



**European Research Institute for Cultural Affairs and the Arts
Europäisches Institut für Kulturforschung
Institut Européen de recherche sur la culture**

Scientific Council for ERICArts (Wissenschaftlicher Rat e.V.)

**Report of the First Meeting, held at the German Arts Council, Bonn,
December 8, 1993**

The Scientific Council of the European Institute for Cultural Affairs and the Arts held its founding meeting in Bonn, Germany on Dec. 8, 1993. The Council is a *legally mandated interim body* with the aim of establishing this interdisciplinary institute for basic and applied research in the cultural and media fields. Once established, the Institute will try to concern itself with the often complex issues, structures and events connected with Europe's many cultural realities; this will be achieved through *intercultural research projects, expertise and documentation facilities*.

The need for a better understanding of the *present inner European conflicts with a cultural background* is one of the many reasons leading to the creation of the Institute. Other key reasons include the challenge coming forth from *the cultural article of the European Treaty* (Art. 128), and especially its "Cultural Awareness Clause"; the economic constraints and the rapid *transformation under way in Central and Eastern Europe* with respect to the field of cultural policy; and the *cultural identity crisis* resulting, at least in part, from rapid technological change, striking all societies in Europe and especially the younger generation which seems to have lost touch with the historical cultural heritage.

The 17 *founding members* of the Council present at the meeting (another 10-12 were not able to attend), all recognized members of the European culture and arts research community, believed the need to take action ensuring the realization of the Institute in the coming year. As members of the *Executive Board* were elected: Ritva Mitchell, President (Arts Council of Finland, Helsinki); Els Baeten (Vlaams Theater Instituut, Brussels) and Dominique Leroy (Université d'Amiens), Vice-Presidents; Franz-Otto Hofecker (Institut für Kulturelles Management, Vienna), Treasurer. Other officials are: Dorota Ilczuk (Institute of Culture, Warsaw), Ralph Kellenberger (Liechtenstein-Institut, Barendorn), Alexandr Rubinstein (Institute for Arts Research, Moscow), Hermann Schwengel (Universität Freiburg) and Andreas Joh. Wiesand (Zentrum für Kulturforschung, Bonn/Berlin); the latter was asked to act as Secretary General.

Taking note of previous discussions and concepts, the Council resolved to support the completion of a *feasibility study* describing, in more specific terms, aims, options for institutional framework and resources of the Institute. Special attention will be given to the preparation of a *detailed research programme*, based on the strengths and interests of the Council's members. This study will serve to broaden co-operation with present and potential Research Fellows and Associates, partner institutions and organizations at all European and national levels. The Council recognizes the need for the Institute to integrate *a wide range of interests* into its research programme. This will mean, for example, taking into account not only the process of Western integration but also the particular needs in Central and Eastern Europe as well as those resulting from increasing contacts with the Southern Hemisphere.

The meeting reaffirmed some of the *guiding principles* under which the Institute is to be established :

- a. *Professional and political independence* will be, in part, achieved as the patronage of a leading and well established European institution is being sought. Independence will be further developed as the decision on the location of the Institute's headquarters is made, related basic funds are secured and various sources of project financing are solicited. Eventual decentralization of structures could also provide the framework for an increased diversification of the Institute's activities and of its membership structure.
- b. The principle of *multi-disciplinary and inter-cultural studies*, mirroring the complexity of cultural issues and the replacement of some former national tasks by those with a genuine "European" character, will be achieved by ensuring co-operation between researchers and institutions from various academic, national and cultural backgrounds. Transparency and competence in cultural policymaking will be, in partnership with other bodies, improved by open discussions where decisionmakers, researchers and professionals from all horizons are given the opportunity to share their experiences.
- c. *Combining basic and applied research* is considered of primary importance in order to generate comprehensive, authoritative and comparable results, which meet the needs of the complex decision-making processes in cultural affairs and media policies. Given the insufficiency of some academic theories, efforts will be made to integrate solid practical evidence as well as the spirit of artists into the Institute's work, leading also to the improvement of conceptual frameworks and the definition of indicators for comparison.
- d. Preparation of *documentation, data and information resources* is of paramount importance and will partly be achieved through co-operation with existing libraries and archives. Complementary approaches, including analysis and implementation of findings now already available to the Institute will not be neglected, however.

Concurrent to the organisation of the Institute, a work programme is being developed. *Initial proposals for research projects* were submitted at the meeting. In this context, it was confirmed that funding had been approved by the Government of NorthRhine-Westphalia for the study of *cultural industries development in selected European regions*, which will begin as soon as the research tasks have been specified and potential partners identified. It was agreed that, until the Institute is created, the Scientific Council will assume responsibility for this kind of initial research and publication projects. Other proposals of potential interest to a European Research Institute for Cultural Affairs and the Arts and its members were made by the representatives of existing national and regional research bodies (concerning studies on minority rights, competition terminology in the EU in relation to public funding of the arts, internships, methodological questions, "The European Food Project" etc.). Such proposals were well received by the group, as it is understood the Institute would not only conduct research on its own but also maintain working arrangements with its partners and with international organisations, arts and artists councils or networks, the media and scientific institutions in all regions of Europe

(based on the draft protocol by Charles Vallerand, ICP Group, Ottawa)

The next regular meeting of the Scientific Council is scheduled for September 1994, first meetings of project groups will already be held in spring.

Contact for further information:

Prof. Dr. Andreas Joh. Wiesand or Marion Fischer M.A.

Am Hofgarten 17, D-53113 Bonn (Germany)

Tel : (+49-228) 211058; Fax : (+49-228) 217493