

**Declaration of the Committee of Ministers
on cultural diversity**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers
on 7 December 2000
at the 733rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

Preamble

The Committee of Ministers,

Recognising that respect for cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society;

Recognising that the development of new information technologies, globalisation and evolving multilateral trade policies have an impact on cultural diversity;

Reaffirming that to sustain, protect and promote cultural co-operation and democratic norms and structures in European societies is a central task of the Council of Europe;

Recalling that cultural diversity has always been a dominant European characteristic and a fundamental political objective in the process of European construction, and that it assumes particular importance in the building of an information and knowledge based society in the 21st Century;

Acknowledging that all democratic societies based on the rule of law have in the past developed measures to sustain and protect cultural diversity within their cultural and media policies;

Aware of the tradition of the Council of Europe to protect and foster cultural diversity and recalling, in this context, the instruments already developed by the Organisation on the basis of the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Cultural Convention;

Emphasising that, in the context of global market influences on cultures and cultural exchange, modern democratic states have a new challenge: the development of policies for assuring the recognition and expression of forms of cultural diversity coexisting within their jurisdictions;

Recalling the commitments of the member states of the Council of Europe to defend and promote media freedoms and media pluralism as a basic precondition for cultural exchange, and affirming that media pluralism is essential for democracy and cultural diversity;

Recalling in this respect the important contribution made by public service broadcasters;

Convinced that all member states and other States Party to the European Cultural Convention must confront this challenge from a culturally distinct perspective, but that the shared global context for development requires the elaboration of a set of principles which will provide a coherent framework for sustaining and enabling cultural diversity at all levels;

Affirms that the legitimate objectives of member states to develop international agreements for cultural co-operation, which promote cultural diversity, must be respected,

Declares the following:

1. Cultural Diversity

1.1 Cultural diversity is expressed in the co-existence and exchange of culturally different practices and in the provision and consumption of culturally different services and products;

1.2 Cultural diversity cannot be expressed without the conditions for free creative expression, and freedom of information existing in all forms of cultural exchange, notably with respect to audiovisual services;

1.3 Sustainable development as defined in relation to cultural diversity, assumes that technological and other developments, which occur to meet the needs of the present, will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs with respect to the production, provision and exchange of culturally diverse services, products and practices.

2. Cultural and Audiovisual Policies for Sustainable Cultural Diversity in a Global World

2.1 Cultural and audiovisual policies, which promote and respect cultural diversity, are a necessary complement to trade policies;

2.2 Cultural diversity has an essential economic role to play in the development of the knowledge economy. Strong cultural industries which encourage linguistic diversity and artistic expression, when reflecting genuine diversity, have a positive impact on pluralism, innovation, competitiveness and employment;

2.3 Culturally diverse forms of production and practices should not be limited but enhanced by technological developments;

2.4 Wide distribution of diverse cultural products and services, and exchange of cultural practices in general, can stimulate creativity, enhance access to and widen the provision of such products and services;

2.5 Public service broadcasting plays an important role for the safeguarding of cultural diversity;

2.6 Education, training of professionals and users of new services, and reinforcement of cultural and audiovisual production are notable factors in the promotion of cultural diversity.

3. Sustaining and Enabling Cultural Diversity

3.1 Member states are called upon to examine ways of sustaining and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the new global environment, at all levels;

3.2 Member states are urged to pay particular attention to the need to sustain and promote cultural diversity, in line with the relevant Council of Europe instruments, in other international fora where they might be called on to undertake commitments which might prejudice these instruments;

3.3 The competent organs of the Council of Europe are requested to identify those aspects of cultural policy which are in need of special consideration in the context of the new global economy, and to elaborate a catalogue of measures, which may be useful to member states in their quest to sustain and enable cultural diversity;

3.4 The Committee of Ministers agrees to review the situation at regular intervals.
