

Bruxelles, 18. 01. 2013
Cab Piebalgs/EM/an (2012) sv 1736230

Dear Mr Santschi,

I would like to thank you for your letter dated 15 October 2012.

I understand that the 2011 Communication "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change" raised some questions, and some organizations and cultural actors have queried whether cultural diversity and expressions will continue to be included in our programmes from 2014. Let me assure you that this is for us a key factor in achieving the goals we share, particularly concerning human rights, democracy and other key elements of good governance, social inclusiveness and economic growth.

A large number of projects in the cultural sector are being implemented with the support of EU grants. Calls for proposals under the Investing in People thematic programme (DCI instrument) and the ACP Cultures+ (EDF) have been launched lately and Euromed Heritage, Euromed Audiovisual and Eastern Partnership Culture regional programmes (ENPI instrument) are underway. Cultural activities are also supported at a bilateral level in several countries (Benin, Mali, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Algeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania).

The recent Memorandum of Understanding which Ms. Ashton and I signed with UNESCO, in respect of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, demonstrates our commitment to working closely together in those matters.

*Mr. Beat Santschi,
Vice President Europe
CEDC
c/o ADRIC
11 bis rue Ballu
F-75009 Paris*

The renewed partnership will aim at increasing coherence and efficiency, as well as enhancing quality and impact, of the activities of both sides. Under the terms of the MOU we will implement a meaningful dialogue between our institutions and increase co-operation in the pursuit of common objectives in this sector. Effectively, as mentioned in the MOU: "...The two Sides will increase dialogue on policy issues, cooperation and exchange of data and information in their efforts to achieve their common objectives, notably in the following areas: - education and culture, including their potential as vectors for development (...)".

In a recent meeting of Ministers of Culture from the ACP countries, Ms. Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth highlighted the role cultural and creative sectors play in sustainable development and outlined common challenges for the EU and its developing partners. The conclusions of the meeting on 17 and 18 October should be available at the General Secretariat of the ACP group of states.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of fluid, connected strokes. The signature is slanted upwards from left to right, with a prominent loop in the middle.

Andris PIEBALGS