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## **SECOND WORLD CULTURELINK CONFERENCE**

### **Dynamics of Communication: New Ways and New Actors**

Zagreb, Croatia, 9-12 June 2005, Mimara Museum

#### **Final Report**

Culturelink, the Network of Networks for Research and Cooperation in Cultural Development, was established by UNESCO and the Council of Europe in 1989, aiming to stimulate and develop joint research projects among network members, create and set up databases, and broaden intercultural communication and collaboration. The Institute for International Relations (IMO) in Zagreb, Croatia, has served as the Network's focal point since its inception. Today, the Network counts over 1000 members, mainly cultural and research institutions from 105 countries worldwide.

The First World Culturelink Conference, held in Zagreb in June 1995, resulted in intensified international research activities in the field of cultural policies and led to the perception of a distinct "Zagreb school of cultural policy research".

The Second World Culturelink Conference was dedicated to the dynamics of communication in a world marked by rapid changes. These changes, influenced especially by the development of new information and communication technologies, affect the very ways of communication. Discussions thus focused on new ways and actors of communication, as well as on the new possibilities of networking and the role of networks in promoting intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

The Conference was attended by 150 participants from 37 countries worldwide, coming from Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas and Australia. The participants represented different national and international associations, cultural institutions and centres, foundations, universities and other organizations. Numerous renowned experts in the fields of cultural policies, cultural industries, and new information and communication technologies attended the conference, including Cees Hamelink and Joost Smiers from the Netherlands, Colin Mercer and Jennifer Williams from Great Britain, Aggrey Brown from Jamaica, Keyan Tomaselli from South Africa, Gao Xian from China, Dorota Ilczuk from Poland, Jean-Pierre Saez and Bernard Faivre d'Arcier from France. Experts from Croatia and a significant number of younger experts from abroad (such as Henry Cheruiyot Changwony from Kenya, Konrad Gunesch from Hong Kong, Jennifer Jennings from Ireland, Ana Wortman from Argentina) delivered contributions that will certainly add to their reputation.

In the course of three days, the Conference held three plenary sessions and one special session devoted to the Culturelink Network. The first plenary session was dedicated to globalization processes, their consequences and the redefined roles of all actors involved in the cultural field (the role of the state, of local communities, professional organizations etc.). The topics of the

second plenary session comprised cultural diversity – especially with a view to the future *UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Contents and Artistic Expressions* – multiculturalism and new cultural identities. The third plenary session was devoted to new ways of communication and cooperation, to digital culture and the uneven global spread of digitization.

The participants discussed new tasks and changing roles of cultural policies, they pointed out newly emerging digital divides, and stressed the impressive phenomenon of new actors in communication, especially the role of civil society – all of which announces a shift in the structure of the global cultural space. (See also the Conference Summary and Main Findings at <http://www.culturelink.org/conf/clinkconf/clinkconfsummary.html>.)

From the technical point of view, the Conference functioned flawlessly. It was broadcast live over the Internet by means of streaming video and was followed at UNESCO, the Council of Europe and other organizations. The entire footage will be made available at the Culturelink Website.

Reports about the Conference were published in foreign journals, electronic bulletins, and newspapers (e.g., *EFAH Newsletter*, *ECF News*, *ACORNS*, *Kulturaustausch*, *Impact*, *Arts Management Newsletter*, *The Power of Culture Newsletter*, *La Relance – Libreville, Gabon*) and in the Croatian media (*Vjesnik*, *Večernji list*, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, *Novi list*, Croatian Radio and Television). Interviews with Colin Mercer and Cees Hamelink were published in *Zarez*, the magazine for cultural and social events.

It is a general opinion that Zagreb has hosted an exceptional conference of experts in the cultural field. The more than 50 valuable papers that were presented, as well as the many discussions and meetings held during the Conference bear witness to the fact that it was wide open to everyone interested in questions of intercultural communication. The long applause at the end of the last session and the numerous thank-you notes from participants indicate that IMO's Department for Culture and Communication (the Culturelink focal point) has once more demonstrated its value, its knowledge and communication skills, and that the Second World Culturelink Conference has contributed to the further affirmation of cultural diversity and intercultural communication.

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