

The Cultural Sphere of Europe

On the contribution of Article 151 of the EC Treaty toward meeting the cultural challenges of the present.

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The vision of a Europe that, conscious of having dedicated itself to humane ideals, has overcome disunity to establish a continent on which history and geography have finally been reconciled is one that—according to Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in his opening address to the Convention on the Future of Europe—clearly ought to be realised and will, indeed, be best served by intensifying efforts to solidify European integration processes within the Union. A key role therein is to be played by aspects of culture that have long been neglected within the unification process. To be sure, cognisance of their significance to integration was underscored fifteen years ago by the creation of a new political arena for the Union through Article 151 ECT of the Maastricht Treaty.

That, in itself, certainly warrants taking a closer look: What is the outlined standard actually capable of facilitating? Or, put differently: What should it be allowed to facilitate? Which practical results has it produced among secondarily legislated programs? Does the current course of European cultural politics correlate to the cultural challenges of the present time? How are the cultural assumptions informing the standard finally to be evaluated?

An interdisciplinary approach is employed to analyze the relevant topics in socio-cultural and cultural-philosophical terms within the context of European law. Various courses of action and proposed solutions arising from comprehensive discussions with experts active in the fields of cultural politics, art and science are put to the test of comparison with reality.

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