

Memorandum
170707

Conference on
THE NORTHERN DIMENSION AND CULTURE

8 and 9 October, 2006
Kajaani, Finland

1. Background

The Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture is a continuation of the Kajaani process, which originated as a result of the "EU-Russia Expert Meeting on the Implementation of the Cultural Aspects of the Road Map for the Fourth Common Space" held in Kajaani on 18-19 September 2006. In 2007 Finland holds the Nordic Presidency, and the Conference it is part of the official programme of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The new Northern Dimension policy

The recent developments in the Northern Dimension policy have raised the question of the role of culture in the Northern Dimension framework. As stated in the Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy (24/11/06), the Northern Dimension policy is a regional expression of the four EU-Russia common spaces. It also covers cooperation in the field of culture in the Northern Region, since culture is included in the Road Map for the Fourth Common Space. The Framework Document designates research, education and culture as one of the priority sectors of the Northern Dimension. It also strengthens the role of the northern regional councils by mentioning them as participants in the new Northern Dimension policy.

The possibilities offered by the Northern Dimension framework have not yet, however, been fully exploited by the cultural actors in the region because there is no appropriate structure for cultural cooperation. The Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture will focus on the role of the regional intergovernmental organisations and various networks active in the Northern Region in developing EU-Russia cultural cooperation in the Northern Dimension geographical area and in contributing to the goals of the Kajaani process.

The Kajaani process

In brief, the conclusions of the Kajaani Expert Meeting were the following: 1) a cooperation action plan should be devised for the development of EU-Russia cultural cooperation; 2) a joint working group should be set up for the purpose; 3) the cooperation action plan should make full use of



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existing forms of cooperation and sources of financing; and 4) the cooperation action plan will be adopted by the first Permanent Partnership Council of Ministers of Culture.

These goals are being realized within the framework of the Kajaani process. A joint working group has been set up and it has started to devise an EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan on culture. The first EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council of Ministers of Culture is set to convene during the Portuguese Presidency on October 25, 2007.

The aim of the Kajaani Process and the Joint Working Group on Culture is to promote cultural dialogue between the EU and Russia and encourage the cooperation bodies and networks already existing in the EU to work together with corresponding Russian actors with the aim of proposing measures for the preparation of the Cooperation Action Plan, taking into account the conclusions of the EU-Russia Expert Meeting.

EU - Russia Cooperation Action Plan

The EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan on Culture will promote the aims set out in the Culture Road Map. It will create a flexible structure that takes into account the policies enhancing cultural life in the EU, in EU countries and in Russia and can be reviewed and developed in response to changes in the operating environment.

The Cooperation Action Plan will focus on concrete measures for cooperation, including measures relating to the functioning of the cooperation networks and to possibilities offered under certain conditions by existing EU programmes (such as the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) the Culture Programme, the Media Programme), the EU Member States' and Russian government funding instruments, and other public and/or private sources of financing. Essential elements in the Cooperation Action Plan are to identify forms of cooperation and relevant actors, utilise existing sources and mechanisms of funding and create follow-up mechanisms.

2. The purpose of the Conference

EU - Russia Joint Working Group

The EU - Russia Joint Working Group started its work in the beginning of 2007. The results of the Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture will be presented to the Joint Working Group in order to be included in the section of the Cooperation Action Plan that deals with cooperation in Northern Europe, as well as to the Permanent Partnership Council that will convene during the Portuguese Presidency.

Programme for the Finnish Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers

Holding the Chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2007, Finland addresses in her programme such key welfare issues as education, culture and social and health services. The Presidency will facilitate communication and establish new networks consisting of national cultural institutions and bodies involved in the cooperation. The purpose of the action programmes for cultural cooperation with North-western Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania is to intensify contacts between the countries and stress the importance of culture as part of the politics of the Northern Dimension during the Finnish Presidency.

The goals of the Conference

The Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture brings together experts from the European Commission, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Russian Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications (and agencies subordinate to it), the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Nordic ministries of culture, Northern regional intergovernmental organisations and various cultural and art networks and institutions in order to produce concrete proposals for the upcoming EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan on Culture.

The Nordic Council of Ministers is currently reforming its strategy for cultural cooperation with Russia. One goal of the Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture is to contribute to the drafting of the new Nordic Russia Cultural Cooperation Strategy. The Conference also aims at paving the way for more coordinated cooperation between the Nordic countries and the Nordic Council of Ministers, the three regional intergovernmental organisations active in the Northern Region and cultural actors in North-west Russia in order to gain better results when implementing Nordic Russia cooperation, the Northern Dimension policy and the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership.

The organisers believe that by enhancing synergy between the various cooperation programmes and projects, cultural cooperation in the Northern Region can gain more visibility and effectiveness. This also raises the possibility of linking culture more closely with the Northern Dimension agenda, which could open the possibility of creating a Northern Dimension partnership structure for culture. The possibility of a new partnership focused on culture will be discussed at the Conference.

The programme of the Conference

The programme of the Conference is organised as follows:

Day 1: The current situation and future prospects in cultural cooperation between EU and Russia in the Northern Region.



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The presentations and discussions of the first day will deal with the strategies and priorities of the various actors involved in EU-Russia cultural cooperation in the Northern Region. A special session will be dedicated to the existing possibilities for financing the cooperation.

Day 2: Concrete ways to develop cooperation in the framework of the Northern Dimension.

The second day consists of thematic panel discussions which aim at producing concrete proposals for the content of the EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan on Culture and the Nordic Russia Cultural Cooperation Strategy. These proposals could then be used to develop cultural cooperation within the framework of the Northern Dimension.

Invited participants

By bringing together representatives of both governmental and non-governmental cultural actors, various networks, funding bodies and institutions, the Conference aims at enhancing dialogue and synergy between the major bodies active in cultural cooperation in the Northern Region.

According to plans, participants will be invited from

- Education and Culture and External Relations Directorates General of the European Commission
- Ministries of culture and arts councils of the Nordic Countries
- Ministry of Culture and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation and agencies subordinate to it
- Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministries of Culture of the Nordic Countries and cultural bodies subordinate to them
- Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the Baltic Sea countries
- The Portuguese Presidency
- The forthcoming Slovenian Presidency
- Russian Cultural Centre, Helsinki
- Cultural Committees of Northwest Russia
- Nordic Council of Ministers and its Secretariat
- Nordic Council Ministers' Offices and information points in Russia and in the Baltic states
- Nordic Culture Fund
- The Arctic Council
- The Barents Euro-Arctic Council/The Barents Regional Council
 - Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC)
- The Council of the Baltic Sea States:
 - Ars Baltica
 - Monitoring Group on Cultural Heritage in the Baltic Sea States (four sub-groups)
- European cultural networks and organizations active in cultural cooperation in the Northern Region

In all, the number of participants will be approximately 100.