data and materials, but also expert-analytical work in the cultural sphere. The available mass media (magazines, newspapers, Internet platforms), dedicated to problems of culture, are usually thematically limited and offer mainly culturological analysis of this sphere. The problem is aggravated with the fact that these platforms have a homogeneous audience and small incidence.

3. Problems of the cultural policy, the system organization of management of the cultural sphere. Today in Belarus there is no institutionalized space in which it is possible to preserve the frameworks and tasks of European integration of Belarus in the cultural sphere: formation of directions of the cultural policy on the basis of a public dialogue, formation of adequate methodology for monitoring and estimation of advancement, assemblage and carrying out of system qualified researches:

a. The qualitative variety of criteria of evaluation of the situation in the sphere of culture demands a corresponding variety of competences. However today, experts and structures which have such competences, are separated and have neither infrastructural, nor activity bases for their teamwork. As a result, all available researches, reviews, and analytical materials on the sphere of culture are not only fragmentary, are limited to their disciplines or tasks, but also have no mechanisms and tools for the interaction organization. As a result, actions inside the country and geopolitical steps have no necessary conceptual and analytical securement.

b. The basic principles of the policy in the field of culture, which are applied in the European space, demand a public space and dialogue. Even in the absence of systematic and high-grade researches, the condition of the public sphere can be evaluated with the help of a number of events and precedents. Thus, the creation of some "public councils" that pretend to organize a dialogue, has not changed the way of a "public" estimation of various phenomena of cultural life of the country (concerts of groups causing a negative reaction of a number of persons and institutions, introduction in schools of a course on development of religious (Orthodox) spirituality, etc.). It still has a character of an ideological intrusion, but not a dialogue.

c. Numerous and various subjects carry out their activity chaotically, without mutual coordination at least at the level of general directions and activity priorities. Even

actions controlled by the Ministry of Culture quite often have no normal conceptual substantiation and programs. However, the problem is not only in the absence of programs and coordination, but also in the absence of practice and accepted mechanisms of such actions. This problem is characteristic of practically all subjects working in the sphere of culture.

5. Immediate tasks and order of actions.

The directions of activity defined in documents on the EaP Platform 4, are addressed, first of all, to European structures and partly - to the state organs which manage the cultural sphere. However, as it was mentioned above, overcoming of problems available in Belarus is impossible without a full inclusion of civil society in these processes, and also without coordination and interaction of all subjects: European structures, the Belarusian state, and civil society.

The main general task for all the mentioned subjects within the scope of the initiative of the Eastern Partnership for the nearest period (2010-2011) is:

The creation of an institutional base for the implementation of the cultural policy of Belarus, which would be built in the all-European cultural processes. This institutional base should be built on principles of a dialogue of various subjects and system researches, situation monitoring in the cultural sphere.

The implementation of this task assumes:

- To create a base for monitoring the implementation of the Convention: the solution of the conceptual and methodological issues, the organization of comparative research, training and discussion of country reports, and so on;
- To create a platform of public dialogue on issues of culture and inclusion in decision-making by all stakeholders;
- To provide tools of access and openness to statistical data and materials of special researches for independent (non-state, European) researchers
- To include Belarus and Belarusian researchers (state and independent) in all-European comparative researches, to prepare a country review on the implementation of the UNESCO Convention in Belarus.
- To involve a wide range of subjects involved in manufacture, distribution, and consumption of products of culture, as well as subjects of preservation of a cultural variety and identity, in European programs on culture
- Integration and establishment of close connections with similar subjects and structures in other partner-countries for carrying out of joint comparative researches and development of the general regional priorities in development.

Within the scope of these tasks, the **strategy of actions of structures of civil society** is as follows:

1. To initiate and to provide with resources a platform for interaction of various subjects on the questions of conceptual and analytical securement of the cultural policy in Belarus. In particular, the organization and participation in public hearings on the country review of the implementation of the UNESCO Convention in Belarus can become the first step.
2. To organize our own researches in the cultural sphere, to problematize approaches and methodology of gathering and analysis of data in Belarus and other partner-countries which have their own experience in the solution of this problem.
3. To raise the competence and qualification of independent experts from civil society in the cultural sphere by attracting scientists, analysts, and methodologists to discussion and inclusion in regional (Eastern Partnership) and European researches.
4. To organize regular monitoring of the sphere of culture and its advancement on the specified priorities within the scope of the road map

The European structures (ES) and civil society of European countries can take part in the solution of the tasks by:

1. Including Belarusian experts and researchers (independent and state) in formation and monitoring of the program of development of culture of the Eastern Partnership, as well as in the discussion and working out of methodology of the European statistical system on culture.
2. Expanding the spectrum of possible and necessary directions of activity concerning Belarus - from cultural exchanges and help to concrete projects in the sphere of culture and art - to assistance to research activity in this sphere and a dialogue concerning the cultural policy.
3. Assisting to close interaction between the partner-countries concerning conceptual and analytical securement of the cultural policy.

Within the scope of the solution of this task, **Belarusian state structures** should:

1. provide availability and openness of the available data and materials to independent researchers.
2. prepare a report (review) within the scope of the implementation of the UNESCO Convention in Belarus and organize public hearings on its base.

6. Obstacles and possibilities of their overcoming

The success and efficiency of actions of each of three parties are defined by the contribution and participation of the two other parties. Without interaction of all three participants of the process, it is impossible to achieve any of the objects and to

solve any of the problems, despite undertaken efforts of each of the parties separately. This interaction is complicated by the fact that the Belarusian state does not want this interaction, and Belarusian civil society cannot (is not able to) organize it. It causes a key role of the European Commission in this process. In a general view, it can be formulated like this: the EC can provide Belarusian civil society with resources and means of implementation of the purposes and solution of the tasks, it can also spur the Belarusian state to join their solution. Thus, the purposes should be put and problems should be formulated on behalf of civil society, and implemented on behalf or under the aegis of the EC. Otherwise, if the purposes and tasks are put on behalf of the EC and cooperation is offered to the Belarusian state, civil society appears outside of this process - and as a result, the purposes are not reached and the tasks are not solved. The same happens if purposes and tasks are set by the state which does not consider civil society to be a necessary participant of the process.

The launch of the whole process is only possible as an action and event which integrate actions of civil society, European and Belarusian state structures. For example, the «creation of a center (platform) for accumulation of interaction of various subjects concerning conceptual and analytical securement of the cultural policy in Belarus: solution of methodological problems, carrying out of complex researches, statement and discussion of actual problems and tasks of the cultural policy in Belarus» will demand an organization of a big conference or a forum, for example, of public hearings on the review of the performance of the UNESCO Convention. The initiative and organization of such an event (or a series of actions) should be developed by civil society of Belarus, but be implemented on behalf and under the aegis of the EC, otherwise the Belarusian state will not participate in it and will not allow to carry it out. Even if the state takes part in such a forum, it will try to impose a format of its implementation, try to exclude speeches of representatives of civil society, independent experts and specialists, try to ignore results and arrangements. Accordingly, only the political will of the European structures can provide productivity of such an action. But decisions of these structures on the territory of Belarus are not valid without the sanction of the Belarusian states. Therefore, the responsibility for the implementation of results and arrangements should be assigned to civil society, and the control over the achievement of the purposes and the solution of tasks should be divided between the Belarusian state and European structures.

Such a forum (hearings) will not be effective without maintenance of constant informing of wide layers of the Belarusian population and interested communities and subjects. It will demand specialized (in the cultural segment) tools in the mass media. But the creation of the independent mass media does not solve the problem in the conditions of the state monopoly of the sphere of the mass media, neither does the creation of a television channel outside of the country. Therefore, there must be access to the state-run mass media, for example, a TV program at a state-run channel, an insert in one or more popular state-run newspapers. But in this case, the

question is solved not by economic tools, but by diplomatic ones. And, unilateral efforts of the European Commission or civil society will not bring results. Actions of civil society can be successful only under the aegis of the EC. It complicates the solution of tasks and achievement of purposes even more.

One of possible variants to increase the efficiency of actions can be investment of representatives of Belarusian civil society who solve tasks of the cultural policy, with the status of official representatives of the EC, or official representatives of the EC in Belarus should start to implement programs of the cultural policy developed by civil society of Belarus.

The essential obstacle in the way of the implementation of these actions is the levelling of the innovative potential of the Eastern Partnership in the implementation of a line of new relations between EU and the partner-countries. In this case, the place of civil society in the inter-countries' dialogue will be reduced to an observant and critical position. Possibilities of the method of open coordination for formation of the agenda and implementation of monitoring of advancements will remain non-demanded. The urgency of this danger is great because its implementation only needs the absence of efforts and good will to introduce innovations of all subjects included in the implementation of the initiative. The European structures willingly come back to the former adjusted bureaucratic practices which do not demand reformational efforts. The Belarusian state tries to minimize the transformational effect from new relations with Europe. Belarusian civil society in its overwhelming majority is not ready to set and solve tasks which demand an exit on a new level of competence and responsibility.

The only way of overcoming this obstacle is to preserve the meaning and prospects of the Eastern Partnership as a program of transformation of Belarusian-European relations and to bring the country closer to the European space.

Additional complexities and obstacles for the implementation of the offered actions are:

- Resource securement of offered actions. The organization of a new system of activity in the field of the cultural policy demands serious intellectual, organizational, and material investments.
- Displacement of priorities in actions of the basic subjects on other events and activity kinds. Thus, the presidential election can engross completely attention and resources of experts, Belarusian and European state structures.
- Change of the external economic and political conjuncture, which can brake the general process of intensification of relations between Belarus and EU.

All these difficulties cannot cancel the stated tasks, but can transform them from short-term into long-term ones. Counteraction to that lies in the field of expansion of a circle of people and structures interested in the development of processes of

Belarusan-European integration, deepening of understanding of the essence and mechanisms of the implementation of these processes.

Related articles and links

Website: www.cultureactioneurope.org : [European Agenda for Culture](#) (Background info, The Open Method of Coordination, A 'structured dialogue' with civil society)

Website: [European Commission. Culture](#)

[Reporting on the European agenda for culture and the open method of coordination](#)

THE 2009 UNESCO FRAMEWORK FOR CULTURAL STATISTICS (FCS), 2009

[The UNESCO World Report on Cultural Diversity](#)

[CULTURAL STATISTICS.2007. EUROSTAT POCETBOOKS.](#)

[Statistical portrait of the European Union 2008. European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.](#)