



Culture and civil society: new relationships with the third sector



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Preface

When the authors were commissioned to write this Policy Note it was their idea to subtitle it "New partnerships with the third sector". However, during the gestation period of the study, it became evident that to focus on *partnerships* between the cultural sector and that sector which inhabits the territory between the public and private realms, would be to overlook some interesting cultural initiatives which, though not strictly speaking *partnerships*, nevertheless appeared to be realising similar objectives to those held by the non-profit making or so-called third sector. In particular, some arts-led projects or organisations seemed to be as committed to the principles of participation, empowerment, combating social exclusion and strengthening democratic values as third sector organisations. Accordingly, we decided that "New *relationships* with the third sector" would be a more accurate reflection of the content.

The intention of this paper is to better formulate the nature of the relationship between culture and civil society and the implications of such a relationship and, by way of illustration, to highlight examples of interesting practice. To that extent, the paper builds directly on one of the chief conclusions of the Round Table on A Civil Society or "Everyone for Themselves"? Culture as an Agent for Democracy in Europe, organised by the Council of Europe in Stockholm on 1st April 1998.

The series title "Policy Note" is an apt one as far as we are concerned. This short study does not seek to provide a definitive examination of the policy issues; it has more limited ambitions. By indicating some ways in which the arts and culture can be at the heart of a process to fulfil broader societal objectives, the paper hopes to demonstrate to policy makers in both