

A CULTURAL POLICY

The EU's role in cultural policy is limited to promoting cultural co-operation between the EU Member States. There are no EU laws on culture. In Malta, a National Culture Policy document is being formulated. A National Culture Heritage Database will also be set up to deal with the management and regulation of national cultural treasures.

PARTICIPATION IN CULTURE 2000

Malta aims at participating in the EU programme on culture, known as Culture 2000. This programme runs from 2000 to 2004 and should be of interest to all those involved in cultural activities or cultural organisations. Culture 2000 covers performing arts, visual and plastic arts, literature, music, heritage, cultural history and the like. There are three types of initiatives that are supported by Culture 2000:

- (i) Specific and short term cultural activities,
- (ii) Long term (three years) cultural co-operation activities and
- (iii) European emblematic cultural projects such as the European City of Culture, cultural prizes and major cultural events.

EUPU

Malta's participation in Culture 2000 will be co-ordinated by the European Union Programmes Unit which brings together the national contact points on Culture 2000 and other EU programmes in which Malta is participating.

AUDIO-VISUAL POLICY IN MALTA

When originally enacted, Malta's Broadcasting Act was already modelled on the EU's Television Without Frontiers law and the Council of Europe's Convention on Transfrontier Television. It has now been updated to include the possibility of incorporating the recently introduced aspects of the EU law such as the promotion of the production and distribution of European works and programme quotas for European (including Maltese) works.

Other aspects relate to access of the public to major events (particularly sports events), teleshopping as well as some aspects of television advertising and sponsorship. Provision was also made to bring Maltese law on the protection of minors into line with EU standards. Broadcasting in Malta is monitored by the Broadcasting Authority.

MEDIA PLUS

Malta is exploring the possibility of participating in the EU Media Plus Programme which will run from 2001 to 2005. This programme supports: (i) training in the new technologies, (ii) training in economic, financial and commercial management, (iii) script-writing techniques, (iv) networks of training courses, (v) initial training activities and (vi) development, distribution and promotion of European works.

EU AUDIO-VISUAL POLICY

In the area of audio-visual policy the EU encourages cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supports and supplements their action. In taking initiatives on audio-visual, the EU must also keep cultural aspects into account, thereby promoting European cultural identity in film and television production and safeguarding the right of the public to access major events through free television.

The most important EU law in this area is the 1989 EU law on Television Without Frontiers which was amended in 1997. This law enables free movement of television broadcasting services in the Union in order to promote the development of a European market in broadcasting and related activities, such as television advertising and the production of audiovisual programmes. It covers the following areas: television broadcasts; the promotion of the production and distribution of European works; access of the public to major events; television advertising and sponsorship; protection of minors and the right of reply.

In the area of public broadcasting, it is up to Member States to define and organise public broadcasting as they see fit by attributing to it the tasks which are appropriate in the interests of the public and by providing funding to ensure the performance of these public service tasks. A protocol confirming this position was agreed in Amsterdam in 1997.