

NETWORK Europe 2004/06

ARIADNE'S THREAD: ART AS A CULTURAL IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

In this year 2004 ten new countries will join the European Union and will bring different cultures and different ways of expression and communication. Thus it becomes very important to take stock of our culture broadly intended as history, art, science and all what can contribute to defining our identity also in the confrontation with other European countries.

The Church has expressed with clarity the meaning of cultural identity: "Culture is the essential element which constitutes the identity of a human being and a community and that represents a value and a fundamental right". The Pope has remembered that "Europe cannot be understood without cultures, traditions and different values of those Countries constituting it".

Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities Giuliano Urbani has launched the "Agenore Project, at the roots of the Europe of yesterday, today and tomorrow" intended as a means of knowledge and promotion of the European cultural identity. Within the framework of such a project is the "online" creation of a "thesaurus" of values characterising European civilisations which each member state will individuate in the respective national and regional cultures as a contribution to the formation of a common civilisation and a shared citizenship sentiment.

The Council of Europe says that in Europe cultural heritage is recognised as a vehicle of cultural identity. The knowledge of this heritage depends both on the quality of its enhancement and on the capacity of the Europeans to recognise and appreciate national cultural heritage and that of the other EU countries.

Within the framework of the Information Society the EU has developed actions and programmes that focus on the promotion of the cultural diversity through the use of information and communication technologies. The Ministers of Culture gathered in Tessaonica in May 2003 discussed the issue concerning the internal instrument on cultural diversity and concluded: "Europe is a continent of cultures and cannot accept the threat of a cultural homogeneity or the threat of a clash of civilisations. Europeans call for the safeguard and promotion of cultural diversities.

The safeguard of cultural diversities will be linked to the objectives of long-term development and intercultural dialogue through the promotion of creating activities and artistic expressions.

Art helps peace, said Umberto Agnelli, Italian councillor of Praemium Imperiale, the annual Awards ceremony for arts held in Tokyo. The

dialogue of art and the confrontation between artists from different cultures sends the world a message of harmony and positive force.

Derrick De Kerckhove, director of the McLuhan programme of culture and technology and professor of the French Department at the Toronto University in Canada, affirms that "artistic culture will play an important role in the future development of the relationship between man and computer and between man and man through computer as already testify those interactivity programmes supported internationally.

Following what has been highlighted above and the cooperation agreements with private and public Bodies, the Association I.C.S. International Communication Society, continuing the elaboration of projects within the framework of various initiatives of the European Commission, promotes the network Europe for research 2004-06 "Ariadne's thread: Art as Cultural Identity"

The title suggests the guidelines of research: to rebuild through the labyrinths of memory the past of our Country from the origins to date, thus highlighting the identity as a value and as a culture in particular through its cultural heritage and its symbols, its history, literature and possible connections and comparisons with other European Countries.

Research can be carried out both as excursus on a determined topic (for example architecture of house buildings and/or of towns, theatre, transportation means, communication, shoes and/or fashion, etc.) or as focus on new phenomena or on a certain period (origins of Italy, Roman period, Middle Ages, Renaissance, etc.)

European students from public and private Middle Schools age group (10-14 years old) and (14-18 years old), and Universities (19-26 years old) are invited to participate in it through the use of new communication technologies (CD-Rom, Internet, Video) so that they can show artistic, cultural, scientific aspects also of a particular period of our history which are considered fundamental for the definition of the Italian cultural identity.

The presentation of all multimedia works will have to be accompanied by a summary on paper.

Communication and terms for the presentation of research works:

Every six months – from 2004 through 2006 – together with the European initiatives it will possible to present the completed research (the best research will receive a prize in Euro) or the research project (the best will receive a support in Euro on in new technologies for its realisation).

Application for the research is **September 15 2004 (to present the research in November within the framework of Netdays Europe 2004); 15 March 2005 (to present the research in May); 15 September 2005 (to present the research in November); 15 March 2006 (to present the research in May); 15 September 2006 (to present the research in November).**

Upon receiving the enclosed application form, we will send a participation form to be filled in and sent together with the work.

Selection:

A qualified jury in different sectors of Italian culture and new technologies will select the best works in local, national and European events and will be included in the publication on the Italian identity which is still being organised.

For further information

Associazione ICS

International Communication Society,
P.O. Box 626, 00100 Roma Italia.

Tel. 06/70453308; fax 06/77206257;

e-mail: icsociety@tin.it;

website: www.associazioneics.net; www.icsociety.it