

*Policy Memorandum  
2004-2009*

**Culture**

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## **On four policy memorandums and one minister. A common foreword**

A summary of our competences – culture, youth, sport and Brussels – almost sounds like the members list of an arbitrary club. You do not have to be a policy expert to be aware of the enormous differences between these four straightaway. Each of these areas of competence has its own world, populated with its own actors, specific objectives, problem areas and expectations, separate structures, idiosyncratic customs and policy instruments. For example, culture comprises a long series of important sub-themes, the starting point for youth policy is a perspective on a particular age group, for sport there is, amongst other things, an awkward combination of top sports and sports across the range and Brussels is a specific territory, but at the same time applies to every aspect of life. Every area of competence expects us to wear different spectacles in order to consider and deal with the reality and social aspects, from a specific perspective. For each of the four areas, we hope for an effective policy and a generous minister for everyone. In short, culture, youth, sport and Brussels all fully deserve a tailor-made approach. And this is what they get, because we have developed a separate policy memorandum for each of them. This is the tangible expression of our express intention to implement a unique and recognisable policy for each of these fields.

### *The unity of diversity*

However, in all this diversity there are still many common elements. This is logical, because our competences lie in the same social sphere and they also form part of a shared political project: the Flemish coalition agreement. To introduce the presentation of the four policy memorandums, we would like to highlight and emphasise a number of these shared characteristics here.

As a starting point, we are resolutely opting for an offensive, positive approach. Our policy memorandums are based on a belief in the *strength of, and not a complaint* about people and their projects. This strength is expressed perfectly in the wealth of associations which link our policy memorandums. Culture, youth, sport and Brussels are characterised and populated by many and diverse associations. They form a lively social capital and are often involved in local and Flemish policy projects. They provide expertise and above all, they provide space to thousands of Flemish people for their own projects. We would like to acknowledge and recognise this and involve them intensively in the implementation of policy. At the

same time, we are investing in strong individuals in this way, enterprising people who take and carry responsibility.

Our policy memorandums also unambiguously reveal a style of government based on dialogue. We make this choice for two reasons: it means our policy is better, but at the same time it expresses our belief in an interactive policy, with active citizens as the co-owners and co-directors of their own activities.

Stimulating more interculturalism is also a strong leitmotif. We are resolutely opting for a society in which diversity and differences are stimulated and appreciated as necessary social and human values.

We do have critical questions about the scope of our policy efforts and of many of the associations and institutions supported by us. We know that there are still important social groups who do not sufficiently benefit from the efforts made by our community. This concerns people living in poverty, some ethnic minorities, the disabled and others. Hopefully this concern will be met with a concrete and effective response.

Never before has Flanders had access to so many support centres and umbrella organizations. This is a good thing, but it is not yet good enough. Above all, we advocate more synergy in this respect. We are inviting these (often still new) structures to organise themselves much more in networks, and support us appropriately as policy implementers, help us with the execution of the (also often very recent) regulations and furnish us with ideas. In this respect, we would expressly like to refer to the great importance of joint cross-sectoral databanks and actively providing access to information. These efforts should lead to much greater participation in the short term.

The international dimension is a strong presence. *More Flanders in Europe in the world*, but equally *More of the world in Flanders*, are slogans which will be translated into practice.

Our policy memorandums are not isolated projects: culture, youth, sport and Brussels are not islands in a policy ocean. At almost every level, they are related to many other sectors and levels. That is why we call for and hope for more connections which will reverberate in almost every chapter. We will make every effort in this respect to create many policy crossroads and roundabouts, where the various parties involved in a joint policy project can

meet together in a safe, easy and above all efficient way. On the basis of our competences, we are consciously committing ourselves to this sort of open cooperation, both with our Flemish and with our federal colleagues.

Not all our aspirations can be translated into operational objectives straightaway. For some aspects, we consciously want to take the time for further reaching exploration. There are many interesting and exciting ideas which we will analyse in the next few years and assess for their possibilities.

### *Ambitious plans*

More than ever we are aware that the aspirations which we have formulated in these policy memorandums are very ambitious. At the same time, the financial margins for our competences are limited. Therefore our policy memorandums focus more on the appropriate and efficient (re)orientation of existing funds. In this sense, some modesty is required.

On the other hand, we are not all that modest. Our policy will also have room for large new projects. These will be carefully considered but are no less far-reaching for all that. For our four policy competences, we are opting for clear objectives – which certainly does not mean easy objectives. We deliberately did *not* choose for the path of least resistance. We are appealing to the creativity and determination of all those involved, both inside and outside the Government of Flanders. It is only with a broad alliance that we will be able to achieve these aspirations. We are dependant on this, put our hopes in this, and are also expressing our modest ambitions in this way.

## **1. Where are we? Small status quaestionis of the culture policy**

This policy memorandum is concerned with the future culture policy. In order to understand the context of our plans, it is necessary to know in broad lines where we are at the moment, particularly after the last legislative period. This can be briefly summarised as a period of far-reaching change in every policy field. A quick summary follows below.

### **1. The professional arts**

In the field of the so-called “professional arts” there is currently a gradual blurring of the boundaries between the traditional art disciplines. The Arts Decree, which will enter into effect in stages from 2006 responds to this.

- *Dramatic arts and music*: this field is strongly structured. These sectors played a leading role in working with a system of policy plans. The regulations determine quality dimensions. The policy plan submitted by the organizations forms the basis for an agreement with government. The policy is targeted and selective and devotes attention to diversity. The Arts Decree encompasses new trends – interdisciplinarity, internationalisation.
- The *policy on literature and publications* focuses on literature (prose, poetry, literature for children and youth, literary essays, plays, cartoon strips) as well as the non-literary sector (general, cultural, heritage and art criticism publications, whether or not these are periodic). The former is served by the Flemish Foundation for Literature (VFL), with publication subsidies, working and translation grants, incentives for (cartoon) authors starting out, and incentives for the contact between authors and the general public. The administration provides the non-literary sector with publications which are equally valuable for the cultural sector, but which are high risk because of the small market. The Arts and Heritage Decree also devotes attention to them. The promotion of reading is the responsibility of the Flanders Reading Foundation.
- From a cultural perspective, the *architecture policy* in Flanders is still in its infancy, although architecture is actually a matter for literally everyone. At the moment, production is primarily a matter of economic laws and legislation on town and country planning. For the time being a comprehensive approach is still wishful thinking, although clients of architectural projects were recently urged by government to opt for quality, as a result of the team of the Flemish Architect.
- *Design* is also primarily determined by Economics, with the VIZO (Flemish Institute for Independent Enterprise) as an important partner. The Ghent Design Museum provides important incentives from the cultural perspective.
- *The field of the visual arts* is less structured and reveals itself above all in the context of a world wide system. The consensus is that this field is under-subsidised. There is little empirical material on the table but the Arts Decree also forms a flexible instrument here, providing

possibilities for growth and consolidation. The information and support for the field are provided by the support centre. In this field there are also extremely high expectations with regard to the impact of the new status of the artist, because many artists are still working in precarious circumstances. The fact that information on the statutes and employment is important became clear with the success of the Arts Helpdesk (in anticipation of the establishment of the Arts Office).

- In the field of the *audiovisual arts*, audiovisual creations – both traditional genres and experimental media arts – are supported by the Flemish Audiovisual Foundation (VAF). The VAF provides subsidies, organises creative workshops, supports training initiatives, and carries out promotional activities at international events. At the international level it focuses on promoting co-productions, the cooperation with foreign foundations and relations with European institutions. There is a clear division of tasks in this respect, and there is close consultation with the administration.

The administration implements the subsidy policy for the cultural initiatives, including the Flemish film festivals, and the organizations with a cultural focus on the audiovisual field. Since 2003, an evaluation commission has given advice on this. In future, this regulation will fall under the Arts Decree.

The framework policy comprises the introduction to this art form, communication, distribution and heritage at the level of film (storing and showing films). The administration is also responsible for the cultural reputation of the Flemish film heritage abroad.

In 2002, a support centre was also established for this sector, the Initiative for Audiovisual Arts (IAK).

In the audiovisual sector, the influence of European developments can be clearly felt, as a result of the far-reaching regulations and support programmes. After all, film cannot be seen separately from the public broadcasting corporations and other audiovisual media.

An important recent change in the field of the *audiovisual arts* is the introduction of the “tax shelter” fiscal support measure, which makes it attractive to invest in Belgian/Flemish film from the point of view of tax.

## **2. The cultural heritage**

The demands and requirements of this still very recent and extensive policy area – including museums, archiving institutions, storage libraries,

documentation centres, associations for heritage and/or popular culture, extra muros heritage, as in churches and OCMWs – have not yet been sufficiently met in terms of policy. Currently initial attempts are being carried out to structure the field, and there is work on a comprehensive and socially integrated policy on heritage. The heritage covenants in particular have really proved their worth as an instrument to strengthen the social position an integration of the cultural heritage in the fabric of the local cultural heritage, supported in this by large-scale public initiatives such as the Heritage Day. In recent years, more funds have been provided for the development of a heritage policy, but the field continues to be undervalued in the budget. The degree of professionalisation also continues to leave room for improvement.

The Heritage Decree will enter into effect in stages from 2004. This will stimulate a good quality and permanent concern for the heritage and access to it. For this purpose, it is regulating the recognition of and subsidies for museums, the subsidies for the implementation of heritage covenants, for cultural-heritage publications and for projects related to the cultural heritage. The decree also provides for the operation of the support centre for museums, archive institutions, reference libraries, documentation centres, and heritage covenants.

In this policy area, there are three other decrees in addition to the Heritage Decree: the Decree on Popular Culture started a movement of popular development related to the cultural heritage, the Archive Decree is stimulating the cultural work of archives and the Decree on Top works of art is providing a legal framework for the protection of the moveable cultural heritage which must be kept in Flanders because of its special significance.

### **3. Social-cultural work**

- The decree on the *Local Cultural Policy* encouraged many municipalities to place culture on their agendas, working in a planned way and pursuing a comprehensive and quality-oriented approach. 191 municipalities have already joined the decree, and in 173 (including 10 in Brussels) a subsidised cultural policy coordinator has now started work. The idea of cooperation between different actors in the local policy is becoming popular and gives grounds for hope for a new dynamic approach. In particular, this concerns basic provisions (library, cultural or community centre), other municipal institutions (archives, museums), cultural heritage associations, artists, interested residents.

(Furthermore, it should be noted that as a result of a change in the decree, the subsidy for municipal councils for supralocal library work will be focused up to the end of 2004 on the development of an updated and future-oriented Flemish Central Catalogue (Vlacc 2), the pivotal element of a larger computer project which will be achieved in cooperation with the provinces.

- The *amateur arts* have a rich tradition in Flanders. They fully form part of the broad range of the social-cultural field and contribute to greater cultural competence. The socialisation factor also becomes more important. Because of the related associations, the amateur arts also play an important democratising role.

The diversity of disciplines within the amateur arts is very great. In order to respond more flexibly to trends and developments, the regulations were recently adapted and one organization was established for every art discipline.

*Social and cultural adult work* was also restructured in a far-reaching way and new regulations were introduced. These place social-cultural adult work justifiably in the context of lifelong and lifewide learning. The aim is to restore the value and give legitimacy to this policy field. Two new work forms were introduced: the movements and adult education centres. In addition to the recognition of 13 regional adult education centres, three types of national training institutes are subsidised: training institutes specialising in a particular theme, union training institutes and training institutes for special target groups (the disabled and detainees). New policy instruments are being provided for existing working organizations, such as social and cultural associations. A special regulation has been drawn up for associations of immigrants so that they have additional opportunities to be fully recognised and subsidised in social and cultural associations by 2009.

#### **4. Transversal developments**

- *Support centres*: the support for the various support centres provided by the decree was completed and achieved during the last legislative period. Support centres are defined as light, flexible organizations with a supportive (facilitating) role for the execution of policy. In the first place, this focuses on the whole professional field of a sector. In the second place, it can also carry out more public-oriented tasks. For the execution of the tasks which fall under the decree, a support centre mobilises and facilitates the existing expertise and capacities in the field. Three policy areas are defined in which

a support centre can carry out its tasks: the support of practice, the development of practice, the creation of an image, and communication.

- *International policy*

\* *Multilateral*: there are a great number of international networks in which numerous Flemish groups and organizations participate intensely. For organizations which are supported in a structural way, and which regularly develop international activities, this international orientation is a comprehensive part of their task. The government also supports non-structural cooperative ventures by means of project-oriented subsidies.

\* In the *bilateral* international cooperation, the Netherlands continues to be the foreign country with which Flanders maintains the strongest links, a priority partner. This partnership is reflected in the Language Union Treaty (1980) and the Cultural Treaty (1995). Obviously this cooperation has (cultural) historical roots, but in contemporary Europe, cultural identity will continue to be a point of attention amidst the increasing diversity and globalisation which will grow in importance. The above-mentioned treaties sometimes refer to the integration of particular policy areas, in other places to cooperation. There are campaigns, inter alia, for exchange activities, joint ventures with third countries, agreements on the use of particular instruments.

There are also intensive bilateral contacts with South Africa.

\* One instrument which is currently available to the cultural sector is the Regulation on the Subsidies for Cultural Projects with an International Reverberation. This provides subsidies for international activities of cultural organizations and individuals which are active in the cultural field in the broad sense of the word (dramatic arts, visual arts, heritage, amateur arts, film, ...).

- *Large institutions*: the Flemish Community allocates a specific task and currently supports seven cultural institutions on the basis of the express decision to guarantee the exercise of presentation of particular art disciplines in Flanders itself. Because of the scale, management structure, their symbolic and cultural capital, these are known as the “large institutions”. They are the Flemish Opera (Vlopera), the Filharmonie, the Royal Flanders Ballet, the Flemish Radio Orchestra and Flemish Radio Choir, the international arts centre, de Singel, the MUHKA and the Royal Museum for Fine Arts in Antwerp. These are currently subsidised and were the subject of a limited audit in 2004.

- *Culture and public broadcasting*: in the current management agreement between the Flemish Community and the public broadcasting corporation, there is not enough relativity in the content of the main performance standard – the viewing and listening figures. In addition, the VAF has an obligation to participate in Flemish television productions, while there are no agreements with the public broadcasting organizations in connection with Flemish film, documentaries or short films. It would be appropriate to introduce a debate on these subjects.

- *Culture and education*: the guidelines for a better coordination between and better cooperation with Culture and Education have been laid down in a protocol in the most recent legislative period.

## **II. Strategic objectives for the period 2004-2009**

### **1. Introduction: culture as a process of values and norms**

There are few policy areas in which the active and targeted activities of government are questioned as often, as systematically and from as many different perspectives as in the culture policy. The strategic objectives of government and their implementation in the working field are very often the subject of heated discussion and fierce polemic. It is appropriate to go into this here, before we examine the objectives and their implementation for the period of government 2004-2009 in the following pages.

#### 1.1. The discerning government

One of the essential characteristics of an active culture policy is that the government chooses who and what it wishes to support in an informed way. The days are long gone when the culture policy was not much more than financially honouring activities which had been declared eligible for subsidies in advance. The accountability of those in the working field, the emphasis on a planned approach, the far-reaching advice provided by evaluation commissions and the targeted support and evaluation by the administration are essential characteristics of this new approach for Flanders. In some fields this development has progressed further than in others, but the trend is unmistakable and can only become stronger. Obviously it is the political authorities who make the final choices and also have to be accountable for these, but recent evolutions have shown that government and different sectors interact intensively and try to implement the policy as a whole on the basis of good consultation.

#### 1.2. Private responsibility and the role of government – a paradox

It is certainly at times when the policy choices and the funds for a new period of government and subsidies are established and divided, that the long-term vision and comprehensive view in the field are sometimes forgotten, and the debate is obscured by ambitions and a fight for survival. At such moments, some of the players in the field may become very frustrated about the choices made by government. It would be strange if this

were not the case. Not only is everyone fighting for the survival or continued development of their own organization, but the decision of government is also felt as a mark of appreciation for the work that has been carried out or – on the contrary – as a sign of rejection. In an environment in which personal responsibility and the work ethic are still becoming increasingly important, the role of government as a judge paradoxically only becomes larger. But it is precisely because of this paradox that the government and the various sectors are also increasingly growing towards each other in the longer term. In the absence of a broader dialogue, the government could be pushed aside into the role of a lonely referee, not a position which it wishes to take.

### 1.3. A more articulate sector

During less hectic moments there is more room for dialogue in a broader sense of the word. This is concerned much less with the trials and tribulations of the individual players but rather with the evolutions within the working field, the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats and the global strategy within an increasingly rapidly globalising environment. In this field, there is also still a long way to go. Nevertheless, it is striking that the culture sector has become more articulate, it thinks more intensively about its own tasks, and does not shy away from constructive self criticism.

### 1.4. The moral and social implementation of the culture policy

One of the most difficult exercises in this respect is the relationship between the culture policy and a broader social and even ethical implementation. The demand for this sort of implementation has become acute in recent years to the extent that it can no longer be avoided. This is a very encouraging sign. It reveals that the important actors in the cultural field have shed their cocoon and that they are adopting an open approach towards their own environment and are prepared to take responsibility for this. At the same time it is striking that everyone is struggling with this new reality. Below we will look in greater detail at a number of aspects of this social responsibility, but we would already like to state, by way of an axiom – that the social and moral implementation of the culture policy is indifferent in terms of content and that it is the parties involved – individuals, informal groups, associations and movements – who determine this content themselves with their choices. In other words, it is not the case that participation in culture by definition makes us more social people with a greater interest in our fellow people and

environment. History has taught us that in fact, culture is very often used to emphasise social divisions and confirm the impression that “some are more equal than others.” Linking the culture policy to our Western democratic values is a moral choice which we have to make ourselves and which does not follow logically from “the culture” itself. This inevitably means that it appeals to the personal and collective sense of responsibility that we all have and that both individuals and groups have responsibility for the choices that are made. We emphatically refer to the importance of social organizations, the space (outside the market) between government and individual citizens, where people come together in all sorts of groups and contexts.

### 1.5. Culture as a forum for social debate

The facts alone reveal that culture is a field in which the social debate can be conducted par excellence. Obviously, culture cannot claim the sole right in this field and obviously this applies for all policy areas and at every level. But because cultural life is so diverse, the debate also assumes the most diverse forms here, and because culture is very often focused on explaining the content, the debate also becomes explicit. All this makes culture very suitable as a forum for social debate. At the same time, there is a danger in this. Sometimes there is a great temptation to push cultural life into an instrumental role, and it is seen as creating a dam against everything which is danger of going wrong in society. It is only logical that there is a shared responsibility in this respect for the whole of society at every level. However, it is also true that in this global context culture can at the same time play the role of a catalyst, put salt into wounds and act in a guiding way.

### 1.6. A positive vision

A government can and should be a partner in this. This should not be by trying to constrain cultural life into straightjackets, but by helping to determine the process, seeing a broader context, creating peripheral conditions and making choices. We are choosing for a policy in which we want to provide the maximum opportunities for social participation and orientation. For this purpose, our starting point is a positive vision of man and society. The thread which runs through this is the added value in itself of what is created and experienced in Flemish cultural life, the social movement which is caused, the potential strength of districts, areas, villages and towns as living communities.

## 2. A policy with respect for cultural identity

### *The context*

The social and political pressures on the identity of culture and its various sectors is increasing. The character of many forms of culture which is difficult to measure leads to questions about the way in which the culture authorities can evaluate and justify its policy. The “usefulness” of culture, which is often not very easy to demonstrate can also sow dissent between the various sectors. Finally, culture is also under the pressure of market forces. In this context, the role of subsidies comes up in the social and political debate. All this means that the emphasis is sometimes unilaterally placed on the social side effects generated by the various cultural sectors – heritage and art as a media event for attracting viewing figures, social and cultural work as preventive activities, etc., but which are not necessarily part of their core cultural task. In other words, they are instrumentalised and measured with inappropriate standards.

### *Objective*

**As the Flemish cultural authorities, we are convinced that a high quality development of the cultural field as a whole and of the individual actors involved starts with the recognition of the individual identity of the various cultural sectors. This individual cultural identity of every sector is given concrete form in a number of key tasks which we respect and honour as the cultural authorities. Thus one field is not placed against another in an instrumental way. In fact, it is precisely the diversity (art, heritage, social-cultural associations, etc.) which leads to added value. The artistic and creative task of the professional arts, the tasks related to the collection, maintenance, study and provision of the cultural heritage and the educational, cultural and social functions of social and cultural work to create communities are inalienable key tasks. They are essential to achieve the cultural and social wealth that is aimed at. In fact their importance is unquestionably recognised. The Government of Flanders creates the conditions for them to be achieved and chooses the priorities.**

### *Explanation*

Creating conditions and establishing priorities to stimulate and support creativity, to maintain products of culture which reflect our history and make them available and to promote emancipation, keeps a culture lively and up-

to-date. Creativity, the collective memory and emancipation are important conditions for the continued development of an (information) society, and contribute to the general welfare and well-being.

Obviously, this argument – a respect for individual cultural identity – should not be an excuse for isolationism, factional divisions and excessively restrictive profiles for sectors and their institutions. In fact, looking beyond the borders, evaluating and entering into forms of cooperation, discovering one's own position in society... actually strengthen the individual identity that we envisage. As a government, we therefore fully promote any ideas and practices which break down barriers.

### 3. Towards a meeting between cultures: interculturalism

#### *The context*

Sometimes we think we are still living thirty years ago in one dominant comprehensive culture with a virtually universal consensus on values and norms. This almost idyllic picture postcard presentation – which itself requires a significant historical re-evaluation – is then confronted with the picture of contemporary society as a mish-mash in which all sorts of divergent cultures, ethnic groups, styles and convictions are mixed up without any sort of “hierarchy”. Some people by definition interpret this diversity as a great problem. In principle, they want to diminish the differences, work on them or assimilate them in a greater whole, the so-called monoculture of the past.

This is a debate that is exclusively based on multiplicity as a *problem*, which sees cultures in confrontation with each other and which is considered to be doomed to failure. Another approach is commonly known as “the multicultural society”. Despite appearances to the contrary, this concept also leads to segregation, whether it is used by its supporters or opponents. After all, a multicultural society is far too often based on a policy of tolerance: “I will tolerate you if you tolerate me”. Certainly, one of the effects of multiculturalism is a sense of alienation. Multiculturalism still means too much a society of many cultures which leads to one global grey common denominator, the assimilation in one large (own nation) culture or even to segregation (living side-by-side, but separately).

On the other hand, an intercultural society actively works on people and cultures living together. This concept is based on the idea that cultures can only evolve if they can be consciously nourished by and provide interesting nourishment for other cultures with which they come into contact or live with – in the most natural but also far-reaching way possible. Cultural diversity is not an interim stage to something “higher”, but a permanent and necessary state for a modern society to be vibrant, dynamic and rich. It is precisely because of this diversity that the “crossroads” of Flanders has historically developed to become what it is now.

#### *Aim*

**In the Flemish policy on culture, we do not want to identify the diversity which characterises our society as a problem, but as a desirable reality.**

**For this reason, we also present the model of interculturalism explicitly as an aim in the culture policy. Investing in creating communities and (inter)cultural activities is an important start on a real and positive intercultural society, in which each person has a central place.**

### *Explanation*

It was not even so very long ago that our political boundaries were the real boundaries of human interaction. Today, Flanders no longer has any boundaries – even in a literal sense: Kortrijk is along the same urbanised ribbon development as Lille, the Meetjesland as Zeeuws-Vlaanderen, Hasselt as Maastricht. Cultures and customs merge together naturally on the edges of our regions. At the same time, we bring the world into our homes on a daily basis, via television, the internet and the Chinese restaurant around the corner. More than ever, the boundaries of the countries are being replaced by a world of communities, large and small, focusing on the world and on their own districts, both in a physical and a “virtual” way. Uniform, identifiable communities are becoming blurred and many cultures are developing side by side. For some this leads to a sense that there is a lack of direction and makes people feel uncertain and therefore places an important responsibility on government. Therefore we believe it is important to constantly invest in the long term in an international, as well as a local policy on culture. In this respect, it is essential to devote special attention to people in their urban environment, for example with social and artistic projects, as well as to a broad basis of education. Cultural competence in this context should also represent intercultural competence.

Festivals which bring music and dance from all over the world attract many people. In music and film, as well as the visual arts, architecture, literature etc. wonderful cultural crossovers are becoming commonplace. These and other cultural interactions and influences result in hybrid communities and also form a realistic reflection of these communities. Cultural organizations must make use of this and respond in their policy of provisions and participation, each on the basis of their own individual character. Furthermore, every cultural institution, and every local government is encouraged to think about and develop activities to implement the three-pronged concept of diversity (personnel and management-provision-participation) for their own organization or own administration. These aims can be achieved and monitored with management agreements, policy planning and covenants.

Every society develops on a basis of more or less shared values and norms. Most people agree about this although opinions sometimes vary about the everyday way in which they are carried out. A truly democratic society organises these debates and areas of tension in a constructive way. This applies all the more because while until recently, many people were supervised in carrying out their own values and norms from the cradle to the grave, a pluralist society such as today's society gives room to everyone to determine this for themselves to a significant extent. Freedom, responsibility and a sense of community are three key concepts which jointly determine the boundaries of their own space. In anticipation of the updating of the cultural pact as a result of an intercultural pact, we will continue working in this spirit along two tracks which lead to the same goal. We stimulate cultural organizations as important places for an authentic experience of culture, and at the same time we encourage them to develop encounters and a mix of cultures and their differences.

Via the first track, we safeguard the right to individuality. Associations and institutions are free places for the development of their own, self-defined projects. (With this starting point, an old Flemish "tradition" is being continued.) Without a consciousness of one's own identity, meeting the other culture or other cultures is almost always a problem. The old concept of emancipation and the new-fashioned *empowerment* are relevant in this respect. At the same time, associations and institutions are also responsible for the permanent development and maintenance of social capital. They are a place for links, networks and forming opinions.

The second track supplements this and should be followed at the same time as the first. The emphasis is different. While the first objective particularly emphasises *bonding*, the second stimulates *bridging*. Strong organizations are also bridge builders, they create links and passages to other groups. They do not do so on the basis of fear or inability, but on the basis of self-awareness, with a great deal of openness and a positive approach. They take responsibility in and for "their" society which may be intercultural or not. This involvement can only grow if people do not feel forced and feel that their identity is respected.

#### 4. Participation and cultural competence

##### *The context*

When talking about participation in culture, one of the strong pillars of the current Flemish culture policy, this concerns deepening and enlarging experience as well as new experience. Broadening and extending the participation of the population are dealt with in section II.5, promoting cultural competence (deepening experience) is the strategic objective which is highlighted here. It is an aim which involves many partners, and which takes place in the context of lifewide learning, learning which is not (only) based on utilitarian perspectives and considerations, and therefore does more than follow the dictates of economic laws. Lifewide learning focuses on social, cultural and political citizenship.

##### *Aim*

**A community is by definition the (co-)manager of “its” art and culture. With our Flemish policy on culture, we therefore want to reach all our citizens, meaning as many as possible. With this aim we attach a great deal of importance to lifewide learning. Education continues to be an important and decisive partner for the acquisition of cultural competences. Therefore we continue to aim for intensive cooperation. However, education in a non-formal context (e.g., participation in socio-cultural work) also contributes to active and conscious citizenship, to more meaningful and social understanding, to an unforced and yet creative way of spending leisure time and to the enjoyable exploration of one’s own creative possibilities.**

**Socio-cultural work for young people and adults forms the core of this non-formal education and should therefore receive the necessary attention. However, education in the arts and culture should also have an important place in the sector of dramatic arts, literature, music, the audiovisual arts, architecture, visual arts, the cultural heritage and in public broadcasting. The attention devoted to education should not become reduced to an academic activity. Entertainment and leisure should form an inherent part of these initiatives.**

##### *Explanation with the aim*

Improving the quality of the participation in and experience of culture is strongly related to increasing people’s (socio-)cultural competence and *empowerment*. In this context this comprises the range of skills, attitudes and

knowledge which are important for participating in culture. Important partners in the development of this cultural competence include, in addition to education: socio-cultural adult work, youth work, amateur arts, cultural centres, libraries, arts education/cultural education, the media, intercultural intermediaries. However, the institutions in the professional arts and the cultural heritage sector themselves can also play an important role here: participation in itself, whether or not it is within this framework also contributes to increasing cultural competence.

## 5. Eliminating obstacles to participation

### *The context*

Access to culture is a universal right – a fortiori when this concerns culture subsidised by the government, and every individual has cultural potential. These two starting points support the Flemish culture policy wishes to eliminate as many obstacles as possible that stop access to culture. The obstacles which stand in the way of the cultural participation of various (groups of) people are very diverse. Just as the term “participation” can have various interpretations: does it mean “be part of” or “take part in” culture? Is it about “active” or “passive” participation?

It is necessary to use a diverse range of instruments to eliminate these obstacles. For questions such as: “How can we reach a new or different public?” Or “How can we reach certain groups who participate less in the best way?” the usual (communication) instruments are not generally sufficient, and other and new strategies, methods and procedures are required as well. The reflection on the existing cultural provision soon becomes a relevant factor: are all the levels and groups in a population represented amongst the participants of culture? If not, why is this? Does the responsibility lie with the supply or the demand, or both?

### *Aim*

**The Flemish policy on culture aims to remove the obstacles which inhibit the participation in culture and supports initiatives in this respect. This particularly concerns initiatives related to socio-cultural work, communication (including the “traditional” channels but also digital communication), spread, financial obstacles, physical access... Longitudinal scientific research into participation in culture is also important for the policy.**

**The Government of Flanders also considers that it is very important for all art and heritage institutions, libraries and cultural centres and culture and youth work organizations to think about the relationship between their provision and the public who participate in this provision. Every “instrument” and every initiative which has the aim of broadening or deepening cultural participation must deal with the obstacles which prevent participation in culture or make it more difficult.**

**Therefore we think that it is important to support a range of tailor-made types of work, aimed at greater participation and more community development, e.g., within a specific population.**

*Explanation*

Promoting participation not only means making efforts to reach more people, but also to attract new “publics”, groups of people who have never or rarely come into contact with culture or art up to now.

Obstacles – in the sense of difficulties which mean that the potential public and the cultural provision do not come together – are of different kinds:

- information obstacles lead to difficulties with regard to the familiarity, “legibility”, spread and comprehension of cultural events;
- practical obstacles mean that cultural events are difficult for some people, because of problems related to access by public transport, the physical access or lack of access to the infrastructure, opening hours, possibilities of childcare, etc;
- financial obstacles are related to the cost price of participating in culture;
- social obstacles mean that the social aspect which is so often related to participating in culture is lacking and that the provision does not reach certain social groups and networks, particularly of socially vulnerable groups;
- cultural obstacles are related to the cultural baggage which the providers expect from their participants. This baggage has to be acquired in the home and learning environment (both at school and in the non-formal and informal learning circuits).

## **6. A two-way international culture policy**

*Context*

Culture is permeated with an international dimension. For the culture policy, multilateral and bilateral internationalisation, worldwide networking and international partnerships in equality are also a factor. The internationalisation takes place in two directions: on the one hand, Flanders is strongly influenced by the external world. International and multilateral forums force us to look beyond our own boundaries, European regulations and international charters and conventions also determine policy.

Furthermore, constant migrations produce an ever closer cultural patchwork amongst the population. This leads to breaking down physical and mental boundaries and the creation of a beneficial and creative intercultural cross-pollination. In society this process sometimes also leads to friction. In the

other direction, the rich culture of Flanders also has a great deal to offer the world, both historically, and as regards its present culture and socio-cultural activities. We must use and take advantage of these chances and opportunities as fully as possible.

### *Objectives*

**Within an increasingly international context, we want a strong, efficient and permanent international cultural policy for Flanders for all the fields concerned and with the necessary coordination and priorities. We are planning additional funds to support a large number of initiatives. We would like to continue to stimulate the international work of the cultural field in Flanders and strengthen the presence of Flemish art and culture abroad. In addition, it is also important to develop activities to being international cultural actors to Flanders and to encourage international cooperation and exchanges. Finally, the rich region of Flanders wishes to continue to take responsibility for developing countries in its international culture policy in a structured cooperation with Development cooperation. We are convinced that culture can make an essential contribution to processes of emancipation and the development of identity, and that Flanders can also learn a great deal from its partners at the cultural level. An open approach has an inspiring effect.**

**In this international context, the Government of Flanders sees Brussels as the crossroads of internationalisation and a fascinating cultural “laboratory”. It is precisely for that reason that we think it is of crucial importance that the Flemish cultural institutions can play their role in Brussels as fully as possible. The Brussels context provides excellent opportunities to present Flemish cultural life to the international community and open the window on the international community very wide.**

### *Explanation*

Internationalisation is a fact in all the policy fields concerned: the professional arts, the heritage and socio-cultural work. Not responding to this would be to suffocate the (policy on) culture. In order to avoid fragmentation and inefficiency, and to promote permanence, it is inevitable that choices must be made in the foreign culture policy. We will intensify the networking and cooperation with our surrounding regions and countries. In addition, South Africa is a privileged partner at the bilateral level, and many contacts and projects have already been established there. If other

opportunities arise, for example as the result of international developments, these must also be considered.

## **7. The optimisation of the management structure and of the cultural infrastructural policy**

7.1. Evaluation of the superstructure: administration – funds – support centres – advisory organizations

### *The context*

The core tasks of the Flemish culture policy consist of drawing up the culture policy (strategic-conceptual framework), drawing up the regulations for this, implementing the policy, controlling its implementation, supervising this and the policy evaluation. The culture policy is determined and implemented by a complex structure of policy preparation and execution. The administration, the funds for the execution of policy, the facilitating support centres and the advisory organizations play an important role in this. Obviously this whole structure and the policy that is produced are at the service of citizens.

These “government” players have developed on the basis of their own task, and each of them has a historically (determined) vision about their own specific task as well as the tasks of other players. These visions usually coincide but sometimes there are differences of interpretation.

### *Aim*

**The Flemish culture authorities will seek to optimise their own structure in order to carry out their core tasks as efficiently and effectively as possible. For this purpose, they will start by identifying its core tasks and evaluating their execution by the existing management structures.**

**On this basis, we will draw up a strategic plan in order to make modifications in the (individual) structures where necessary and reorganise or rationalise them during the present legislative period. In this respect, attention will be devoted in particular to the division of tasks between the various levels of this total structure, their specific and complementary nature and in addition to their cooperation and the dialogue between them.**

**In concrete terms this means, amongst other things, clearly defining the tasks of the administration – both the central and the decentralised administrations (voï, dab, etc.), the funds, the support centres and the**

**advisory organizations. Following this, we will try to optimise the efficiency and effectiveness of these individual structures in carrying out their tasks. When it is considered necessary, the competences will be increased or supplemented. Organizational models, dialogue structures and cooperative ventures will be geared to achieving the objectives. All this will be done in the context of the options of Better Administrative Policy still to be determined, at the same time looking for a position of the individual structures with regard to becoming more independent.**

## 7.2. Complementary policy levels

### *The context*

A complementary approach is a matter of coordination between policy levels, and in a wide sense, also of coordination between policy areas, the various policy fields (i.e., youth, sport, arts, heritage, socio-cultural work) and private and government initiatives. In the last legislative period, an attempt was made to determine the various key tasks of the municipal councils, provincial councils and the Government of Flanders respectively, on a debate on the key tasks. Within the policy field of culture and youth, the Government of Flanders attempted to carry out a rather theoretical exercise, as was indicated in advance, separate from a feasibility analysis and defining the administrative territories.

### *Aim*

**The debate on key tasks has not yet been completed for the culture policy and must be carried out in concrete form. We want to achieve a shared, clear and feasible context for the administrative, supportive and financial responsibilities, both of the government levels involved, and for the private actors, at each of these levels. In establishing this framework, we will explore and define the theoretical concepts in more detail (e.g., the hospitality premiums, the cultural covenants with large cities, etc.). In this respect, we would also like to continue to invest in stronger administrative discussions on the main options and long-term planning of the Flemish culture policy, also involving non-government actors.**

### *Explanation*

Theory is one thing, practice another. At the moment, the execution of the theoretical administrative agreement between the different governments

seems unrealistic, both from an administrative and from a financial point of view. The theoretical exercise to implement the Culture policy field would have the effect of the proverbial bull in a china shop. One-sided expectations of an explicitly theoretical exercise therefore jeopardise the quality and survival of several initiatives. They also disrupt the administrative relationships between levels of government.

### 7.3. Cultural infrastructural management and policy

#### *The context*

In the field of the cultural infrastructural policy, we distinguish between the management of the cultural infrastructure owned by the Flemish Community and the subsidy policy for cultural infrastructure which is the property of third parties.

1. The Flemish Community – Culture owns about thirty buildings with various cultural facilities such as museums, theatres and community centres. In the infrastructural management of these buildings, a distinction must be made between maintenance and upkeep on the one hand and renovation and expansion on the other hand. Maintenance and upkeep is carried out partly by the user of the building, as regards normal maintenance carried out by tenants and partly by the Fund for Cultural Infrastructure (FoCI) as regards the maintenance carried out by owners. The maintenance by tenants is funded by the user and at his initiative with his operating subsidy, possibly supplemented with a separate subsidy for management. The maintenance carried out by the owner is funded by the FoCI on the basis of the applications by the user. Technical and financial advice on these applications is provided by the department of Buildings of the Flemish Community. They are then prioritised within the FoCI and the Culture Administration. In contrast with the maintenance management, the renovation and expansion of the infrastructure takes place more at the project level. In this respect, a one-off project is started on the basis of a cultural policy decision. Each of these projects requires a specific approach and budget.

2. As regards the subsidy policy for the property of third parties, there are regulations for limited infrastructural subsidies for supralocal sectoral infrastructures, and large or specialised cultural infrastructures of Flemish national interest are subsidised.

#### *Aims*

**The maintenance and renovation of Culture's own buildings is the priority of the infrastructure policy during this period of government.**

**- In the first place, a detailed inventory of the maintenance needs of its own buildings will be drawn up per building. Putting these inventories together should lead to a general coordinated plan for several years for the maintenance of all its own buildings.**

**As the distinction between the maintenance by owners and tenants is not always clearly defined, the plan for several years will determine which work falls under the FoCI and which work is the user's responsibility. The user will become more accountable for the smaller interventions and will have to adapt his budget in this respect.**

**- The decisions on the renovation or expansion of Culture's own infrastructure will be taken in relation to the needs arising from the core task of the user. This mainly concerns the department's (own) large cultural institutions. Decisions taken earlier will be evaluated from that point of view.**

**The subsidy policy for the cultural infrastructure of third parties contains two components.**

**- The existing regulations for infrastructural subsidies for supralocal sectoral infrastructures will be elaborated to arrive at an execution decision of the establishment decree of the FoCI. At the same time, the priorities will be clearly modified in connection with the sectors which can apply for these subsidies.**

**- The continued development and subsidies for large and specialised cultural infrastructures of Flemish national interest is the responsibility of the whole Government of Flanders, at the suggestion of the culture policy. This will evaluate the needs for further development, from the point of view both of the cultural sectors and disciplines, and of the regional spread and location. The available room in the budget during this legislative period will be a decisive parameter. Commitments already undertaken will be taken into account.**

**The infrastructural management and policy of the cultural authorities will devote particular attention to the permanence and architectural quality of every intervention. In decisions on the renovation and expansion of its own buildings, and for the subsidies for large cultural infrastructure, the concern for good quality and innovative architecture will be a decisive element.**

## **8. Professional, semi-professional and voluntary work: evaluation and greater appreciation**

### *The context*

The culture policy is the perfect place for an encounter between voluntary work and professionalized institutions. This encounter has different dimensions, including the important social and legal aspects. For (voluntary) work this means the not-yet-quite-regulated framework for the reimbursement of costs, insurances etc. For the professionalised institutions it concerns collective employment agreements and working conditions. We will not explore these aspects in this part of the policy memorandum; they must be arranged at the federal level to an important extent. However, we will focus on the possibilities of governments to enrich and diversify the existing landscape with a policy of subsidies.

1. With regard to professionalisation, we find that the (business) demands are constantly increasing at the level of financial management, personnel policy, support, infrastructural management, etc. The age of well-intentioned “amateurism” is over. A number of factors played an important role in this. To start with, it is clear that it is necessary to report as fully as possible and in as much detail as possible on the expenditure of community funds. It is quite right that requirements are increasing at this level. The need for further professionalisation is clearly experienced by the actors in the field itself and is translated into the establishment of sectoral structures which specialise, amongst other things, in supervising the process of professionalisation. The support centres also play an important role in this respect. Finally, there has been a great increase in the training provisions at the level of culture management in recent years and many employees of cultural organizations have made use of these provisions to take further training and acquire additional competences.

Because of this increasing professionalisation, the overhead costs of the organizations are also increasing. Inevitably we will be confronted sooner or later with the limits of this growth and will have to conclude that the number of professional organizations in the culture sector cannot be unlimited. Therefore there will inevitably be some losses and this always leads to frustration and dissatisfaction, particularly when there is no acceptable fall back position.

During the last legislative period, the decree on additional employment was approved, amongst others. This approach is new in the culture (and youth) sector. It tries to find a balance between explicitly employment objectives and ambitions in the context of a culture policy. Furthermore, incentives are provided here and there for greater cultural diversity on the work floor and in the management of organizations and institutions.

2. In the culture policy, many fields are almost automatically assigned to one of two worlds: on the one hand, the voluntary world (also known as amateurs, in a positive sense) and on the other hand, the professional employees (professionalized). This distinction is important and is expressed in many aspects, not least the financial consequences. We deliberately wish to avoid a debate on differences in quality: for us, both worlds are constantly proving their relevance and competences.

However, we do wish to focus attention on the challenging and promising possibilities of achieving new forms of organizations and projects in the continuum between voluntary organizations and professional institutions. This requires a creativity on the part of the authorities, particularly in relation to the local culture policy) to create room in the subsidy policy for these intermediate forms. The possibility of making use of temporary professionals, e.g., on a project basis (as a director, conductor, artistic supervisor, etc.), or providing facilities (rehearsal space, technical theatre and musical support), becomes a real opportunity in this way. This approach can have an important positive impact on the work of many voluntary associations and at the same time serve as an intermediary space between professional cultural activities. At the same time it can lead to a refreshing differentiation in the broad cultural landscape.

#### *Aims*

**We would like to endeavour to increase the appreciation of the semi-professional approach, not as a sort of stage preceding professionalisation, but as a way of working *sui generis*. We believe that the Government of Flanders can play a role in increasing this appreciation, but that the local governments can also provide important incentives in this respect, for example by providing suitable infrastructure to make these activities possible, provide limited project-related subsidies, etc.**

**The Government of Flanders wishes to discuss the support and increased appreciation for this semi-professional sector in the debate on key tasks with the towns and municipalities, think about further-**

**reaching facilitation at the federal level, and also implement a targeted policy of incentives itself wherever possible. With this operation, we would like to strengthen the appreciation for creative “investment” at every level, and create channels by which this creativity can be actively encouraged in a targeted way.**

**This takes place in the context of a more general objective of the Flemish culture policy: we wish to implement a specific policy for “pure” amateur activities, as well as semi-professional and professional activities. This can be seen as the application of a respect for cultural identity (in this respect see II,2).**

### *Explanation*

It is probably too early to provide a detailed explanation with this policy option. The idea is relatively new and must be examined in more detail in terms of its feasibility and practical implications. In any case, we do not see this field as the sum of a number of sub-fields (again giving rise to the danger of artificial dividing lines), but as a continuum in which everyone can find their own place and develop their own ambitions.

## **9. Cultural industries as partners**

### *The context*

Far-reaching changes are taking place in Flanders and in the rest of the world at the level of the leisure economy. Internationally the significance of this branch of industry is constantly increasing, and therefore the political-economic interests are also becoming greater all the time. An enlargement of scale and the influence of (digital) technology are resulting in fundamental structural changes. At the same time, subsidy regulations for culture are being discussed at the national and regional level in the context of the GATTs (General Agreements on Trades in Services). They are seen as disrupting the market, in other words, as distorting competition in relation to the commercial providers of cultural goods. On the other hand, the protection of the smaller cultural communities is also of central importance at international forums.

On the basis of its far-reaching culture policy, Flanders is subsidising a strong and varied cultural provision. This cultural provision is also increasingly organised by commercially inspired players. This trend towards the marketing of culture is noticeable in various fields, both in socio-cultural work, in the cultural heritage sector and in all the disciplines of art. In some

disciplines of art the boundary between subsidised and commercially inspired culture is less clear. For example, feature films are almost exclusively produced, distributed and shown by “businesses” which also receive cultural subsidies. The contemporary visual arts quite often include a significant economic component, but there are also possibilities of government subsidies. A comparable situation applies for contemporary music.

The trend towards the commercialisation of culture is sometimes felt to be threatening. Nevertheless, it entails many opportunities: there are possibilities for numerous creative partnerships and these are actually established. At the same time the demand with regard to the role of government in relation to culture in providing subsidies is becoming stronger, as well as its task with regard to the development of commercial cultural provisions.

### *Aims*

**Flanders will have an active role in the international discussions on cultural diversity and the cultural industries, in consultation with the members of the European Union and with cultural regions outside Europe, particularly in the context of the discussions taking place in the World Trade Organisation, with a view to the protection of cultural diversity.**

**Our starting point is that the most important task of the Flemish cultural authorities is, on the one hand, to promote innovation and artistic creativity in the shadow of the market, and on the other hand, to guarantee high quality artistic and cultural experiences and participation for the population. The Government of Flanders will carry out this task by following two paths:**

- **continuing and developing the cultural political tradition which is expressed in a cultural policy of production and participation, by supporting a subsidised sector and also with project-based subsidies for commercial actors for commissions in the general interest, such as guaranteeing cultural diversity or providing opportunities for talented young people;**
- **by implementing a supplementary policy to correct the market with regard to the cultural industries in the context of diversity.**

**At the same time it will examine the extent to which it is appropriate and effective to establish a cultural investment company with which the government can provide the cultural industry with risk capital as a full shareholder, with the same rights and obligations as private**

**shareholders. This would allow the government to focus the direct project-related subsidies for the cultural industry on innovation, artistic creativity and diversity.**

*Explanation*

This policy field is still fully developing, but the Flemish cultural authorities recognise the cultural industries as partners who can provide opportunities with regard to achieving the values which form the basis of its policy. Further research into this subject is necessary during the first stage. This will form the basis for any policy-related activities. The research will have to examine the cultural industry in Flanders as regards its impact, needs and the anticipated evolutions.

The cultural industry of the subsidised sector can be distinguished by comparing their starting points and objectives. The main goal of the subsidised sector is to serve the general interest and for this purpose it spends the subsidies that are allocated as effectively as possible. This mainly concerns non-profit making associations. The cultural industry is based on private interests and focuses on achieving financial added value for the benefit of private persons or shareholders. It is mainly concerned with private persons who are working independently or in commercial partnerships.

The cultural industry, the collective name for anyone who provides culture with a private profit motive, can also be subsidised by government where this is considered appropriate because of the general interest.

In the leisure economy, the fact that Flanders is characterised by a range of cultural industries is very important. These can be roughly divided into two levels: (a) the producers of industrial products which can be reproduced, such as books, CDs, videos, games, film, the printed media and (b) the producers of non-industrial or semi-industrial goods which can be reproduced. This last category comprises the sector of the dramatic arts, but also designer fashion, design and architecture. In certain cases, the producers have links with an internationally developed culture or experience industry, but the great majority are smaller enterprises (one-man businesses and small-scale initiatives) which provide cultural products. In the small Flemish and Dutch-speaking market, they have to present themselves in an increasingly global and strong competitive environment.

Thus the cultural industry in Flanders currently finds itself in a complex

force field. On the one hand, there is the limited scale of the market, which certainly applies for language-based products. Then there is the enlargement of scale which is occurring in certain cultural industries at a worldwide level and which leads to increasing questions about the place of a local cultural industry. Finally, capital-intensive technological developments can become a comparative disadvantage for businesses operating on a relatively small scale.

## **10. Leisure time with respect for culture**

### *The context*

Culture contributes to the individual identity of people, i.e., also of people at play who are engaged in leisure activities, parties, and eating. This accounts for the traditional close links which exist, for example between culture and leisure time. Art and culture therefore also form part of the leisure economy and tourism. A large part of the tourist provision can be found in the cultural field while on the other hand, many cultural events are organized on a tourist basis. Cultural institutions should take this into account. This certainly does not mean that they have to transform themselves into fun factories.

Furthermore as a rich cultural region, Flanders is situated at a historical, cultural, creative and touristic crossroads. The intensification of international cooperation with other cultural regions, will not only lead to an active policy with neighbouring countries, but also makes it possible to look beyond the borders.

### *Aim*

**On the basis of the contacts between culture and tourism, we are aiming to organise a more structural dialogue between these policy areas, with mutual respect for the various starting points. In this cooperation, the cultural added value of the product has a central place for its various individual areas of culture. In addition, other points for attention arise when these forces are combined, including the further elaboration of the concept of the “leisure shop”, the development of a policy for international cultural communication and the continued development of a detailed vision to achieve a comprehensive, joint policy for cultural events. We would also like to devote particular attention to the aspects of the Flanders Festival, and on the basis of the example of successful and promising projects abroad, to the field of the food culture.**

### *Explanation*

At the end of the strategic objectives it will be clear that we do not agree with the attempts to *reduce* cultural life to a form of subsidised leisure activities. Obviously we do not have any objections to good leisure activities (and in the previous pages we have looked at the question whether the government has a role to play in the cultural industries which aim to provide a high quality provision in this respect), but we do not consider that it is right to force cultural life into that sort of straightjacket. This would seriously underestimate its social role. An essential aspect of our policy is the idea that the individual and added value and the wealth of cultural life in Flanders must be recognised at every level. The policy on culture is an important and decisive factor in the development of a society in which a sense of responsibility, confidence and chances of development have a central place.

### *Leisure shop*

In our busy society, the quality of the way in which we spend our scarce leisure time becomes increasingly important. If it is possible to easily acquire the necessary information and assistance with regard to the cultural, sports, recreational and tourist provisions, this contributes to that high quality. Initiatives have been developed in various social fields which put this one-stop-shop principle into practice: the clients can go to a central place for information and for public assistance. All sorts of information lines, portal sites and enterprise offices are examples of this. In the leisure sector there is also an increasing demand for the best possible services. There is a growing awareness that an inadequate provision is a serious barrier for a significant proportion of the leisure public. For example, this applies for opening hours which are not really related to the needs of the potential public. Many people do not have access to the information and reservation facilities through the channels which are most familiar to them, or with which they came into contact most up to now. The idea of a one-stop shop as a leisure shop can provide a solution in this respect. In the relationship between leisure facilities and the public, the leisure shop can play an important intermediary role. In this case, the information and assistance for the public are provided at one central service outlet.

### *Events*

It goes without saying that events are an important instrument for tourism. Many events also have a cultural aspect or an even mainly of a cultural

nature: for example, there are art exhibitions, commemoration years, the visual arts, city festivals, etc. Furthermore, culture also works with events which are aimed at raising awareness, such as the Heritage Day (moving heritage) or the Open Monuments Day (architectural heritage). In any case, it is clear that culture and tourism can be partners. Therefore it is important that during this legislative period there are permanent discussions, with respect for each other's areas of competence and individual character.

### **III Towards the field: the implementation of objectives**

#### **1. The professional arts**

The broad amalgam of “professional” art disciplines falls under the Arts Decree which enters into effect in stages from 2006, and which aims to guarantee a rich diversity within the available budgets.

##### 1.1 General: the Arts Decree, the start of a comprehensive and planned arts policy

The Arts Decree is redrawing the whole landscape and the related policy. We will briefly examine the four important aspects which correspond closely to the strategic objectives formulated in part II:

- The Arts Decree responds to the increasing blurring of boundaries between the various disciplines, provides a comprehensive approach for all expressions of art and aims to create room to respond to the constant changes. Both sector-specific initiatives and crossovers have a place there. The goal is a policy in which possibilities for development have a central place, both for the landscape as a whole and its various forms of organizations, and for individual artists and organizations.
- The decree asks artistic and cultural organizations from more and more sectors to work with a policy plan system. Every organization which applies for a subsidy for several years must draw up its plans for the period concerned in terms of content and finance in advance, and will also held accountable for the policy that is implemented. Institutions must be sufficiently autonomous and professional to be able to shoulder this institutional responsibility. This must be apparent, inter alia, from the policy plans and administrative reports that are submitted. We do want to guard against an excessive burden of plans which would actually be disadvantageous for those sectors which still have to grow at the level of organization.
- In addition to the production and presentation of the arts, the decree also devotes attention to support activities which contribute to a greater familiarity with the arts and artists. The decree provides support for educational arts and social and artistic organizations and projects which should lead to a broader and more intense participation.
- The decree also contains a first opening with regard to the profit sector. In future, this will also be eligible for project-related support.

We are aware that the first application of the Arts Decree must be more than a time at which the “money is divided amongst the arts”. It will be the start of a comprehensive arts policy, in which it is necessary to find the correct balance, without resulting in colourless and tasteless compromises. It is also the time at which choices will have to be made, when all the applicants appear at the starting line with equal opportunities and where not everyone will be given what he or she had hoped for. In any case, we will make sure that individuality, daring, vision, and being prepared to co-invest in the development of a comprehensive arts policy will be honoured. Special attention will be devoted to young people, who sometimes have to wait much too long for their first opportunities and are therefore at risk of being discouraged. We do not opt for a one-sided approach but will try to make sure that the provision is multifaceted and diverse, and that it has something to offer every interested citizen in all its diversity.

In this overall context, we will place a number of specific emphases.

## 1.2 Attention for the large institutions

The new institutions derive their right to exist and to subsidies on the express choice of the Flemish Community to guarantee the exercise or presentation of certain disciplines in Flanders itself. Despite their differing management structures, (vvo, dab, vzw, etc.) and their degree of autonomy, the responsibility for their existence, as well as the level of quality lies with government. This fact distinguishes these institutions from all other subsidised institutions: the government must take responsibility itself more clearly.

The large institutions have a large amount of symbolic capital. This is stored in valuable collections or built up by their specific artistic activities. The management of the large institutions is governed by the new decrees (Arts and Heritage Decree). This contains provisions with regard to quality control, the techniques of management agreements, etc. The new round for recognition, as provided in the decrees, raises the question of concluding new management agreements *sui generis*. In this respect, it is self evident that the results of the audit recently carried out will be taken into account, that tasks are clearly described and that the ratio between tasks and funds will be examined on the basis of consultation. We expect the large institutions to enter into an open and constructive dialogue with the subsidising authorities.

The policy with regard to these institutions requires a specific and far-reaching approach for every aspect, in accordance with a plan in stages:

1. defining or redefining the choices of government with regard to each of the institutions concerned;
2. defining the task which we, as the government, assign to these institutions;
3. defining an organizational structure of work which is feasible and the basic funding required for this (from a business point of view of management). This aspect must be determined by government, possibly with the help of external experts and in consultation with each of the institutions concerned;
4. defining a form of organization which may or may not be uniform, in which the role of the board of directors, the day-to-day management and government commissioners are determined, and for which clear agreements are made about responsibilities and reporting;
5. drawing up a management agreement in which all this is recorded and which also involves other levels of government, particularly at the level of funding and responsibilities;
6. determining the infrastructural needs in relation to the task and within the overall cultural infrastructural context in Flanders;
7. implementing these principles in concrete decisions, following the advice of the evaluation commission and the administration, in the context of the execution of the Arts Decree;
8. evaluating the operation of the institutions with international evaluation commissions

### 1.3 The dramatic arts and music

Dramatic arts and music is probably the best developed sector in the arts policy. This is partly due to an historical advantage, but is also related to a level of professionalisation which is much higher than in the other sectors. This has a twofold advantage: artistic people have the freedom to devote themselves almost inclusively to their artistic work, which results in a very varied provision that has a big impact both nationally and internationally – and the business people are often highly specialised.

For this sector the challenge will be to stimulate the diversity of the provision and ensure the viability of the disciplines within the available room of the budget. Threats include the alleged possibility of an over-supply, the clear problem of spread (dramatic arts), falling sales in the music industry, the Dutch-language genre which is becoming less of a priority for recording industries and the decline in the support for foreign tours by Flemish pop groups.

A number of specific points for attention can be distinguished in this overall context.

*A better spread of innovative productions*

As many subsidy dossiers show, it is becoming increasingly difficult to achieve a significant spread for innovative productions which perform a research function or which confront young artists for the first time with an audience. We will examine whether specific incentives are possible for the presentation of these sorts of productions. The result of this action should be a better spread of these productions so that they reach more people.

*More permanence for valuable projects*

There is a need for a policy which allows valuable projects to transcend their one-off character. Specifically this concerns a policy of stimulating repeats of important productions and for the digitisation of productions on other media. This will result in a better spread and in the archiving of productions (“living heritage”).

*Sufficient funds to be able to carry out the necessary tasks*

We do not opt to help too many different organizations on their way with too few funds, but to allocate sufficient funds to each of the recognised and subsidised organizations to allow them to operate adequately. Points for attention include the large city theatres, which should more than ever be able to play their role as a catalyst, and a number of important players at the international level. However, smaller or start-up organizations should also be able to operate adequately on their own specific scale. As the room in the budget for the first application of the Arts Decree will not be unlimited, this starting point implies that government will have to make clear and consistent choices.

*Increased attention for musical theatre*

In recent years, many attempts have been made to market professional musicals without any significant government subsidy. Although these have often been adequate, it must be admitted that this specific subsector finds it difficult to find a successful and healthy balance between artistic ambitions and profitability. At the level of working conditions, it is also often unsatisfactory. Meanwhile, a new situation has also arisen with the breakaway of the music department from the Flanders Ballet. We believe that there are clear opportunities for giving the musical theatre a new lease of life, but that the sector itself also has an important role to play in this.

*Objectivising subsidies in the music sector*

Generously subsidised orchestras can market their productions for lower prices than ensembles which receive no or only small government subsidies. This situation must be examined. We do not argue for a purely market-oriented approach to the concert circuit, but do ask ourselves whether the current system does not give the subsidised sector too much of a competitive advantage, so that it has a discouraging effect on free initiative.

*Attention to the Iceland model*

In contemporary popular music, we have a number of very talented people who can undoubtedly compete at a highly international level. The problem is that they have to operate in an extremely competitive environment in which they have to fight hard to survive. A number of smaller countries have invested heavily in their best cultural ambassadors. For example, the efforts made by Iceland to present their musicians at an international level have been particularly successful. Similar efforts have been made by the Scandinavian countries. We would like to examine how we can provide our artists with more active support and supervision in building up their international career.

1.4 The policy on literature and publications

The policy on literature will create the best possible climate for authors and guarantee the discovery of those literary productions for readers. The policy on literature aims to support poetry and prose, dramatic works and essays, fiction and non-fiction, with appropriate funds and initiatives. In addition to the direct subsidies for authors and translators, literary magazines, dramatic works and other organizations and events will also be subsidised. The Flemish Literature Foundation will be entrusted with this task in the new policy period. Consultation with the Culture administration continues to be important, particularly for good coordination with the Cultural Agreements.

*Promoting reading*

During a busy age, reading more than ever provides important moments for rest and reflection. In this field we aim for a joint reading policy with the Dutch and Flemish Reading Foundation, defining a number of joint initiatives and determining the budgets with the Netherlands.

We will take initiatives with our Flemish colleagues competent for Education and Family in order to make reading one of the important ingredients for a good school and a happy family.

*The foreign policy on strip cartoons*

Depending on the funds available, it is important to consolidate the good results of the first attempt at a foreign policy in the next policy period. Residential opportunities which we offer foreign authors and translators in Flanders will open the doors to our Flemish authors abroad. We also wish to continue supporting the policy on strip cartoons in order to continue to support our talent in this important contemporary genre.

*New authors*

In addition we would like to give new authors the necessary incentives they require. Authors of immigrant origin will also be intensively involved in these efforts. Their contribution to our literature is an enrichment.

*Publishers and bookshops*

We will take action to support and promote good bookshops and publishers. After all, the policy on literature consists of paving the way to link authors and readers. Publishers and booksellers, united in boek.be, are building this road and the Flemish Literature Foundation will ensure the application of the literary road code. The advisory function of booksellers and the presence of a broad range in bookshops must be able to count on government support. The links between the school-library-bookshop must be strengthened.

*Cooperation with the Dutch foundations*

The Flemish Literature Foundation will pursue close collaboration with the Dutch foundations in order to achieve the above-mentioned cultural and political objectives and to achieve an integration of the Dutch and Flemish policies on literature in the future. This can be achieved by means of a gradual coordination of the methods and criteria for subsidies, the development of a joint translation policy and by means of cooperation in the foreign presentation and promotion of our literature.

A consistent policy on translation and promotion with a joint approach will guarantee Flemish and Dutch authors better opportunities abroad.

*Grants and premiums*

One important task of the Foundation continues to be the support for authors, so that they can have complete freedom to write and publish.

Working grants, publication premiums and translation premiums continue to be the appropriate means for this.

*A coherent policy for publication (non-literary)*

For the culture sector, good quality publications can provide significant added value. At this level it is important to develop a coherent policy with a clear objective and an appropriate strategy to implement this.

On the basis of a general cultural concern, we would also like to support reflection on all cultural sectors. Both for the visual arts, dramatic arts, music and architecture, publications will be supported, just as they are for example in the heritage field. Bearing in mind our international reputation, leading essays can also ask for a translation subsidy.

## 1.5 The policy on architecture and design

*Attention for architecture*

High quality architecture expresses the concern and attention we devote to our environment. We would like to look for ways to encourage everyone, clients and users, governments and private persons to invest carefully and in a targeted way in the quality of our environment. This will require policy-oriented research and funds to provide the correct incentives.

*Fund for research into design*

In academic circles, architecture and design are still viewed too narrowly as applied science. Research into design which focuses more on the cultural perspective of these disciplines is not subsidised anywhere at the moment. Nevertheless, this sort of research leads to innovation which can in turn result in a new dynamic force in the sector.

*Flemish architecture and design in international networks*

Flemish architecture and design should be integrated to a greater extent in international networks. Designers must be encouraged to take part in international trade fairs. Researchers and students should be subsidised if they wish to continue to study abroad.

## 1.6 The visual arts

*Developing the field and the policy plan*

In general there is still very little empirical material about this field, which is in full transition, and is experiencing a period of highly successful

achievements due to the combination of a talented new generation and established names. By analogy with other sectors, the government has to provide possibilities for growth and consolidation here using the Arts Decree as an instrument. Developing this field requires financial means and policy choices. These must be expressed in a policy plan for the visual arts. (Building blocks are available for drafting this plan: the by no means inflexible context provided by the brand new Arts Decree for the development of the field, the mapping research on the Visual Arts carried out by the Centre for Cultural Sociology, not forgetting the most important building block: the wealth of possibilities provided by contemporary image production in Flanders).

The policy plan must allow the Government of Flanders to make a carefully considered commitment to the visual arts in Flanders. The debate on the key tasks, its international position, the reputation at home and abroad of artistic practices, consolidation and networking, the expansion of internationally and locally networked growth centres, the position of the artist, the contribution of the independent curator and critic, the role of the galleries and collectors, the place of the museums for contemporary art, the link with training institutes, the challenges related to the conservation of videos, the coordination with the policy on the audiovisual arts, etc.; these are all points for attention which will have to be taken into account if the policy is drawn up.

As regards policy choices, the Government of Flanders will aim for a clear and targeted policy with clear priorities. The level of the subsidies must guarantee that the actors are able to carry out their work well and preferably at the international level.

#### *Funds for arts organizations and artists*

The Arts Decree justifiably imposes conditions and quality requirements on the subsidised arts organizations. In particular, these concern collective employment agreement obligations, the payment of the visual artists with which they work, the continuity of the work, etc. The Government of Flanders must give them the financial possibility to comply with these obligations. We must make a financial effort to make it possible for the visual arts organizations which are still too often one-man (or one-woman) organizations at the moment, to develop their level of quality. After all, it is expressly not the intention of the Arts Decree to generate a Mattheus effect. In this respect, the Government of Flanders must give priority to the organizations developing permanent activities, which have a clear

international profile or are developing one and which (can) act as focal points for cooperation at the level of content, know-how and funds. In addition, topical activities and events (celebrations, biennials, etc.) can play an important role in the dissemination and expansion of the visual arts. These efforts will also benefit artists. As a result of their increased financial strength, the organizations will be able to pay the artists with whom they are cooperating satisfactorily.

### *International impact*

The contemporary visual arts by their nature form a transnational and international system. It is a matter of giving Flemish actors – artists, organizations, and mediators – the opportunity to position their work and activities in an international context, by means of a strategic presence in locations where the consensus on arts movements and individual oeuvres is also generated. The existing regulation on “international working permits” forms a valid instrument for this purpose. However, in Flanders itself, this provision is limited, while welcoming artists from abroad for longer periods of work can be just as useful and enriching as sending our own artists abroad. In this context, the Frans Masereel Centre in particular, possibly supplemented with new players, should try to connect with the European exchange programme, “Pépinières Européennes pour jeunes artistes”. Attempts at these initiatives deserve the support of the Government of Flanders. After all, the impact of foreign talent is just as important as the impact of our reputation abroad. In addition, it continues to be important to support foreign platforms which are presenting “art from Flanders”. Support centres should also be able to play a role at the level of internationalisation. In addition, the possibility must be examined whether independent curators and critics can be used in a global system of scouting and continuous networking. Digital information is becoming increasingly important for publicising and disseminating the visual arts, both nationally and internationally. The Government of Flanders will devote permanent attention to the development of good databanks, containing data in the field in an integrated way. In this respect, there is an important role for the support centres, Culturenet Flanders, the museums and organizations for visual arts, art courses and documentation centres, amongst others.

### *The international function of the museums for contemporary art*

The large museums for contemporary art by their nature have an international function. However, in recent years a lack of funds has resulted in a relatively weak international position of these institutions. The

opportunities which museums such as the SMAK and the MUHKA have at this level are still insufficiently realised. We will examine whether it would be possible to provide additional funding for this aspect of their work, with the output being a more active position in various international cooperative ventures. In these circuits, the SMAK and the MUHKA should be leaders and active participants in international exhibition projects.

#### *Museums of contemporary art and a broader public*

Apart from some initiatives related more particularly to events, the organizations for contemporary visual arts focus on a fairly limited core public with some rather “in-crowd” characteristics. Without losing their focus, they must be encouraged to make efforts to reach a broader public. On the other hand, museums for contemporary art must develop an effect which not only focuses on the in-crowd public: in addition to tailor-made research exhibitions, they must also organise high quality (retrospective) exhibitions which provide the general public with a state of the arts. In reaching a broader public the museums play a crucial role. In addition, as pioneers and as a social warehouse, they also have a responsible role in relation to their immediate environment (urban context, art schools, artists, associations, etc.). They help to determine the creation of a fertile artistic undercurrent – the humus of the arts landscape.

#### *Coordination with audiovisual arts*

The further coordination of the visual arts policy with the policy on audiovisual arts and the integration of these two fields in the umbrella arts decree, form a permanent point of attention for this period of government. The experimental media should not be forgotten in this respect.

#### 1.7 The audiovisual arts

The audiovisual arts are a field which has clear points of contact with other fields and sectors: audiovisual media, the economy (investments, employment, commercial products), education, heritage, leisure time. In a cultural context, this primarily concerns the cultural dimension of this art. This perspective determines the main lines of the policy in this respect, which obviously does not detract from the fact that consultation with the sectors mentioned above is extremely useful and necessary.

#### *Spread and education*

Because the audiovisual arts and culture were not included in the culture policy for a long time, the link between the audiovisual field and the cultural

debate and the general culture policy will have to be given a new lease of life in the next government. Updating audiovisual skills is absolutely essential in view of the audiovisual culture we live in. There is a need for a better spread of a diversified audiovisual provision and audiovisual education with a sound educational basis.

*Towards a new management agreement with the VAF*

The first management agreement with the VAF ends at the end of 2005. In the course of 2005, a start is made on the discussions for a new management agreement. This will be drawn up on the basis of an evaluation of the operation of the VAF, and taking into account a policy memorandum which was recently prepared by the board of directions. The main concerns and starting points of the Flemish cultural authorities relate to four points for attention:

1. the concern for a broad and varied provision
2. permanent attention devoted to the development of Flemish talent
3. the choice for a selective policy of subsidises on the basis of clearly formulated priorities
4. promoting the reputation of the Flemish audiovisual production, also in the international field

*Distribution premiums, distribution incentives, exploitation incentives*

The negotiations on the new management agreement of the Flemish Community with the VAF will explore whether it is useful and feasible to introduce a system of distribution premiums and/or distribution or exploitation incentives for Flemish film, in addition to the existing forms of selective subsidies. In the field of the distribution and presentation of film in general, we will also examine how we can increase the diversity of the range.

*The audiovisual industry*

One important recent change is the introduction of the fiscal subsidy measure “tax shelter”. This measure makes investing in Belgian/Flemish film attractive from the tax point of view. It is self evident that investors will be more inclined to invest in productions which have a higher chance of being commercially successful. We will implement a promotional, informational, facilitating and supportive policy to provide maximum opportunities for the application of the “tax shelter” for Flemish films.

In the context of the policy for the cultural industry, we will devote special attention to the audiovisual industry, both as regards the supplementary and market correcting policy and in considering the establishment of a cultural investment company.

*Public broadcasting and Flemish audiovisual productions*

The broadcasting companies have a very important role in the distribution of Flemish audiovisual productions, for its own public, and therefore to maintain the sector. In the past a number of interesting and valuable initiatives were already taken, but close cooperation between these related sectors is necessary. For this purpose, the Flemish Minister of Culture will consult with his colleague competent for the media.

*The Flemish voice in the European decision-making process*

At the European level, the current period of government is at a critical stage. The ratification of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production is (finally) being drawn up, the European Convention on the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage is waiting to be signed and – last but not least – the new Media programme of the European Union starts in 2007. It is essential for Flanders to make its voice heard in the European decision making process. The Flemish film sector as a whole must participate in the future programme more than it has in the past, so that the Flemish audiovisual sector can eventually be raised to a higher professional level with the help of the Media programme. The Belgian-Flemish Community Media desk is a suitable instrument for publicising the Media programme, both to individual users and to organizations and production companies. In this process, the role of the European co-production fund Eurimages (of which Belgium is currently the deputy president) should also be mentioned. Both here and at various other European forums (including the European Audiovisual Observatory) we aim to intensify the Flemish presence, as a central region in Europe.

*The international reputation of the Flemish film heritage*

Drawing attention to Flemish film by means of initiatives related to presentation and various support activities is an element in the Flemish culture policy which is just as important as their creation and production. The (international) promotion of Flemish audiovisual production is carried out by Flanders Image which is part of the VAF; for its part, the administration takes its representation at international events with a cultural agenda very seriously. In future this will have to be developed on the basis

of consultation. The maximum cultural promotion of the Flemish film heritage abroad is one of the goals of the Flemish cultural policy.

### *Application of the Arts Decree*

Film is one of the expressions of art with the greatest access, and with a particularly high potential at the level of participation. It often also gives rise to an exploration of related art forms (literature, theatre, dance, etc.). However, this presupposes breaking down the dominance of purely consumer-oriented commercial cinema. It is in this field that the audiovisual organizations, film clubs and festivals are in the footlights: their role in increasing the public's knowledge can hardly be overestimated: in presentations and their educational activities, they provide knowledge and/or a frame of reference; festivals provide an opportunity to broaden and deepen a knowledge of the field, depending on whether they have a general or thematic orientation. The success of these clubs and, above all, of the numerous film festivals put on in Flanders proves that there is a real need for this.

From 1 January 2006, the Arts Decree also enters into effect in the field of the audiovisual arts. In this respect we will have to be sufficiently aware that the project-oriented operation and club activities are bursting with good will and have a large input from volunteers, but that there is little or no structure, and that the step towards professionalisation will take some time. We must make sure that the subsidies of these organizations are not jeopardised by the strict requirements with regard to professionalisation imposed in the Arts Decree. After all, with a few exceptions, the sector of the audiovisual arts has traditionally been undersubsidised. It is time for it to catch up in this respect, parallel to the policy with regard to the visual arts. The IAK support centre will have to play a role in this. On the one hand, it must reveal the needs in the sector and formulate these in proposals together with the administration. On the other hand, the IAK must also provide supervision for the sector, which should lead to further professionalisation, and the maximum use of the available forms of subsidies at the various levels. The VAF also has a task in building up (professional) competences, with the subsidies it provides for training, grants and production workshops.

## **2. The cultural heritage**

*By way of introduction: an important new policy field*

The large sector of the cultural heritage – “the collective memory of our society” contributes significantly to the creation of a sense of community. A knowledge and an experience of the cultural heritage help to determine the cultural self-consciousness of people and provide a society with a creative capacity which can bind people.

We must become more aware of the cultural heritage we have and its value, amongst other things as one of our scarce raw materials. It is the task and responsibility of government to stimulate an approach to the cultural heritage that maintains it and is critical, creative and reflective. This contributes to the development of a frame of reference in which social and cultural phenomena can be interpreted.

Although the cultural heritage in Flanders is ubiquitous, it was undervalued for a long time. The policy recently introduced by the Government of Flanders is actually no more than a catching-up operation in comparison with the countries surrounding us. As the minister competent for culture, I therefore feel called upon to continue to explore the road we have taken and build on the commitments which were undertaken, in particular in the last period of government.<sup>1</sup>

## 2.1 The continuity of the policy

The continued expansion of an integrated and comprehensive cultural and heritage policy is an important challenge for the 2004-2009 policy period: a coherent policy which focuses in a balanced way on the core tasks (acquisition, maintenance and management, sustainable development, scientific and public access), and on the social integration of the cultural heritage. The last assumes that wherever possible, this sector will cooperate with other actors (see below). This is a task for the Government of Flanders, but it is also a task for every actor involved in heritage: a heritage that is not kept “alive” and “up to date” will turn to dust and lose a great deal of its significance.

### *The Heritage Decree*

The effective implementation and proper funding of the Heritage Decree will be an important point of attention for this legislative period.

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<sup>1</sup> In Flanders the care of monuments, care of the landscape and care of the archaeological heritage do not constitutionally belong to personal matters, although they form part of the international umbrella term “cultural heritage”. The care for the architectural heritage is a regional competence, while the community is competent for the moving and immaterial heritage (“*cultural heritage*”).

### *The heritage covenants*

The heritage covenants, which were started in the last legislative period, are a good example of an integrated cultural-heritage policy. They must provide a tailor-made heritage policy, adapted to the needs of the municipalities or cooperative ventures of the municipalities surrounding the heritage, and close to the population. It is important that the heritage unit which implements the covenant does not cooperate only with the established institutions, but for example also with local, voluntary organizations. In fact, a great deal of the cultural heritage is not in archive institutions, such as the unusually extensive ecclesiastical heritage in Flanders.

Expanding the application of this policy instrument is necessary to be able to continue the dynamic developments which were started. Because of the Heritage Decree, the heritage covenants have in fact recently been based on the decree.

In this respect, we will not forget to point out the importance of the coordination between the sectoral policy plans (e.g., museums, archiving institutions, reference libraries and documentation centres) the municipal or provincial cultural policy plan and, where there is one, the policy plan for the execution of the heritage covenant.

## 2.2 Three areas where we need to catch up

### *Maintenance and management*

Measures focusing on maintenance and management are a condition sine qua non, also for good quality public participation. At the moment it is hardly possible to estimate the wealth and diversity of cultural goods present in Flanders, and the condition of this heritage is often appalling. For these two serious reasons, urgent action is needed.

From the strategic point of view, a basic registration comes first – we need to know what we have. A sound collection policy is impossible without solid and computerised records. A good collection databank is also an instrument for further maintenance and management measures and an inventory of the damage forms the basis for a conservation policy. In these steps to catch up where we have fallen behind, the Government of Flanders particularly aims to take a stimulating and coordinating role.

The logical consequence of an inventory is that for certain objects or parts of collections it will become apparent that they do not or no longer have a place in collections. As the government responsible for culture we aim to stimulate the discussion on the mobility of collections (coordination-long term loans, rejection exchanges) and formulate advice on these matters.

A recently concluded “research project” on the building blocks and means, and the desirability and feasibility of open storage activities” showed that many institutions have fallen behind with regard to the responsible (temporary) storage of the moveable heritage. The availability (or lack of availability) of suitable storage areas is one problem, but the inadequate knowledge and expertise at the level of storage activities have also proved to be a problem. For a permanent solution to the problems of storage, there is a need for intensive discussion and the awareness raising of all the actors involved.

### *The archive sector*

There is an urgent need for manoeuvres to catch up and a comprehensive action plan for the archive sector. The new 2002 decree for the first time provides a basis for a number of private law archive institutions based on cultural subjects (e.g., AMVC as the archive for literature). It also refers to the expansion of the Archive bank, a computerised record of the Flemish private archive heritage. A number of the sectoral problem areas are indicated below:

- The Archive Decree relates to private law cultural archives. Therefore it excludes the archives in which a direct link can be made with the administrative tasks of a government. At the moment the heritage covenants also cover the cultural activities of municipal or city archives.
- A study was recently carried out examining 254 reference libraries. Practice has shown that reference libraries and documentation centres are hardly covered by the current regulations. Therefore there is a need for a specific policy (e.g., a documentary expression of the immaterial heritage and the digital heritage).
- The subjects of the private law archives – for each subject one archive is subsidised – are mentioned in the Archive Decree. In the context of a long-term policy, an inventory must be drawn up of possible future cultural subjects, taking into account the historical importance of the subject, the existing archives, the available places where archives are kept and their collection, the extent to which responsible archivists can fund their own archives, the present research needs, the needs of the general public, etc.

### *Digitalisation*

There is no doubt that digitalisation techniques can make an important contribution to the inventorisation, conservation, restoration as well as

public access to the heritage. Digitalisation and the maintenance and management of digital carriers therefore involves more than merely recording the heritage on the digital carrier.

The obsolescence of the carriers and the declining availability of the related equipment are a great threat to storage and access. We must be careful about putting too much trust in digital technology. Research is necessary to build up sufficient expertise and raise the awareness of the sector with regard to taking precautionary measures. It is essential to work with open international standards which are not bound to a producer of systems.

It is appropriate to consider the establishment of a Flemish knowledge centre for digitalisation. In other countries, these institutions serve as the spearhead of an integrated digitalisation policy. They all work on the basis of combined funding together with the private sector. Fundamental research must be carried out on the concrete task and use of this sort of centre (e.g., complying with standards, application of copyright, conservation, project management, research into virtual deposits).

### 2.3 Stimulating coordination, cooperation and participation

#### *“Exporting” coordination*

The greatest merit of the last legislative period may be that the cultural heritage was recognised for the first time as a separate policy field. One of the important insights was that the “natural” interrelationship between archiving institutions such as museums, archives, documentation centres, reference libraries as well as clubs for popular culture and other heritage clubs should be “restored”. Now that this interrelationship is more obvious, the importance of looking after the heritage properly can also penetrate into other policy areas and fields. For example, there is the passage in the Arts Decree in which art organizations are asked to look after their own heritage. Further coordination with other policy fields is also necessary. Furthermore, there is a long way to go before society as a whole will recognise the importance of its heritage and it becomes a “natural” reflex to consider what effect various measures can have on the heritage. For this reason it is important to cooperate with fields such as education, tourism, youth, town and country planning and economic district development.

#### *The Flemish art collection*

The Heritage Decree provides the possibility of subsidising cooperative ventures of museums and other heritage institutions which wish to develop particular national expertise and/or whose collections reveal a thematic

interrelationship and which wish to profile themselves together at the international level. In this context, *the Flemish art collection* serves as an example, a project for the cooperation between the three large art history museums in Flanders: The Royal Museum for Fine Arts in Antwerp, The Museum for Fine Arts in Ghent and the Groeninge Museum in Bruges. They are an exception to the rule that Flemish cities hardly make any sort of joint cultural provisions on the cultural market. The development of this umbrella organization will be an extremely important point for attention for the heritage policy in the next few years.

#### *Agreements and consultation with other government levels*

The other government levels are important partners for the development of a comprehensive and integrated cultural and heritage policy. The permanent dialogue between the Flemish Community and the provinces and towns and municipalities will continue. This is in the context of the agreements which were drawn up following the Debate on key tasks.

With regard to “Brussels”, there will be more consultation (VGC, French Community, Brussels Capital Region, federal government), for example, about the recognition of the Brussels museums, the top works of art which are in Brussels, the cooperation with the federal scientific institutions, etc. Consultation is necessary with the French Community and with the federal government, not only on “Brussels”, but also on other subjects (e.g., the collection of the Belgian State, the Protection Act, heritage tax, insurance, levying VAT (21%-6%), the ratification of the UNESCO Treaty of 1970 on the illegal export of cultural goods).

#### *Movable and immovable goods*

We will also stimulate the development of the necessary cooperation projects, both those carried out in the field and those carried out by government at the transectoral level. Systematic consultation with regard to the coordination between the “movable and immaterial heritage” and the “architectural heritage” is important. During this consultation, drawing up a joint declaration of intent can be discussed. With this we would like to create more clarification for the various actors involved in the field of the Flemish heritage. In addition, permanent cooperation/dialogue with tourism is important for the cultural-heritage field.

#### *Education and involvement*

Public access to, and the (re)integration of the cultural heritage in society should generate an increase in the interest for that heritage. Therefore

increasing its visibility is an important point for attention. Cultural education is an important task, both for the various levels of government, and for the cultural field itself. It increases involvement. Cultural education should not be restricted to children and young people, and requires a redefinition of what is meant by cultural education (lifewide learning). For this reason, we want to encourage the different sectors to develop a special policy to attract specific population groups to the associations and the heritage, and in this way involve them in the study of and concern for local history and all sorts of heritage work. The heritage covenants and the Heritage Day already play an important role in this. Now we would also like to call upon other actors to take an active part in this.

Special efforts must be made with regard to cultural diversity and the involvement of immigrants, in the first instance by means of projects and community work. In this respect, as well as others, education has an important task. The passing on of traditions, the oral culture, stories, sagas and legends, the spoken word, the immaterial heritage have a strong place in the market and there appear to be few obstacles to participation.

#### *An initiative on the food culture*

In this light (reducing obstacles, participation, cooperation), we think there are cultural possibilities in one of the “essential” aspects of everyday life: the food culture. One event which is being successfully organised in some European countries focus on this. Primary and secondary schools take part in this particularly in France, (*La semaine du goût*), as well as cooks and restaurants, students, clubs and historians, and the media respond on a large scale. It appears to be a successful and “rich” marriage between culture (policy), the catering industry, education, the media, etc. Basically this is a project on the boundaries of the heritage and (contemporary) everyday culture. This sort of initiative can be perfectly organised from the cultural perspective (in a broad sense). The feasibility of a specific action and/or a project on the food culture deserves to be examined in more detail, from a fresh (inter) cultural point of view. We can learn from the practices in other countries which serve as examples. The Flemish Support Centre for Popular Culture has experience of projects on food and engages in networking in this respect.

#### *Flanders Festival!*

We would also like to encourage fun and a bond between people and lots of fun with community and street festivals, together with culture. This will also

promote the creation of communities. We believe in this kind of non-formal dynamic activity.

#### 2.4 Incentives for maintenance and acquisition, and for our own Flemish heritage

##### *The Decree on top works of art*

The Decree on the protection of the moveable cultural heritage which is of exceptional importance was issued in January 2003 (known as the “Decree on top works of art”). The trial list “17<sup>th</sup>-century visual arts”, which was drawn up during the run up to the ratification of the decree, is provisionally protected. The advisory Board must pronounce a decision on this provisional protection and the Government of Flanders will take a definitive decision in the spring of 2005.

Meanwhile, several other trial lists have been drawn up. These will have to be improved in the near future and supplemented with additional trial lists. If the decree on top works of art is not to miss its target, another important point of attention is to finance the fund for top works of art. We will also take responsibility for the restoration of these top works.

##### *A right to make proposals for acquisitions*

In the expansion of their collections, heritage institutes, in particular the art museums, are confronted with the high market value of the key works which are important for their collections. The limited funds available for creating collections are insufficient for the acquisition of these works. This means that crucial works for the collection remain in private hands and are in danger of ultimately disappearing abroad. We would like to introduce an experimental regulation which gives museums and archive institutes of national importance a priority right for the purchase of this type of collection work.

##### *Fiscal incentives*

In addition, we would like to continue to work on the fiscal incentives for the cultural-heritage field. We will examine the possibilities of introducing an exemption from inheritance tax for top works (criteria with regard to exports and public access). After all, inheritance taxes are a serious obstacle to the owners of top works. It is necessary to think of an approach to this problem to avoid inheritance taxes leading to the disintegration and sale of collections abroad.

The possibility of tax deductions for gifts to a cultural institution or a museum to fund the purchase of top works is a possibility which already exists; in addition, tax deductions for gifts in the form of art works have already been introduced at a federal level. In order to allow for the tax deduction on gifts to the fund for top works of art, this fund will submit an application to be recognised as a cultural institution. We want to start discussions with the federal government to examine whether the existing regulation on tax deductions for gifts in the form of art works and the payment of inheritance taxes by means of art works can be extended to other cultural goods belonging to the movable heritage (the current federal regulation only relates to artworks). One condition for this is that it can be demonstrated that the work is a key work for Flanders.

#### *Flanders' own collection*

Another point for attention is the concern of the Flemish Community to build up its own collection. The Government of Flanders manages a collection of approximately 19,000 art works. 12,000 are co-managed by the French Community, and this collection is not centralised in one place. The works can be found both in museum collections and in various government institutions accessible to the public throughout Belgium. One of the priority points for attention is to manage this collection as well as possible and make it accessible to the public as far as possible.

#### *Flanders' own institutions: Their function as an example*

The Royal Museum for Fine Arts in Antwerp and the Gaasbeek Castle are institutions of the Flemish Community which serve as an example in the cultural-heritage field.

The necessary synergy for the Royal Museum for Fine Arts in Antwerp is growing as a result of consultation and cooperation with the other actors in the field, and across the fields (e.g., with universities and research centres). This should result in a further-reaching local, supralocal and international position and profile. An appropriate organization which also takes into account its specific function as a scientific institute, is important for developing efficient activities.

Gaasbeek Castle is being developed as a leading and public-oriented museum on the basis of an innovative concept for the collection. The castle culture is taken into account in all its aspects. The problems of the infrastructure of both institutes also deserve special attention.

## 2.5 Internationalisation

It is important to incorporate the Flemish heritage policy in the international context. In this context we will take further steps to ratify the UNESCO convention (1970) on the illegal import, export and transfer of the ownership of cultural goods. In this context, the decree on top works of art has an important role for Flanders. One important incentive to learn to assess the immaterial heritage correctly was given by the UNESCO convention of 17 October 2003. In this respect, the theme of “cultural diversity” deserves the necessary attention. The ratification of this convention is important to us. The Government of Flanders has a task with regard to its implementation, in cooperation with the support centre, the not-for-profit organization, the Flemish Centre for Popular Culture. In the existing programme, “Masterworks of the oral and immaterial heritage of mankind” Flanders applied in 2004 with Flemish national sports, specifically shooting.

## 2.6 Promoting training and expertise

- There is no structural training for conservationists of the heritage in Flanders (including a museum training). We wish to endeavour to establish this in cooperation with the SERV and the Education Department.
- At the level of supplementary training and in-service training, a number of initiatives have been taken in recent years. Examples include the activities of the King Boudewijn Foundation, the museum consultancy, various provinces, umbrella organizations, lobbying associations, support centres, etc. These initiatives have extra added value for small heritage institutes/organizations, as these often do not have sufficient numbers of highly qualified personnel. Therefore they must be continued and expanded. In addition, we will also devote attention to the supervision and training of the many volunteers in this sector.
- The development of a joint knowledge and expertise centre for everything related to the cultural heritage in all its aspects is an enormous challenge. This sort of “centre” is not an independent organization, but a more or less structured platform for cooperation, a learning environment, a dynamic/interactive focal point for promoting expertise and networking, where knowledge and experience are gathered together, shared and exchanged. This concerns both training at management level (e.g., policies and subsidies at various levels of government, working with volunteers, communication, project management, etc.), as well as training at the level of expertise in terms of content. The support centres carry out a coordinating task in this respect (promoting the quality of the sector).

## 2.7 The Reproduction Fund: cultural economy

The Reproduction Fund can be seen as an example of cultural economy in the heritage sector. Therefore we want to encourage its continued expansion in order to provide the Flemish cultural heritage with broader access, more availability and a stronger reputation both in this country and abroad. In the very near future, we hope to develop a viable and affordable model to guarantee a strong financial and economic basis for the reproduction fund. The active support of a number of obvious partners will be essential for this.

## 2.8 The Holocaust Museum

We are establishing a foundation to keep the memory of the holocaust alive, and to analyse and explain the mechanisms of exclusion, intolerance and racism on the basis of the persecution of the Jews and others. In this way we will endeavour to strengthen the democratic roots of our society. This foundation is carrying out this task in the first place by founding a historical museum in Mechelen.

The organization and funding of this museum will be carried out by the minister-president.

### 3. Socio-cultural work

Associations and clubs which are often described as a form of social capital are firmly rooted in Flemish tradition and modern life. In the first place, “coming together” is an important and even fundamental democratic right (*liberté hors de l’Etat*). In many dictatorships this right is muzzled immediately. However, associations (in the broader sense of the word, therefore also including movements, training institutes, amateur arts organizations, etc.) mean much more. They are by definition the expression of the many private projects which citizens carry out on the basis of their own free will and with the use of usually voluntary energy. They create units of groups of people (uniting them). Irrespective of the focus or the subject which brings them together, the association is above all a meeting place where people enjoy doing things together.

In the last period of government there were many changes in social-cultural work in the various individual areas: socio-cultural adult work, the amateur arts, the local culture policy, and initiatives to disseminate culture. The key words for the policy in the period 2004-2009 are supervision, development, quality control and participation.

#### 3.1 Socio-cultural adult work

The most important objective of socio-cultural adult work is to promote social integration and social participation, as well as the development of a democratic, lasting, and inclusive society. Research has shown that associations score highly at this level: participants in associations prove to have qualities which help them to contribute to building a social and democratic society. In general, they are more tolerant and less selfish, strong defenders of democracy, with more trust in their fellow men, they participate more in culture and they are more involved in community life.

Nevertheless, socio-cultural adult work is also under pressure. In recent years, there has been a great change in the pattern of participation of Flemish people. There has been an increase in the share of “incidental” participants. This is related to factors such as the zap culture, an individualised lifestyle, and increasing pressure of time. These changes in the pattern of leisure activities are taking place against the background of the increasing disappearance of factions in Flanders, yet another change. Traditional (multi-thematic) associations originating in different factions are coming up with answers to phenomena such as the loss of members and initiation rites. At the same time, new players are emerging: new types of clubs, networks

and social movements organised round a single theme with a looser expectation of commitment. For their part, training institutes are faced with a shift in their range of programmes: courses for practical skills are becoming more popular than subjects related to social affairs.

*Funds for the implementation of the new regulations*

The new regulations are aimed at the necessary re-evaluation and legitimising of this policy field. For this purpose, the content of socio-cultural adult work has been reduced to its “roots” – the social and emancipatory dimension – and the sector has been subjected to serious restructuring. Two new types of work were established: the movements and the centres for adult education. New policy instruments were provided for existing types of activities which had already proved their merits in the past at the level of empowerment and increasing the creation of communities and cultural participation, such as socio-cultural associations: policy planning, comprehensive quality control, subsidies with envelopes for a particular policy period, the evaluation of content and quality, the evaluation by in situ auditing.

In 2005 we will provide additional financial means for the decree of 4 April 2003, which aims to give a new and innovative lease of life to socio-cultural adult work in Flanders in the next few years in order to achieve the planned restructuring and fulfil the expectations with regard to the new types of activities. After all, a favourable climate for the continued development of the new and existing types of activities is a priority.

*The need for research*

Scientific research focusing on policy is necessary to examine the effects of the new policy and expose the role of socio-cultural work in civil society. This research can help to support the planned evaluation of the decree and provide arguments for any amendments.

*Non-formal work on competences*

The new regulations justifiably place socio-cultural adult work, and in particular, the adult education centres and training institutes in the context of lifelong and lifewide – non-formal, non-vocational – learning. In this field, socio-cultural adult work clearly has an important place. The recognition of both the non-formal and informal education, as well as informal learning supports the sector to an important extent to find a position in the various cross-sectoral cooperative ventures, in particular in the DIVA. Following up the development of the positions of centres for adult education – regional

actors with a pluralist character and with specific regional tasks in the field of the coordination of the non-formal provision – within the context of the DIVA will be an important point for attention. Furthermore, together with the sector, we will look for our own, recognisable implementation of the EVC concept.

#### *Target groups*

- To build up a democratic, permanent and intercultural society, the participation of deprived groups, including those with a low level of education is and will continue to be an important aspect of policy actions. In this respect, the regional adult education centres and organizations such as the not-for profit organization, Cubido, or the recently established national network for the cultural participation of people living in poverty, have a very explicit task. This target group should be given every opportunity to become and stay involved in society and its cultural products. This is also encouraged by setting up action research into work forms which can attract people with low levels of education and which reveal approaches which were successful and actually disseminate these. This joint task is also taken into consideration in the planned evaluation of the decree on the local culture policy.

- On the basis of the Government of Flanders' intention to work on an integrated target group policy, Culture will participate in initiatives for the elderly, detainees, immigrants, people with different sexual orientations, the sick and the disabled. By subsidising a broad range of organizations, the policy aims for a larger participation by social organizations for these diverse social groups, at the level of socio-cultural work.

#### *The development of strong socio-cultural immigrant organizations; management training*

The interaction between immigrant and native Flemish communities and the cooperation between immigrant and native Flemish organizations must be promoted. In this respect, the development of strong socio-cultural – immigrant federations is the explicit first objective. Increasing their financial means (from 2003) should guarantee their professionalism, together with a targeted range of training for middle management and volunteer managers. The participation of immigrants in the middle management of immigrant as well as native Flemish socio-cultural organizations must be promoted in this context. Therefore a great deal of importance is attached to the management training. The training course developed by the support centre and offered to immigrant organizations must be repeated in the future.

*Quality control: continue and develop*

The attention devoted to the continued professionalisation of the sector and to increase quality control for the operation of the (socio) cultural organizations requires the continuation of the support for drawing up the policy plans and the internal organization of their operation. Possibly it would even be appropriate to extend the Culture policy field further to other sectors. The operation of the not-for-profit organization Kwasimodo in the past and recent evaluations of policy plans of the socio-cultural organizations reveal that many organizations can make good use of this individual supervision.

*Adapting the range of instruments*

The new regulations are planning an evaluation of the sector in mid-2005. This must be used to introduce a number of adaptations in the legal range of instruments, particularly of a procedural nature (creating dossiers, timing, timing of the audits).

*Attention for hobby and leisure clubs*

The social value of the activities of the many hobby and leisure clubs continues to be a point for attention in the framework of important, voluntary and yet educational leisure time activities. The numerous positive effects – increasing creativity, more self-confidence, relationship skills, avoiding social exclusion and isolation – are all reasons for them to be given special attention in the next policy period.

### 3.2 The amateur arts

For the amateur arts, which are an important part of the broad spectrum of the socio-cultural field, attention in this policy period should be devoted to maximum participation, promoting quality and professionalisation, creativity and the encouragement of greater visibility, a diversity and spread of the provision. The valorisation of both the artistic and the social component has priority.

The first stage of the implementation of the amateur arts decree, which is in its last year of the first policy period in 2005, has proved to be successful. The rearrangement of the fragmented sector into one single organization for each art discipline was achieved. The decree led to a new dynamic dimension. Nevertheless, a number of challenges remain for the sector of the amateur arts. For example, there is a need for more data on the field and for room for innovative and wider projects. The cross-connections with related

sectors – art education, professional arts are still too sporadic and linked to specific disciplines. These aspects will be given full attention during this policy period.

We would also like to place a new emphasis on the semi-professional activities (in this respect see II.8).

### 3.3 The local culture policy

The decree on the Local Culture policy has spurred a large number of municipalities to give priority to the place of the culture policy on the agenda. More than two thirds of the Flemish municipalities have appointed a coordinator for the culture policy and are working with a culture policy plan. Public libraries have met the challenge to draw up a local library policy, cultural centres have reflected on the basic objectives of a cultural centre and translated these into the local situation. Many local advisory organizations made use of the decree to renew their composition and give new life to their activities.

#### *The decree: a pause, consolidation and evaluation*

The great challenge for this period of government is to provide permanent support for the innovation and creativity that has started in the municipalities and to encourage this with a view to a higher quality and comprehensive local culture policy.

It can already be said that the new lease of life which was achieved as a result of the strategic elaboration of a culture policy based on policy plans must not be broken by imposing too much planning pressure, with all the related paperwork that is entailed. A policy plan and an action plan are not subsidy dossiers, but important instruments for a high quality local culture policy. The supplementary subsidy for the execution of the culture policy plan must also continue to support innovation.

Following the success of the decree that was greater than expected, and on the basis of the limited financial room, there will be a period of rest. This can be used to draw up a description of the state of affairs, which can also be used for the anticipated evaluation of the decree in 2007. This evaluation must be carried out in a systematic way and should be based, inter alia, on data that can be objectively measures. The position of the culture policy coordinator, the continued development of the culture and community centres, and in particular the variable and project subsidies, the updated role of the libraries in the information society, the intermunicipal cooperation and the possibilities of participating in the local culture policy, are all important themes in this.

*Creation, provisions and spread at the local level*

In the context of the local culture policy we will examine whether there are tensions between the creation and the provisions, on the one hand, and the spread via cultural centres and community centres, on the other hand. The intention is to register and examine the activities of cultural and community centres. This will be done on the basis of the reports on their operation to be submitted and the evaluation of the implementation of the policy plans.

*Culture policy plans and the socio-cultural fabric*

In the evaluation of the culture policy plans, special attention will be devoted to initiatives of incentives to promote the socio-cultural fabric in the towns, inter alia in coordination with socio-artistic projects.

*Libraries: meetings, including digital meetings*

- Libraries are currently working on a thorough reorientation which should profile them in future as cultural and literary meeting centres.
  - The governments must stimulate them to travel further on the digital path. With the development of Vlacc II and the acquisition of collective rights to digital information and other services, an important step is taken in this direction. Vlacc II will become operational in the course of 2005.
  - The development of the digital and virtual library will allow for other forms of participation and can attract a new public. The enlargement of scale for the development of a library's activities will become an important point for attention and a condition for responding to the challenges of the digital library.
  - In addition, we want to cooperate on good peripheral conditions to allow libraries to play their role as an intermediary in providing information with few obstacles, and invite them to explore their strategic role further in this respect.
  - In future, more policy attention must be devoted to international networking between libraries. Policy developments must be followed up in this respect via international contacts, both in Europe and at a worldwide level (Ifla). In addition, the evolution of European regulations must also be followed (copyright law, etc.) with regard to making information available and the consequences of this for the activities of public libraries.

*More than culture*

We wish to consider how the Flemish regulations with regard to municipal councils can be simplified and coordinated. The intention is to promote the cooperation between different actors which are concerned with leisure activities with children, young people and adults (youth work, sports clubs, cultural initiatives, childcare, part-time art education, etc.) at the municipal level. In the first place, this concern the decrees on local culture, the policy on culture, sport and youth work and the Heritage decree, as well as the rules on after school childcare.

### 3.4 General

#### *Diversity as a criterion for evaluation*

Cultural diversity as one of the evaluation elements for the socio-cultural activities of an association can serve as an incentive for greater and closer cooperation between immigrant and native Flemish organizations, and for more intense interaction between immigrants and native Flemish people in organizations.

#### *A culture databank for all*

Cultural centres, libraries, community centres, the amateur arts, and the socio-cultural field will be encouraged to participate fully in the culture databank and other communication initiatives, with the aim of increasing participation.

#### *Internationalisation*

Internationalisation is also a factor in socio-cultural work. Socio-cultural adult work, the local culture policy with the public libraries and the cultural centres, and the sector of the amateur arts deserve their own place at the international level. The expertise and best practices of these provisions and organizations can serve as an inspiration for others; conversely, the Flemish actors can be inspired by examples from abroad. Information days, the exchange of experiences and encouragement subsidies should stimulate the participation in European programmes. As regards the sector of the amateur arts, the subsidies of the international projects should take place in future on the basis of its own regulations because of the specific nature of these activities.

## 4. BRUSSELS - CULTURAL AND INTERCULTURAL

### 4.1 The context

Brussels is the capital of Flanders. It is the capital in two senses: Brussels is the largest city and Brussels is the most important city:

- large city: in this respect, the phenomena of urban living (which are found throughout urbanised Flanders) present themselves in an even more emphatic way, both in a negative and in a positive sense. On the one hand, these are characteristics such as isolation, fear, frictions in interculturalism; on the other hand, there are economic, cultural and urban expressions of international importance. Within the limitations of our competences, our policy must focus both on the negative and positive phenomena;
- the main city of Flanders. This encourages us to strengthen the link between Brussels and Flanders and between the Flemish people and Brussels.

The Flemish Community is not an island in Brussels, but is open to all other communities: in a passive way (everyone is welcome) and in an active way (working on an intercultural society) to strengthen all cultures. In recent years, the Flemish Community has strongly invested in the cultural centres in Brussels (e.g., the renovation of the KVS together with the VGC and the city of Brussels, the renovation of the Beurs Theatre, the purchase and renovation of the Flemish-Dutch Centre, etc.). This increases the cultural visibility of Flanders, and at the same time Flanders contributes to making Brussels an attractive city.

Because of the decree on local culture policy, a direct cultural hand was extended to the municipalities of Brussels in partnership with the Flemish Community Commission. We have discovered that this bore fruit. For example, apparently almost every municipality will soon have its own complete Dutch-language library. A number of municipalities joined in drawing up and implementing culture policy plans. This recent evolution has two important effects: on the one hand, the direct responsibility taken by the municipalities itself is proof that an attractive cultural programme can counter a great deal of opposition. On the other hand, it presents the VGC in a different way: while in the past it was the VGC which acted in the place of many municipalities, there is now more of a partnership. For the Flemish authorities in the municipalities, this is more important: the sense of competition is gradually being replaced by a sense of mutual support. Above

all, it is important for all people (of all languages and cultures) who feel the wind of enthusiasm and innovation blowing through Flanders.

Brussels also has a rather uncomfortable position in the tensions between organising a significant content for all the districts and areas on the one hand, and the top-heavy pulling power of the centre on the other hand. The culture policy has always taken this into account, with the development of community centres, the introduction of library provisions, support of clubs and associations, etc. Nevertheless, more tailor-made work could be carried out to meet the real needs of inhabitants of districts and areas.

Brussels is a fairly tolerant city. However, this should not blind us to many of the real problems which are mainly related to living together in too close proximity. We must invest in the difficult path of evolving from a multicultural to an intercultural community: the best case of “tolerating” each other, must be replaced by the active strengthening of each other’s cultures.

A city in which there is too much inequality between people must give priority to investing in this. Specific attention must be devoted to the financially poorer people, the constantly larger group of the elderly and to children, young people and young families.

## 4.2 Objectives

1. We must strengthen the presence and visibility of Flanders in Brussels, both physically and mentally. This means a permanent concern for the cultural centres and a triple test for every aspect of policy: “positive”, “Flemish”, and “intercultural”.
2. Brussels must develop strategies in order to develop a stronger national and international profile around specifically defined spearheads in “art” (e.g., see Ghent and film).
3. Together with the Flemish Community Commission we would like to continue to stimulate municipal councils to fully join the decree on the local culture policy. Libraries will continue to be an important motor for innovation and broadening activities in this respect. We must give every chance to the municipalities to take their responsibilities and to provide support to clubs and associations themselves where necessary.

4. Flanders itself also invests heavily in many Brussels cultural centres (whether or not they have a national scope or tend to work in Brussels). There should be more visibility for this. After all, to an important extent this determines the Flemish cultural identity of the city (both for the inhabitants and for foreigners).
5. By strengthening existing and supporting new cultural initiatives, Brussels must “conquer” the hearts of the Flemish people (e.g., events such as the Zinneke parade, the cultural implementation of car-free Brussels, the Brussels Roll and Sandwiches for commuters, etc.). A strategic plan is being developed for this together with the Flemish Community Commission and a number of cultural centres in Brussels: which Brussels to show, where, who for, how to communicate this?
6. In a city with many older people and people from different cultures, it is certainly possible to develop a stronger policy to strengthen the “oral heritage”. With a variety of cultural initiatives, it is possible to record the traditions, life stories, etc., of people and process them (in book form, theatre, CDs with real life stories). This allows the real people of Brussels to tell their stories, but also allows for many intercultural opportunities
7. In the context of the covenant with the Flemish Community Commission on the community centres, there will be an interim evaluation to jointly assess whether there is a need to create even more diversity in the landscape. In this respect, it is important that the tasks for the community centres are primarily a response to the needs of the district and its (potential) public. The fact that every community centre must maintain a special relationship with the clubs and associations in its environment is undeniable, but the other tasks must also be defined in more detail for every centre. We attach particular importance to the target groups “youth” and “the elderly”.
8. Together with the VGC we will examine how it is possible to provide a stronger service for the amateur arts initiatives in Brussels from the VCA centre in Anderlecht.
9. Cultural obstacles must be eliminated by means of a range of initiatives. In this light, the adaptation of the system of Brussels cultural cheques must be recommended: perhaps a left-wing focus has too much effect here.

10. The civilisation of a city is measured by the extent to which the inhabitants have the room to join, for example, a community centre or library on a voluntary basis. In this context it is important to support these associations. Together with them we wish to examine whether this can also be done in other ways in addition to the traditional systems of subsidies.

11. A broad new educational project for all the inhabitants of Brussels will be supported together with the adult education centre of Brussels (Citizenne).

12. In order to promote cultural diversity, we will examine to what extent cultural institutions can be encouraged to devote more attention in a global sense to participation in, employment for, and (co)management by immigrants.

## 5. Transversal points for attention

### 5.1 Continuity in the policy

In the last legislative period, important decrees were approved in the three policy areas which will enter into full effect (in stages) in the next few years and which will influence policy in a far-reaching way. The new regulations will also contribute to a number of the strategic objectives formulated in this memorandum, actually being given a central place. The operationalisation and implementation of the decrees, within the possibilities of the budget and by a government which deliberately aims to be selective, will be a crucial – even the crucial – point for attention in the next period of government. Chapter III will explore this in more detail for the respective policy fields. Continuity in policy is a matter of effective government and of a government which takes and gives responsibility, and which inspires and extends trust and confidence.

### 5.2 Diversity in culture: a matter for everyone

The aim for greater diversity is a matter for every policy field, sector and actor. As regards the Government of Flanders, it has a three-fold aim:

- In the next legislative period, we want to make efforts to have a more diverse composition of *personnel*, both in the administration and in the subsidised cultural institutions. The Culture Administration is working on a Diversity pilot project and via the personnel registration system for the cultural sector (RISC) it will examine to what extent it is possible to record the diversity in the cultural institutions.
- The *provision* must be differentiated in such a way that as many adults and young people in Flanders as possible feel represented. A diversified composition of formal decision-making organizations of institutions, associations and the Government of Flanders will certainly contribute to this in the longer term. The use of criteria which guarantee a diverse qualitative provision is also an interesting option. This will lead to an enrichment of cultural life in Flanders.
- At the level of cultural participation, we also wish to promote chances in a fair way. We will devote attention to the best possible, balanced spread in policy, for example with the continued implementation of the Decree on Local Culture policy. We will also examine where and how we can stimulate

the creation of art and culture by various groups in Flanders and make it more visible.

### 5.3 Attention for the range of instruments that leads to greater cultural competence

#### 5.3.1 *Interdepartmental Culture-Education expertise unit*

The Culture-Education protocol will lead to more structural dialogue between the two departments. Advisory groups have already formulated a number of concrete proposals. The execution of these proposals is on the agenda for this legislative period, with attention for further coordination, harmonisation and transparency of the regulations.

It is important to create a place where the expertise of the two departments and sectors can be collected together in order to result in a permanent dialogue. Therefore we want to work on the establishment of a Culture-Education expertise unit, which can be charged with providing information and supporting practice for the various actors in Culture and Education, amongst other things. An interdepartmental steering group can act as the steering organization, supported by the related advisory groups (cf. the protocol). This interdepartmental expertise unit is in the Department of Education. Culture would also make efforts in this respect.

#### 5.3.2 *Part-time art education*

There will also be consultation with the colleagues from Education to examine how we can cooperate with the modernised part-time art education and how we can contribute to strengthening cultural education at school. Amateur arts organizations must also be encouraged to set up activities which build bridges between education and culture and which benefit the relationship and understanding between part-time art education and the amateur arts sector.

#### 5.3.3 *Youth and culture*

Children and young people are full participants in initiatives in the arts, heritage and socio-cultural work. They not only adopt a receptive attitude in this, but also are also creative themselves and organise things. They are also producers of culture. The broad culture policy of the Government of Flanders must focus on recognising and honouring children and young people as full actors in the cultural landscape. Various policy instruments must be evaluated and if necessary amended with regard to their potential to *recognise children and young people as users, producers and co-directors of*

*culture*. For example, the regulations can be intensively screened with regard to its respect for volunteers.

- A culture policy, no matter at what level, should take into account the whole range of tastes. Again diversity is the key word, both in the range of programmes and in the support provided. The policy on creativity should also provide incentives for popular culture and non-western forms of culture to flourish. These forms also deserve support. This is not because it is a step towards the professional arts, but on the basis of a respect for these expressions of culture as a valuable system of cultural and artistic expression.
- In this policy memorandum, the necessary attention is devoted to the aspect of participation. It is self-evident that children and young people are also involved in this. An introduction to culture and art at a young age spectacularly increases participation at a later age, irrespective of whether it is the parents or the school who introduce the children to culture and art.
- For young people “authenticity – being able to be themselves and develop – is of central importance in their lives. There is a danger that when young people are encouraged to engage in artistic experiments too abruptly, and with complex forms of culture, this will be too unfamiliar to them and will ultimately lead to a rejection of complex cognitive forms of culture. The interest in and appreciation of art only develops on the basis of an ability to relate to that art.
- The intermediary role which youth work can play as a guide to culture must be worked out in more detail.

#### *5.3.4 Youth, libraries and cultural centres*

In the evaluation of the execution of the policy plans in the context of the local culture policy, the initiatives of libraries and cultural centres for young people and schools will be examined. On the basis of this summary, it is will possible to propose amendments and measures to encourage cooperation between education and culture.

#### *5.3.5 The broad school: developing concepts: What’s in a word?*

The promising concept of the “broad school” was examined during the last legislative period. In order to implement this concept it requires further clarification.

Both in and out of the educational world, the broad school is seen as a conceptual framework in order to identify the network between actors from different sectors at the local level. Common characteristics of all these actors include the concern for the broad development of the child/young person on

the one hand, and the explicit local character (municipal, district based), on the other hand. The network can consist of schools, initiatives for after-school childcare, libraries, community organizations, socio-cultural initiatives, youth work initiatives, sports clubs, youth music workshops and part-time art education, centres for student supervision, numerous youth work provisions etc.

Depending on the place of the organization in the network, there will be different expectations. Schools will undoubtedly count on the other actors in the network to help to perform or implement some of the educational tasks. District initiatives will see the consolidation of the social fabric in the network. Youth workers will use it above all as a recruitment base and as a practical way of strengthening local support.

A bird's eye view particularly reveals the whole range of advantages, rather than the needs and expectations put forward by the various initiatives. In the broad school network, we see an opportunity for personal development and the creation of communities; we do not want to be blind either to the possibilities of a more efficient use of the available potential.

#### *The broad school and the culture policy*

The culture policy creates various different opportunities for the broad school. First and foremost the concept provides a possibility for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Non-educational actors such as youth work and the socio-cultural sector have built up a reputation here. Their expertise with regard to teaching competences, attitudes and skills is highly valued. It brings together actors who work together, both in a professional way and in their free time. The concept of the broad school provides a possibility of achieving a range of leisure provisions which are interrelated. Apart from the opportunities there are also threats, such as the possibility of making non-educational factors too instrumental in relation to learning.

However, the opportunities are greater. In the culture administration we would like to extend the concept of the "broad school" further, together with other sectors, both theoretically and in practice. We want to join in the movement to simplify and coordinate the Flemish regulations further in order to provide incentives for local cooperative ventures. We want to help to find examples of good practices and publicise them. In the context of the Culture-Education protocol, we would like to see how we can establish joint strategies for and on behalf of children, young people and all the residents in the community.

### 5.3.6 *DIVA*

The work to prepare and execute policy for lifelong and lifewide learning is monitored by the Ministerial Training Committee. This is in the context of its task to coordinate the various training and educational initiatives better. The involvement of the Culture Administration will be extended in the future, in view of the importance of this consultation,

### 5.3.7 *The recognition of competences acquired elsewhere*

The debate with regard to the recognition of competences acquired elsewhere should also be taken into account in this context. We would like to ask that special attention is devoted to the possibly undesirable instrumentalisation of socio-cultural work and the need to be clear with regard to certification. It is important that the culture, youth and sport sectors are closely involved and given the opportunity to influence the direction in the exploration and design of an EVC policy. Therefore we will take a clear position in this debate and proceed with conviction so that a clear point of view is developed which has strong support, in close consultation with the sectors concerned.

### 5.3.8 *An important role for organizations in arts education*

In the participation policy there is an important role for organizations for arts education. They can contribute to initiatives for children and young people in all the art disciplines and in the cultural heritage. Organisations for arts education can also play a role as an intermediary between education and the art and culture organizations, and should therefore be involved in the debate and in the agreements between Education and Culture as a full partner. At the same time, the subsidy policy must adopt clearer starting points and criteria. After all, the organizations and initiatives in this field are currently supported by a number of different subsidy channels.

## **5.4 Removing obstacles which restrict participation in culture**

### 5.4.1 *The importance of social-artistic initiatives*

As the cement which holds society together, culture is also important for the most vulnerable groups in society. This assumes social support to appeal to the cultural potential of these people. That is why we attach importance to social-artistic initiatives. In fact, a recent trend in the narrowing gap between social and artistic practices actually concerns establishing these initiatives.

The Government of Flanders sees this evolution as a special point for attention in the different policy fields.

#### *5.4.2 Support for people who live in poverty*

We aim to make participation in culture self-evident, even for people who live in poverty. For this purpose, we will provide both financial support and support in terms of content to projects for the poor. In this context we are also examining the possibilities of non-stigmatising systems of discounts for cultural non-commercial activities. Attention should also be devoted to the coordination with the federal legislation on the cultural participation of the poor via OCMWs.

### **5.5 The culture policy and public broadcasting**

#### *5.5.1 Cultural emphases in the new management agreement*

We will consult with the media authorities to argue for including the following emphases in the new management agreement with the public broadcasting organizations: to reach a public that is as varied and broad as possible, to supplement the range of commercial broadcasting companies, to give opportunities to Flemish artists, the educational task (not in the sense of “raising the public”, but rather in the sense of additional and lifewide learning). The cooperation between the public broadcasting organizations and the VAF, and the mutual responsibility for supporting television film and cinema film must be clarified on the basis of consultation.

The culture authorities certainly do not intend to become involved in the actual television productions. It is actually the task of the public broadcasting organizations to find out how they can best carry out the core tasks that are put forward with their own adapted television formats.

### **5.6 E-culture: attention for a diverse development**

#### *5.6.1 A new culture?*

E-culture is a comprehensive part of the expanding information society, which increasingly operates on the basis of digital media. It is clear that citizens are increasingly turning to the internet as the best information channel, to the extent that anything which cannot be found on the internet does not exist for many people. But there is more: e-culture is not a simple phenomenon and has many different implications. The role and

implementation of a cultural institution or association, of the participant and of the policy is changing in a digitalised society. In other words, digital culture, or e-culture is much more than the digitalisation of content and the transmission of data via media channels such as the internet.

E-culture could be described as all the processes of expression and meaning in the digital field. This concerns new possibilities for creating, sharing and experiencing culture, to link knowledge and culture in a cross-disciplinary way and take an active part in this. The culture policy cannot simply look on from the sidelines.

### *5.6.2 Digitalisation in the policy fields*

We can already see the influence and application of digital media in the various cultural disciplines:

- in the professional arts, more and more artists are turning to multimedia forms of expression;
- the socio-cultural sector focuses on increasing access and the library sees its traditional function extended to that of an information intermediary;
- in the cultural-heritage sector there is a search for new ways of providing access and the digital media also help to give an answer to core tasks such as maintenance and management. Examples include registration and long-term archiving;
- in every sector we see that the communication, participation and educational possibilities are being explored. In the access to, distribution and increased visibility of cultural products, the digital media play an increasingly important role (DVD, internet, broadband). The extent to which the various (sub) sectors already apply the digital media at the moment varies enormously, and in Flanders the efforts are often on a small scale and not well coordinated.

### *5.6.3 E-objectives*

In line with our strategic objectives (cultural identity, participation, internationalisation, professionalisation) we would like to lay the first building blocks for a comprehensive policy with regard to e-culture in Flanders. The central starting points for this are: the creation of a vision, the promotion and exchange of expertise, coordination and stages.

- One point for attention concerns investments in accessibility. It is important that initiatives are encouraged in consultation with other departments, such as education and media, both for infrastructure and use, and for training. Reducing the intellectual and mental obstacles is just as important as meeting infrastructural and technical needs. The aim is to

reduce the obstacles which restrict access to the new information and communication technologies so that they are widely assimilated. It is important to avoid certain groups of a population from being excluded from this use.

- In addition, the long-term storage and the access to good quality varied cultural provisions have a central place. In this respect our attention is devoted with priority to the possibilities of digitalisation in the cultural-heritage sector (including the audiovisual heritage). The results of the study “Building blocks of a digital heritage” will provide the first suggestions for an umbrella vision and a plan of approach for digital Culture in Flanders. The possibilities of cross-fertilization with other creative sectors should not be forgotten. Where needs can be tackled jointly, this should actually take place. Strategic alliances between cultural institutions and actors have a central place, but also those between the cultural sectors, the research world, education and industry. In this context the cultural possibilities of the recently established Interdisciplinary Institute for Broadband Technology will also be explored.

- In view of the developmental stage we are in at the moment, we believe that a number of interventions are necessary in order to achieve a permanent effect. Projects on the digital heritage will have to exchange experiences and (sub)sectoral cooperative projects and ventures will be given priority. Smaller experiments continue to be possible in the context of encouraging innovation and creativity, but they must take place within a framework of a comprehensive vision. Above all, there is a need for considered investments which will benefit the various (sub)sectors. This should also be expressed in the applications for subsidies. There is clear need for scientific research into the various individual aspects and we would therefore also like to make the necessary efforts in that respect.

- The international developments in Europe – and those in accordance with European agreements – must be closely followed and translated into the Flemish context. International expertise and exchange are of crucial importance for a high quality and professional development of a comprehensive policy at the level of e-culture. In that context, we will examine the need, feasibility and concrete implementation of a Flemish information centre for digital culture.

- Finally, the policy will also create room for digital creativity, so that competences in arts education and in the cultural field itself can be promoted in a more structured way.

### **5.7 Three in one: promoting expertise, quality control and professionalisation**

Promoting expertise, a higher level of professionalisation (policy planning, framework, management) and increased quality control (in terms of content and in a business sense) must be a constant point for attention in the cultural policy. In this respect it is important to aim for a balance between quantitative and qualitative criteria. It is undeniable that the impact on production, presentation and participation is very important. The extent to which results have already been achieved at this level differs greatly from sector to sector. They are particularly important in the dramatic arts and music. In other places, the new regulations proceed on the basis of an adequate level of professionalism, but the movement that has started must be further consolidated.

As a government which constantly has to make choices, the Flemish policy criteria with regard to expertise, quality and professionalism will have an important impact, though without imposing unreasonable demands on sectors which still have a long way to go in this respect and taking into account the available funds. It will provide specific instruments to achieve progress in this field. However, this should not lead to further pressure on planning! This aspect is also dealt with in this policy memorandum in the respective policy fields.

### **5.8 Internationalisation**

The international culture policy is both a matter of the sector-specific fields and of a more transversal approach. More policy-related aspects concerned with internationalisation will be found in the relevant chapters. We focus here on the transversal aspects.

#### *5.8.1 Multilateral*

- We would like to actively contribute to a multilateral operation by participating in working groups in the Benelux, the European Union, the Council of Europe and Unesco with a strong professional presence. Participating in international activities, forums and programmes acts as an inspiration and creates a sounding board for culture workers, policy makers and those who implement policy. It also encourages the breakthrough of our artists. Specific EU programmes include Culture 2000, the EU Youth

programme, and Grundtvig for non-formal adult education... Participating in European programmes will be stimulated with information days, exchanges of experience and subsidies to serve as an encouragement. There is a need for cooperation with the Foreign Policy administration and with the other Communities.

- In this context it is also necessary to extend the operation of the Cultural Contact Centre. The expertise and information available there will be further extended for the various EU programmes and for the initiatives launched by UNESCO which are relevant for the cultural field. The various support centres must also play a role here.

#### *5.8.2 International communication*

We would like to create space for a streamlined international promotion of culture and visibility of all the sectors (including the amateur arts).

Establishing a multilingual website on the Flemish (international) culture policy is part of this.

#### *5.8.3 A cultural agreement with the French Community*

During this legislative period, we want to work on a cultural agreement between the Flemish and the French Community, provided that the principle of territoriality is respected. An intensive, structural and lasting cooperation is not possible at the moment because this is lacking. Nevertheless, it is clear that in cultural practice, especially in the Brussels context, a start has been made on cooperation.

#### *5.8.4 Bilateral: the Netherlands as a privileged partner*

Flemish-Dutch relations will be evaluated with a view to updating them. This can take place within the institutional framework of the two main conventions (the Language Union Convention and the Cultural Convention). The aim is a better coordination of policy and the instruments in response to the needs and the evolutions in the various policy fields.

- Our language, the Dutch language, deserves active attention. As the Government of Flanders, we have good instruments to stimulate and improve language skills in Flanders and in the Netherlands. Together with my competent colleagues, we will ask for attention to be devoted to language in education and in the media. Our dialects must be protected as living monuments of our rich diversity. In order to achieve this, the Government of Flanders supports institutes such as the Dutch Language Union, the KANTL and the Flemish Centre for Popular Culture.

- The report, “Look after language – Evaluation of the Dutch Language Union”, (January 2004) and its recommendations are taken very seriously. This shows that the Language Union Convention is an essential element for maintaining and strengthening the position of the Dutch language and literature. We will start a discussion to adapt the Language Union Convention to the state reform in Belgium and coordinate it with other existing conventions between Flanders and the Netherlands.
- The cooperation with the Netherlands will also continue to be a point for attention at the level of the policy on literature. The Dutch Language Union started a new policy period in 2003 for which the following priorities were put forward: to support Dutch language teaching abroad; the management and maintenance of digital language files; the social language policy and the use of ICT in Dutch language teaching and the continued development of a joint literature policy. In addition, we will attempt to reverse the lack of familiarity of the language union. A communication plan is intended to publicise the activities of the Dutch Language Union and make them more visible.
- From 2005, special attention will be devoted to the cultural heritage, inter alia, with the establishment of the working groups, “Moving heritage in and outside the museums”, “Training and Education”, “The architectural heritage”, and “Access to information and digitalisation”. If there is sufficient room in the budget, their proposals can lead to more permanent and intensive cooperation.
- The activities of the Flemish-Dutch Centre will be developed further during this legislative period with a view to even more exchanges between Flanders, the Netherlands and Europe. The Centre focuses on stimulating the debate between the European Union and its citizens. In that light it will, amongst other things, meet the need for the provision of information about Flanders and the Netherlands and for services.
- Evolutions and trends in the music and the drama sector should lead to an analysis and evaluation of the current instruments in the context of the Flemish-Dutch cooperation (Vuurtorens, 1000 Watt prize, theatre festival, VTI-TIN)
- In the policy with regard to the Netherlands as a neighbouring country there is a role for the Brakke Grond Foundation as a promoter and catalyst. This institution, which is now active as a Foundation, is symbolic of an instrument of a dynamic, transparent and innovative policy.

#### *5.8.5 Bilateral: the cooperation with South Africa*

In the bilateral cultural policy, there is cooperation in partnerships based on equality and exchanges between equals with countries, regions and communities in which culture is used as an instrument for the development of democratic processes. This takes place by establishing Flemish cooperation programmes or cultural agreements (with budgets for culture). Currently there is intensive cultural cooperation between Flanders and South Africa. This will be strengthened. One of the priority projects is the “local cultural policy” project. This aims to develop a local culture policy in six localities in South Africa. Recent policy developments in Flanders, particularly the decree on the local culture policy will therefore be used as reference points for the local culture policy in South Africa.

#### *5.8.6 Bilateral: neighbouring regions*

In the interregional cooperation with Nord-Pas de Calais, on the one hand, and North Rhine-Westphalia, on the other hand, concrete incentives are provided to create new and permanent cooperative ventures on the basis of the regional identity. This should lead to a supra-regional context for the promotion of culture, youth and sport.

- In the last legislative period, the contacts with North Rhine-Westphalia started quickly, but are currently focusing mainly on cooperative projects within the various disciplines of art. It is our aim to develop this cooperation in a more institutional way, so that permanent links can be constructed at the artistic, socio-cultural, political and administrative level.

- The declaration of intent on culture, which was signed with the region Nord Pas de Calais in 2003 will be elaborated further. The most important elements of this declaration include:

1. setting up joint artistic projects
2. cooperation on the European construction and synergy with other European regions
3. examining the achievement of a cross-border arts biennale
4. intensifying the cooperation between cities and municipalities

In order to achieve these objectives, bilateral networks are built up between cultural mediators and administrators in permanent working meetings and seminars. These should make it possible for artists, and arts and cultural centres to develop joint projects on a permanent basis. In this context we will also work on a common advisory and subsidy framework. Our activities will also concentrate on the development of multilateral cooperative projects between both regions and third regional partners, to facilitate the use of EU funds.

Finally, attention will be devoted to the development of a worldwide network with the partners of the respective regions in the world.

#### *5.8.7 Other bilateral partners*

There is a strong demand in Morocco for intense exchanges which will encourage reflection on culture and identity, and in addition to achieve co-productions. This can be done in cooperation with the Moroccan community in Flanders. This demand should be examined and if appropriate, honoured. At a later stage, it is possible to consider Turkey, the new member states of the EU, Japan and China. In the near future, the latter will play an important role with regard to the arts. The foreign policy will be geared to the social evolutions in the countries concerned and in Flanders. The concentration of the international culture policy and of the activities on a number of countries and regions by means of cooperative or cultural agreements, guarantees greater permanence and means there is less fragmentation.

#### *5.8.8. The regulation on the subsidies for cultural projects*

The regulation for the subsidy for cultural projects with an international impact will be thoroughly evaluated during the legislative period and amended where necessary.

### **5.9 Towards the best possible management structure (superstructure)**

In recent years the support centres have undergone important developments. These were not always planned and have resulted in the current differentiated character of the landscape of support centres. The policy is faced with the challenge of working on a clear description of the tasks of each support centre, in consultation with the field and government, to clearly weigh up the priorities and where possible to conclude constructive cooperative ventures.

This will be an important point for attention, which also raises the question about reflecting on a complete own management structure. For various reasons, we will have to redefine the role and tasks of every level of the administrative structure, the discussion on core tasks in the context of the Better Administrative Policy Project, the significant development in the number of support centres, the most efficient use of community funds, and the general and broad character of the services to the cultural sector.

We will work on an open discussion between all the levels of the administrative structure, with the aim of achieving a consensus on defining

the core tasks and operational objectives of the Culture Administration, as well as drawing up a list of the necessary competences. Reflecting on the general organizational chart, the deployment of personnel and the jobs carried out (both in the administration, the support centres and the foundations) must lead to an evaluation of the coordination of the current operation with the core tasks put forward and the operational objectives. On this basis, an attempt will be made to optimise the total operation, with a better distribution of tasks, and the integration or better coordination of business and logistical functions (rationalisation) by promoting dialogue and cooperative agreements and by improving and supplementing competences. A plan in stages must be drawn up for this purpose which must be gradually implemented.

### **5.10 The cultural infrastructure**

- Drawing up an inventory and a plan for several years for the maintenance of our own buildings and the supervision of the execution of this work for the FoCI will be entrusted to a facility manager (external or internal). He/she will also be responsible for the renovation and development projects for which clear contracts will be concluded with the Buildings Department of the Flemish Community.

This meets a clear need: the coordination of all the FoCI dossiers at the technical and financial level by the Culture administration itself, as well as the existing administrative processing of these.

- The renovation and development of our own infrastructure will be made dependant on the scope and content of the task entrusted to the user. Because these users are mainly (our own) large cultural institutions, it is necessary to go back to the operational policy plan for these institutions.

- Priority sectors for the subsidies for supralocal sectoral infrastructure: in the last legislative period, priority was given to the arts centres, music clubs, educational music organizations and youth infrastructures of supralocal importance. This priority will be evaluated and if necessary, reformulated.

- Large infrastructural projects of third parties: because of their large scale and financial implications, this concerns complex dossiers which require a thorough study of the infrastructural needs, both per sector and per region.

### **5.11 A consultation structure for architecture**

Architecture is by definition a transversal matter. With a view to an integrated and comprehensive policy which devotes attention to the cultural and quality aspects of architecture, it is necessary to develop an interdepartmental discussion structure in which the various players concerned with architecture all participate: the Flemish Architect, Economics, Town and country Planning, Education, Culture, Monuments, Welfare.

## **5.12 Towards a policy based on reflection and knowledge**

Scientific research has a broad function in a contemporary cultural policy and plays an important role in the creation of a cultural debate in Flanders with a strong basis. In recent years, the appeal for a more reflective culture policy has been repeated many times. Reflection is important because the comprehensive Flemish culture policy is confronted with complex social themes and challenges for which there are rarely uniform answers. Reflection can be achieved in different ways: with a debate on culture in government, in the field and with the general public on the new and existing regulations and the policy in general, with the organization of a states-general, with the debate which is accompanied by publications, with the contribution of support centres. The results of scientific research are also important: they must provide both policy makers, support centres and the field with the material for the debate and with inspiration so that they can adopt a broader approach to the policy on culture.

### *5.12.1 Objectives*

Therefore we would like to devote further attention to a knowledge-based and reflective culture policy in all its aspects, and in particular to scientific research and the recording of data in the context of the policy cycle. These provide the necessary input for further scientific research. Both the participation and the production side, as well as the mapping research, must be given the necessary attention. As a result of applied sectoral research, we can examine the sectoral developments and take targeted policy-oriented action with a strong basis. In any case, the various policy fields must (continue to) take account of public research.

### *5.12.2 General*

In the context of the expected increase in the budgets for scientific research (the “3% norm”), we want the extra money to ensure that sufficient attention is being devoted to far-reaching investments in research in general, and in

particular into a number of still rather underdeveloped policy themes which often have an international dimension. The human sciences should have a more balanced place, side by side with the pure sciences, in terms of the budget.

#### *5.12.3 The university support centres*

The university support centres Re-Creative Flanders and Sport, Movement and Health should eventually be able to develop into interdisciplinary study centres at an international level, where it is possible to achieve further advances in scientific expertise, particularly at the level of policy-oriented research. In youth research there is an important role for the interuniversity Youth Research Platform. The monitoring of these (inter) university support centres and their current operation must be evaluated during this legislative period.

#### *5.12.4 Longitudinal participation and time use research*

Why people do or do not participate in art and culture, and what the specific differences are between the various groups must be studied in more detail. The added value of this research (by Re-creational Flanders) is determined to a large extent by its longitudinal character. Evolutions in the participation in culture in Flanders are clearly revealed in this way, and on the basis of these objective facts, the government can evaluate and reorient its policy on participation. The importance of repeated research is also crucial for the data which are generated in the research on time use by the TOR group (VUB). In the context of the importance of a policy on (leisure) time, we will consolidate this Flemish research which started in 1999, and adopt a coordinating role in it.

### **5.13 Employment**

#### *5.13.1 Coordination of subsidies and regulations*

During the last legislative period, employees who fell under the so-called DAC Statute in the Culture sector were virtually all covered by the regulation. In the next few years, more work must be carried out on the coordination of the subsidies which are divided via this channel with the existing regulations. The subsidies must gradually be incorporated in the structure of the culture policy, without this being at the expense of employment. At the same time, it is necessary to make sure that any new intersectoral agreements are concluded in a way that is logical for this policy field.

### *5.13.2 The implementation of measures and projects and a better spread*

The existing measures in the context of employment and voluntary work will continue to be implemented. In this respect, projects in the context of cultural diversity (such as the Cordoba project) will be given special attention and there will be better spread across the sector.

### *5.13.3 Research into culture and employment*

There is an urgent need for a broader and more thorough knowledge of the employment aspect of the culture policy. This is an unknown and therefore misunderstood factor both in the subsidised and in the non-subsidised sector. In order to estimate the impact of policy decisions and all their consequences, developing further competence in this field is an absolute precondition. This must not lead to the economic instrumentalisation of the culture policy to become an “employment policy”, but it can show the culture policy in a different light from a pure subsidy policy.

## **5.14 The Arts Office**

The Arts Office, which succeeded the Arts Helpdesk, has an important role to play in providing information on social status and fiscal matters. The Arts Office is jointly managed by employers, employees and support centres and should become a contact centre for artists from every possible discipline. Both professionals and semi-professionals, as well as “pure” amateurs, should find a place there with their questions about their specific social situation. In addition, the Arts Office should also play a role in the discussions on the continued development and improvement of the status of artists and should become an important databank where information is collected and provided on the growth and development of artistic employment in Flanders. For this last task, the Arts Office will work closely together with the Culture and Media administrations of the Flemish Community. On the basis of its specific character, the Arts office will make great efforts to promote the expansion of the social dialogue to all the arts sectors.

## **5.15 Voluntary work**

In the context of the respect for the individual identity at every level (voluntary, semi-professional, professional) of the experience and creation of culture, we will attempt to provide the correct support for every sector at the correct administrative levels. We wish to examine this in more detail in the context of the debate on core tasks.

## **5.16 Cultural industries: working group, analysis, possible new policy instruments**

The cooperation with the Economics department, an intersectoral and interdepartmental working group will be established in the short term, which will focus on the issues of the leisure economy, and more in particular, of the cultural industries. The working group will analyse this subject in terms of policy and explore the possibilities of new policy instruments. On the one hand, these instruments can relate to the challenges presented by the worldwide conglomerates, and on the other hand, on the structural needs and incentives which characterise the Flemish situation. The following aspects can be examined: fiscal measures (e.g., tax shelter), financial instruments (e.g., cultural investment company) and logistical instruments (e.g., making infrastructure available), investments in creative talent, training, etc. The development of this initiative will take place in close consultation with the Economics department. The dialogue on the support of the cultural industries must also be conducted with the federal government, because many possible facilitating and supplementary measures fall under the competence of that level of government.

## **5.17 The policy on leisure**

### *5.17.1 The leisure shop: cooperation between cultures, youth, sport and tourism*

In order to establish the concept of the “leisure shop” and therefore a function that is integrated as well as possible (information, mediation, reservations, both front office and back office), it is necessary to aim for an umbrella service for the entire leisure sector. Participants in leisure activities are no longer served by a separate tourist information office, a separate culture shop and a separate sports line. More intensive cooperation – both at the Flemish – and at the provincial and local level – is therefore necessary between culture, sport and tourism. The aim is to facilitate this rather than to raise awareness.

However, culture, sport and tourism are not synonyms. Every sector has its own objectives, specific target groups and priority points for attention. For example, this implies that for marketing and promotion the paths of these sectors are mainly divergent. As regards the function of encouraging participation, better and further-reaching cooperation is certainly possible and even necessary, although it is clear that in this respect, specific

emphases should be placed and respected for every sector here as well. As regards culture and sport, this means, for example, that the provisions, as well as the product, should be implemented as broadly as possible, including socio-cultural work, top sports and general sports, the heritage in all its aspects, amateur arts, etc. The leisure shop is concerned both with temporary and with the permanent and structural provision, irrespective of whether this provision is of local, regional, national or international importance and whether it concerns for example, top events, large institutions or a less accessible or socio-cultural provision. The coordination with and interaction between other institutions and services (e.g. at the municipal level between youth, sport and culture services and the library) are also important. In addition, intermunicipal cooperation is one of the possibilities. It is only possible to talk of a municipal concept and process when this is actually developed in practice in a community-based way and on an equal basis with tourism and possibly other sectors,

#### *5.17.2 Events*

Large-scale cultural events can reduce obstacles and promote the spread of art and culture. It is clear that at this level there is intense cooperation between Tourism and Culture, with the proviso that this partnership must be on an equal basis and that culture is not used purely as an “instrument” to get the “people moving.” This assumes a policy framework with clear criteria and agreements on the division of competences.

### **5.18 Culture prizes**

The annual award of the culture prizes should become an important symbolic moment for the entire sector after their restructuring in 2003, and contribute to positive appreciation by the public. We believe that there is a great potential for growth with regard to these prizes and that they could develop to become an important media event in the cultural life of Flanders.

## IV. Finance

During the last legislative period, there were large reforms in the decrees for the three fields of culture. Meanwhile, these have become familiar and do not have to be described again in the context of this concluding chapter. During this legislative period we are not planning any new far-reaching changes. Where necessary, we will improve the existing decrees and possibly correct them, but there is no basic revision of any of the three fields.

This certainly does not mean that there is no important work to do in the next legislative period. The structures were built in the last few years: the walls are up, the roofs are on, the first fix is finished. Now we have to make it habitable. An endless stream of experts have to start work. They will all make their own specific contribution so that at the end of the job, everyone is comfortably accommodated and can get on with things properly.

### *A realistic development*

The implementation of the new decrees will be a difficult challenge, not only in terms of content and organization, but also financially. During various discussions in parliament and in hearings with the sectors, the question arose again and again whether the Flemish Community will be prepared to provide sufficient funds to effectively carry out all these decrees. This question will now have to be answered. In the run up to the elections several representatives of the democratic parties repeatedly emphasised that the share of culture, youth and sport must be increased in the Flemish budget. We are not blind to the needs of the other sectors, and at the start of this period of government we showed that we are prepared to meet our responsibilities in times when the budget is tight, but we are very strongly arguing for a realistic growth in the next few years.

This outlines the first aspect of our funding plan. We will not be able to succeed without additional funds. Ambitious decrees such as the Arts Decree, the Decree on Local Culture Policy, the Heritage Decree and the Decree on Top Works of Art require significant financial input from 2006. No one disputes that cultural life plays a central role in promoting relationships and mutual understanding between people. Therefore it is important to invest in this cultural life with a sense of conviction and vision.

### *Spending the funds as well as possible*

An argument for new funds should always be accompanied by a thorough evaluation of the use of the existing funds. This evaluation was actually carried out during the last legislative period, when the whole sector was scrutinised and thoroughly analysed. This exercise should be regularly repeated, and that is what we will continue to do during this legislative period. Wherever possible, we will look for cooperative ventures, so that the existing funds can be used more efficiently. Double spending and expenditure where the purpose is no longer clear will be rigorously eliminated. We do not expect that this will generate enormous room for extra funds in the budget. In view of the relative scarcity of funds, this would be very surprising. But it is precisely because of this scarcity that we must be extremely careful. We are wholly committed to this.

### *Making choices*

However, even with an input of new funds and even spending the existing funds in the best possible way, we are fully expecting to be confronted with a demand that far exceeds the possibilities. At the moment the finishing touches are being made to the policy plans in the arts sector, and these will soon have to be submitted in the context of the Arts Decree. We are already quite certain that we will be faced with an enormous number of applications. The response is extremely large, also for the execution of the decrees on the local culture policy and on the heritage, and we have come to the conclusion that it will be impossible to follow the proposed rate of development. This shows that the Flemish people, both individually and in groups, wish to make use of the channels we have created and the provisions we have established on a large scale. All this enthusiasm is heartwarming, but it also has a down side. It is already clear that the Government of Flanders will have to make choices and will not be able to respond to every new policy plan and everyone's ambitions. There is no doubt that this will lead to frustration and will provoke bitter comment, but in the circumstances this seems inevitable. It is obvious that we will opt for projects with the best chances of success, the greatest added value and the strongest business base. Where possible, we would like to provide for fall-back options for projects which we cannot support at the level that was applied for.

New developments as a result of new funds, spending the existing funds in the best possible way, and clear choices in the available budgets: these are the basic elements of our financial policy in the next few years. We will certainly need the support of the whole of the Government of Flanders to be

able to answer the many questions which are certainly being asked, and which we, as the government, cannot possibly leave unanswered.

Bert ANCIAUX

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