



**culture 21**

Agenda 21 for culture

Agenda 21 de la culture

Agenda 21 de la cultura

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## Agenda 21 for culture in France

State of affairs and outlook



Ajuntament de Barcelona  
Institut de Cultura



United Cities and Local Governments  
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The cultural manager Christelle Blouët analyses the implementation of Agenda 21 for culture in France. The text is a summary of the research report submitted for the Professional Master's Degree in facilities and projects management in the popular music sector (2006-2008) at the Angers University Centre for Continuing Education. The report has been directed by Philippe Teillet and produced with the support of the Observatory for Cultural Policies and the Committee on culture of United Cities and Local Governments.

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## Introduction

In 2002, when we started to think about a declaration on the local cultural policies that bring together cities all over the world, the participation of the French cities and local governments was outstanding. It would be difficult to find a country with a greater capacity to think about public cultural policies. And so it is not by chance that the first report on the implementation of Agenda 21 for culture in a country has been drafted in France. The French local governments have become involved in the development of Agenda 21 for culture and have totally committed themselves to the promotion of city policies that adopt culture as one of their pillars.

It is my pleasure to present the summary of the report *Agenda 21 for culture in France. State of affairs and outlook*, which Christelle Blouët has written for us. The report was submitted in April last year, 2008, for the Professional Master's Degree in facilities and projects management in the popular music sector at Angers University, and was directed by one of the leading researchers in cultural policies in France, Professor Philippe Teillet. The report also received aid from the Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles de Grenoble, and especially the director, Jean-Pierre Saez.

Christelle Blouët has based this project on interviews with ten French local governments close to United Cities and Local Governments and Agenda 21 for culture. It has been received with hope because it promotes both cultural diversity and intercultural exchange and because it commits itself to a joint task with local civil society and cities all around the world. Blouët regards Agenda 21 for culture as a synonymous with resources for constructing a coherent local political project, which would give a great importance to cultural rights for the exercise of full citizenship.

I am sure that this summary will be useful to cities all over the world, especially in France, in the development of Agenda 21 for culture. Good reading.

**Jordi Martí**

Delegate for Culture, Barcelona City Council

President of the United Cities and Local Governments Culture Committee

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## Agenda 21 for culture in France

### State of affairs and outlook

Summary of the report submitted by Christelle Blouët for the Professional Master's Degree in facilities and projects management in the popular music sector - Director: Philippe Teillet

October 2008

## Agenda 21 for culture, from local to international

The Agenda 21 for culture is the first document with a worldwide mission that advocates establishing the groundwork of an undertaking by cities and local governments for cultural development. The Agenda 21 for culture was agreed by cities and local governments from all over the world to enshrine their commitment to human rights, cultural diversity, sustainability, participatory democracy and creating conditions for peace. It was approved by the 4th Forum of Local Authorities for Social Inclusion of Porto Alegre, held in Barcelona on 8 May 2004 as part of the first Universal Forum of Cultures. United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) adopted the Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for its programmes on culture and assumed the role of coordinator of the process subsequent to its approval ([www.agenda21culture.net](http://www.agenda21culture.net)).

A genuine action programme for cultural policies, the Agenda 21 for culture rests on a conviction that culture is the fourth pillar of sustainable development and sets out to build solid bridges with other fields of governance.

## The French local governments involved

On 30 June 2007, 18 French local governments appeared on the UCLG lists "Cities and local governments using the Agenda 21 for culture in their urban policies". At that time there was no specific data about their experiences of putting it into practice. To establish a preliminary state of affairs for the Agenda 21 for culture in France and forecast the conditions for its development, Christelle Blouët did a survey between June 2007 and April 2008 as part of the Master's Degree 2 in popular music facilities and projects management in Angers. The survey concentrated on ten local governments that had begun to consider the possibilities, sometimes arriving at a genuine local version of the Agenda 21 for culture. The measures taken by the cities of Aubagne, Lille, Lyon, Nantes, Roubaix, Saint-Denis and Strasbourg, as well as the councils of the Seine-Saint-Denis, Gironde and Nord General Councils were studied. The investigation has produced a report entitled: *The Agenda 21 for culture France, state of affairs and outlook* directed by Philippe Teillet. This summary document deals with the main discoveries and conclusions.

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# 1. What added value for cultural policies?

The main lines of development proposed by the Agenda 21 for culture may be summarised in three measures: to protect and promote cultural diversity, to develop participatory democracy and to foster cross-sectorial cooperation in public policies. French cultural policies, aimed mainly over the last 50 years at improving access to works and sustaining the consumption of cultural goods, may specifically find major resources for innovation in the Agenda 21 for culture.

## 1.1. CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is understood in the Agenda 21 for culture in the sense defined by the UNESCO Declaration and Convention on cultural diversity: “Cultural diversity is the main heritage of humanity. It is the product of thousands of years of history, the fruit of the collective contribution of all peoples through their languages, imaginations, technologies, practices and creations. Culture takes on different forms, responding to dynamic models of relationship between societies and territories. Cultural diversity is “a means to achieve a more satisfactory intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence” (UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, article 3), and is one of the essential elements in the transformation of urban and social reality”. That broad definition can be understood in many ways by local agents, but it unambiguously places the issue of cultural rights at the centre of the concerns.

In France, the heritage of cultural policies most often gives rise to a view of culture which is confined to the field of art and literature, the product of a policy of a search for excellence in the field, which is heir to a French vision of the Republic and its unity. It will be difficult for a view of culture that spreads beyond learned culture to find a place in this model. Indeed, France has always preferred to reserve that view for its international relations, while most often ignoring it within its own borders.

In most French local governments today, the substratum of cultural policy thus consists of cultural facilities and festivals. That illustrates the vital place still occupied by the goals of the democratisation of culture in the cultural policies of the local governments, as they had been set out by Malraux. The question of cultural democracy, which is at the centre of the problems of the Agenda 21 for culture, remains in the background. However, the survey has brought to light the fact that people have been thinking about another approach to public intervention for some years, intervention that is no doubt more easily achieved within medium- sized communities. In the very large cities the major institutions exercise their power more absolutely and leave little room for the opening of this debate. A fear of communitarianism, of renouncing excellence and of the instrumentalisation of culture thus brings all its weight to bear on the evolution of the policies. There are many people who stubbornly cling to the defence and

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development of the democratisation model. While acknowledging that they identify with the values of the Agenda 21 for culture, some local governments paradoxically stand out for ignoring cultural rights as set out by UNESCO and more recently by the Fribourg Declaration. The Agenda 21 for culture proposes that they shift their points of reference in a process of making policies complementary rather than opposed to each other.

“Cultural democratisation policies have had useful but limited effects in the business of expanding audiences for ‘legitimate culture’. Social reproduction is the rule. And so we must move towards another complementary voice of ‘cultural democracy’, which is based on the recognition and the right to expression of all cultures.” Michel David, Director of the new city and culture, Roubaix, interview on 10 December 2007

## 1.2. PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

Participatory democracy is one of the decisive elements of the process of sustainable development. It rests on the perceptions and expectations of the agents in the territory and on taking account of the long term. The first fundamental stage of the construction of a project is thus the collective production of a forward-looking vision of the territory. Each local government works on it in its own way, from a first awareness to the implementation of real measures. That happens mainly through the different ‘consultative bodies’ that are set up in the local governments, in the framework of the law or voluntarily.

In the survey, the first discovery concerning participatory democracy reveals the fears about the difficulty of introducing ‘sincere’ processes politically. When the debate is held, what notice is really taken of the opinions expressed by the people taking part in those consultations in the political arbitration? Running across all policies, participatory democracy involves particular elements on cultural issues. As for the other sectors, it requires a real methodology to allow the contents of those consultations to be properly exploited and fed back into the process, but also to succeed in involving the citizens at all levels of the process, in the conception, the management, the delivery and the assessment of the activities and the programmes themselves.

Once the measure has been tried out with a method, it seems to be put to a plebiscite by the local government that has performed the experiment. In the framework of the local Agenda 21s, the sustainable development approach has made a considerable contribution. That evolution is part of the modernisation of public policies and allows us to take an optimistic view of its development, even if it is in its infancy, and difficult to put into practice. Elected officials and public servants have traditionally held complete control over the debates and arbitrations, whilst participatory democracy implies a sharing of responsibilities: a method that radically questions the bases of our traditions of public governance.

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The subject is even more sensitive in the area of cultural policies, taking into account a real tendency by the institution to 'impose from above' and by artists to transgress and aspire to freedom, but also taking into account the lack of motivation of the people the cultural policies are aimed at to go beyond simple 'consumption'. In a context of a face-to-face encounter between the professionals in the sector and the political sphere, where the inhabitants have usually been excluded from the discussion as emphasised by Pascale Bonniel Chalié, participatory democracy helps to legitimise public action and to embody the policies.

It is important to be aware of the deficit of local democracy at the present time. That awareness has allowed the introduction of legal frameworks to move the management of public life towards more consultation. Habits here nevertheless take a long time to change, even if a real start has been made. Supervision is still essential and the call to citizen activity must not obviate the necessary expertise of the public service and the elected representatives. The tendency towards a radicalisation of the model in one direction or another unfortunately appears in many circumstances: ignoring consultation altogether or, the opposite, throwing everything open to a public supposedly capable of expressing an opinion on each and every issue raised in the management of public affairs. Local democracy will need to protect itself from autocratic drifts if it is going to construct itself.

"The participation of the citizens as a whole in the drafting, introduction and assessment of policies is no longer a choice, but a feature of advanced democracies." Jordi Pascual, coordinator of the UCLG Committee on culture.

### 1.3. CROSS-SECTORIAL COOPERATION

On 24 October 2006, the meeting of the UCLG Committee on culture adopted the document *Advice on the local implementation of the Agenda 21 for culture*. The question of cross-sectorial cooperation was the object of special attention: "Bringing a cultural perspective to the urban project as a whole, with objectives and actions that show how culture impacts on, and is impacted by, activities in areas such as education, health, urban planning and economy." Indeed, the notion of sustainability could be neither appreciated nor assessed through any other filter than this global approach. As well as providing an overview, cross-sectorial cooperation becomes part of the work method. The point is to ensure good coordination between the services and the institutions with different competences, acting on different scales, or taking charge of different projects and policies. Collaboration, exchange, transfer of information and competence, organisation in project groups, committees of elected representatives, working groups that bring together the services concerned: all methods that can transform professional cultures, which are often too vertical, to accompany cross-sectorial cooperation. Presented as one of the major challenges of good governance, public service culture evolves slowly in the way it sees things.

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Some sectors are more concerned with these cross-sectorial cooperation experiments. The educational and social fields have historically formed important ties with cultural policies. Despite the consensus about the need for these bridges, their introduction often comes up against the immobilism of the institutions. Other public policies have also been launched, but the numerous initiatives in the field remain quite isolated actions, which do not yet amount to a global collective project that has thought about the culture intrinsic to all the other sectors. It is nevertheless a vision that is widely supported by the people interviewed in the survey, who are aware that it contains a strong potential for the renovation of public policies. Geographical or inter-institutional cooperation also seems to benefit from a renewal of interest from many local governments, but mainly when their political interests converge.

Agenda 21 for culture shares its methodologies and its broad principles with the local Agenda 21s. The opportunities for discussion and networking are evident. It seems important to develop more meeting points with these programmes and thus take advantage of the trampoline effect driven by their strong development in French local governments.

A realisation of the complexity and the interaction of development factors is an inevitable cultural evolution in the management of public affairs today. Putting that into practice nevertheless comes up against many obstacles, mostly intrinsic to the bureaucratic nature of the public administration and its deadweight, but also against the difficulty both agents and elected representatives have in conceiving the model outside the verticality they are so accustomed to, which has most obviously defined the perimeters of their fields of action.

“Cross-sectorial cooperation is the most interesting room for manoeuvre we shall have in the coming years in the field of culture. It is just an internal methodology that does not need any extra money. It is collective intelligence, a common culture to be created and spread.” Laurence Dupouy Verrier, Director of Culture, city of Saint-Denis, interview on 3 March 2008.

#### AN ACKNOWLEDGED RELEVANCE AND USEFULNESS

From this survey it emerges quite clearly that the public policies of the French local governments have wide fields for thought and new initiatives. The Agenda 21 for culture has plenty of resources which allow them to construct a coherent, global political project that takes account of the importance of cultural rights, the exercise of full citizenship and the impact of culture at all levels of public intervention: an undoubted added value in French cultural policies as they have been developed so far. The local governments in the survey seem to be quite aware of that, even when they show – officially – little critical distance about their policies. These three great fields are open...



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## 2. What lessons are to be drawn from the beginnings of the implementation?

### 2.1. MOBILISING THE AGENTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Many elected representatives attended the Barcelona Forum in 2004 and it was on that occasion that, perhaps without measuring its full extent, they adopted the Agenda 21 for culture as a reference document for the UCLG culture programmes; their local government is a member of the organisation. The small number of French local governments that are really engaged in producing a local version nevertheless raises the question of the political scope of that adoption. Do the local governments feel committed by having signed? Even if the deputy mayors for culture and sustainable development are involved, the other elected representatives of the city are not always aware that they have signed up, or have not calculated what is involved. It is therefore vital to have information and consultation if we are to imagine a specific development which, as we have already emphasised, is embodied in a global project.

The information about the Agenda 21 for culture should also be supplied to the networks of the local governments, which are often gathered around common subjects for investigation in the different meetings and congresses. Who can be responsible for that communication and to what effect? The territory of the 'standard bearers' of the Agenda 21 for culture and its promotion is still almost virgin in France. The local governments concerned do not proselytise. If they embrace it, they devote themselves to developing their own measures, no doubt too premature to create a following. Few collective initiatives take place and few professional agents in the sector use the tool. At the moment, only the Greens seem to adopt it, by organising public seminars or meetings within the party. Their national programme for the municipal elections also referred to it. The failure of the other French political parties, from the PC to the UMP, to take this document into account should be emphasised. One might have expected the socialist party to contribute to its promotion, through its important figures elected in Lille, Lyon, Nantes and again in Strasbourg, four cities which have adopted the Agenda 21 for culture.

Never before had it been possible to have a proper framework of common reference in cultural policies. From now on, the statements of intent made by the local governments concerning the values of the Agenda 21 for culture can be questioned and debated by civil society with a real tool for analysis and joint construction of policies. This perspective on what is provided by the experiences of other member local governments, both national and international, in that common reference framework is an unprecedented enriching factor for conducting the debates. It is up to the professional agents to take it up, without waiting for the federations and networks to carry out the development.

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Throughout the survey it has also emerged quite evidently that certain local governments are intent on being the initiators of 'innovatory' policies and that the effect of the competition between governments is decisive in their political choices. The stimulation and the effects of encouragement that may be aroused by the initiatives of some 'forerunners' in the field, may bring genuine dynamics of development of the local implementations of the Agenda 21 for culture.

The measures are timed to coincide with the programmes developed by UNESCO, but also with those of the European Union: two institutions with which the collaborations are gradually being set up and which it would be interesting to develop further. Many networks are also major meeting and exchange places for the development of the Agenda 21 for culture: Eurocities, Les Rencontres, Banlieues d'Europe, Quartiers en crise, the URBACT network... But also the labels and programmes of international organisations that help to question cultural policies and delve deeper into the measures to be taken.

## 2.2. CLARIFYING THE OBJECTIVES

The range of national contexts in which the Agenda 21 for culture has to develop gives this frame of reference a different reading in each case according to the heritage in which it is set. Is it possible in this international situation to emphasise its general principles more strongly? We have seen that the cohabitation with the French model of cultural policies, which is often disinclined to question itself, may introduce a host of inconsistencies into the implementation of those broad principles. To approach the local versions as an Agenda 21 for culture à la carte runs the risk of cancelling out the benefits of the measures, since it is within its global and cross-sectorial vision that it has an unprecedented added value. However, it seems that the debates about a shared analysis of these challenges have not yet taken place.

On this matter, Jordi Pascual thinks that we have to trust the local governments who say: "Our policies are in tune with the broad principles of the Agenda 21 for culture" and regards the sidelining of certain questions, notably the still thorny one of cultural rights in France, with a diplomatic moderation. It is undoubtedly the role of civil society and the professional agents of culture to draw the attention of the local governments to respect for the fundamental principles of the documents they have adopted and not allow them the benefit of a simple political show.

Can an understanding of the main elements be shared as a consensus? Methods could be envisaged in an international assessment of the processes, as proposed in the setting up of the local Agenda 21s. Everything must be done to give the initiatives credit at all stages of their development. It is through that credibility that the process could be strengthened with new local governments as soon as the first agents can specifically demonstrate their usefulness

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in the construction of their policies. Acknowledgement of the measures and acknowledgement of the usefulness of the document are two important complementary attitudes to be encouraged in order to sustain the development of the Agenda 21 for culture.

### 2.3. PROPOSING OPERATIONAL METHODS

The present institutional organisation of the Agenda 21 for culture in the world secretariat of UCLG is structured with the presidency of the Committee on culture in the city of Barcelona. That is the body that finances all the expenses of the promotion of the Agenda 21 for culture. The multilateral financial contribution, which did not exist until now, has emerged at a crucial point for allowing the operational assistance methods, already under way, to acquire a greater scope. The voluntary measures which apply to the local governments must be accompanied by communication, also voluntary. The dynamism of the network can only exist through the dynamism of its members and their communication, both internal and external. In the end, the professional expertise “linked to this new place for culture in public policies” must be developed, both for the elected representatives and for the public service officials and agents. The possibility of calling on exterior expertise, which is interesting to consider, must not, however, cut back on the internal competences and the appropriation of the measures by the agents themselves, a fundamental and unavoidable stage.

Once the local version of the Agenda 21 for culture is under way, it is within an observatory of good practices and peer review mechanisms that the different agents can ensure its good development. Measures that once again need people to encourage it and funds to allow people to move around and meet one another.

All the ‘signatory’ local governments are concerned with the exchange of good practices, but it is also interesting to note that certain governments are implementing policies that fit coherently into the framework of the Agenda 21 for culture, without any knowledge of the document or any explicit reference to it. The Observatory could spot those policies and federate them around the Agenda 21 for culture.

The relations between all local governments should develop obviously within our borders, but most of all within the international dimension which the Agenda 21 for culture advocates. These exchanges have not yet taken place specifically with most of the French local governments polled in this survey. Their development may be one of the main sources of enrichment of public policies, fed by the experiments, the difficulties and the successes found in other territories.

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## 2.4. ASSESSING THE PROCESS

Assessment is one of the main perspectives of the Agenda 21 for culture, in tune with the objectives of modernisation of public policies. The measure essentially is to introduce procedures adapted to the field of cultural policies, which for a long time has resisted the very idea of any measurement of its work, and continues to do so. What can we assess and how? All the local governments questioned acknowledge the difficulty of the exercise and the enormous energy required by the assessment. The most frequently expressed regret refers to the difficulties of going beyond a quantitative assessment. However, other measures are under way. The Committee on culture has made it one of its main tasks in the years to come and has proposed a first document entitled *Cultural indicators and Agenda 21 for culture*, which proposes “a framework to help cities and local governments to clarify the conceptual bases of cultural policies, and become a first step from which to progress towards local cultural indicators”. In the introduction, the document specifies that “the work to be carried out on local cultural indicators is a fragmented field and lacks consensus. However, its development is essential in order to ensure that culture is consolidated as one of the pillars of development. (...) More years of work will probably be needed in order to achieve a solid proposal on this subject. This document does, however, suggest a framework to explain local cultural policies”.

For many years sustainable development has been using this assessment work and has defined methodological measures which it would be a pity not to draw inspiration from. For H  l  ne Combe, of the Observatory for public decisions in Nantes, “The main things in sustainable development are the expertise of knowledge and the expertise of experience. We will have to work on notions of indicators that count differently, that do not quantify everything and, especially, that make sense to everyone”.

In the French context today, if the cultural field does not take advantage of these procedures, it risks returning to the situation established at state level in the framework of the General Public Policy Review (RGPP), where the quantitative indicators imposed tend to empty the policies of their meaning. The Agenda 21 for culture and the Committee on culture can make a major contribution to the definition of the framework of the assessment, as profitable for local cultural policies as for national ones, however little the agents in the sector may want to look current reality in the face and embark on this road with true determination, aware of the urgency of such an undertaking.

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### 3. Outlook

The survey with ten local governments has revealed a considerable enthusiasm for the Agenda 21 for culture. The critical eye that has been turned on the tool and on the beginnings of the local versions in no way reduces the importance and usefulness of the measures, but does define their margins of progress. The balance sheet and the outlook for each government give an optimistic view of its development.

**Aubagne** has launched a local version after a dialogue lasting several months and the organisation of meetings on cultural practices.

**Lille** wants to make the Agenda 21 for culture one of the major lines of the city's cultural policy for the current mandate and is now working on the drafting of a charter of cultural rights and responsibilities.

**Lyon** is convinced of the importance of the tool, but will the new town council continue in that direction without the thrust provided by the former deputy mayor Pascale Bonniel Chalier?

**Nantes** should pursue its joint measures for sustainable development, integration and culture, suspended during the election period, and make public policies from the proposals that have emerged from the workshops *Living together and promoting cultural diversity*.

**Roubaix**, already well ahead in the development of the public policies promoted by the Agenda 21 for culture, could take advantage of the measures to formalise its cultural policy more, and hopes that the Committee on culture can be the engine in terms of the assessment.

**Saint-Denis** has integrated the Agenda 21 for culture into its global orientation report on cultural policy. The department for culture hopes that the report will be adopted and adapted as soon as possible. The Agenda 21 for culture is a piece of the whole. The city emphasises that the adaptation must not overlook certain elements that do not appear in the text.

**Strasbourg** thinks that Agenda 21 for culture can serve as a guide. Will the new municipal team, which has announced a diagnosis of cultural policy, make it one of its resources?

**The Gironde General Council** had not clearly identified the difference between the Agenda 21 for culture and the cultural actions of the local Agenda 21s, but has the same concerns and will continue to develop its policies along those lines.

**The Nord General Council** is embarking on a new period, after a major task of structuring and assessment, which may be an opportunity to introduce measures of this kind in more depth.

**The Seine Saint-Denis General Council** thinks that it is a tool that enables a questioning of the measures of the General Council and that this Agenda 21 for culture has been an extra spur to the introduction of policies that have already been implemented within the department and to the search for a broader understanding of it. In the last elections, the presidency of the General Council has become socialist after over 25 years of communist presidency. How will the

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Agenda 21 for culture be considered in this new context?

That rapid overview needs to be completed with the work in progress in new local governments, whether or not they have been mentioned within the framework of the survey.

**The Pays de Pontivy** should soon be informing UCLG about its measures.

**The city of Angers** is now thinking about a local version with the Observatory for public decisions in Nantes.

**The city of Nanterre** has been registered on the UCLG lists since 31 December 2007.

Will **the Brittany Region**, whose cultural policy is so much in harmony with the Agenda 21 for culture, take up the measures?

Many other local governments, which we are not yet aware of, may be working at this very moment on a local version of Agenda 21 for culture...

There is a good deal of room of manoeuvre, since the number of local governments is still limited, but the representativeness of the sample is interesting on the scale of our country: small, medium-sized and large local governments, urban and rural, are represented. The sample is thus a genuine laboratory for exploring all the dimensions of the resources of the Agenda 21 for culture.

The question of the links between all the members, French and international, the need for a debate on the fundamental issues, a possible labelling of the procedures, the sharing of experiences, the assessment work: so many problems whose progress is linked to fostering the network, which for the time being still lacks federating agents and financial resources. The development of the Agenda 21 for culture must integrate that evolution.

The opportunity to form more important ties with the agents of sustainable development, who are highly organised in France, has emerged as a major potential resource. The idea of culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development is making headway with the agents and the weaving of close ties seems within reach.

Sustainable development has made it possible to open a new era of public policies and has aroused a great hope for renewal and a strong sense of responsibility. The development of participative democracy and cross-sectorial cooperation places us on the brink of a deep change in culture within public service. Its resources are indeed a way of modernising the institutions, their way of thinking and operating. At the heart of this evolution, the local Agenda 21s and the Agenda 21 for culture propose to get society moving. They provide the prospect, at all levels of civil society, of access to a new active dimension.

The field of diversity, left empty by the local Agenda 21s, stresses the relevance of the Agenda 21 for culture, which has adopted it in all its dimensions. That cultural diversity, enshrined by UNESCO, helps to strengthen the need to question the model of French cultural policies once again. Will the Agenda 21 for culture enable us to move the lines, to define new reference

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points and rediscover ourselves around a common culture of cultural diversity? Obviously, its thrust could help make up for the deficiencies, which can be seen ever more clearly in an increasingly multicultural French society.

The absence of any political consensus about taking into account cultural rights within our borders remains at the centre of the process. The evolution of society does not allow the opening of the debate to be delayed any longer. In this respect the framework proposed by the Agenda 21 for culture is an exceptional opportunity to seize, both to recognise many common foundations and to examine our discord and discover any possible and desirable ways towards convergence. The Agenda 21 for culture and its implementation enable us to tend towards a project for society where 'living together' resumes the central place it should never have lost. It is a strong political will that will make this ambitious project possible. The tool is in our hands.

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