

**Conclusions of the roundtable
of the Ambassadors of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation
Prague, 7 January 2009**

The Ambassadors of the European Year of Creativity and Innovation

- Welcome the decision of the EU to make 2009 the European Year of Creativity and Innovation and thank the Czech Presidency and the European Commission for organising this conference
- Believe that the ambassadors' diversity and breadth of background experience can make a real contribution to the debate on the role of creativity and innovation in the EU
- Urge the EU governments and institutions to ensure that their recommendations are considered and implemented to make sure that the European Year of Creativity and Innovation has a lasting impact
- Are willing to engage with European stakeholders, communities and individuals to contribute to awareness-raising and experience-sharing and to demonstrate the relevance of creativity and innovation in their areas of activity
- Would like to continue working together beyond the European Year of Creativity and Innovation to foster and support long-term change

The ambassadors wish to emphasize the fundamental importance of creativity and innovation for Europe's future. The current crisis creates opportunities for reform and change. It is the responsibility of European decision-makers to ensure that creativity and innovation takes a central role in all future policies. While progress has been made in some areas, more needs to be done. In particular, there is a need for strategic and radical change, aiming to change the long term perspective of the EU.

They call on the Member States and the EU institutions to take action in order to:

- Direct the policies which aim to deal with the current economic and financial crisis to increase investment in research, innovation, human capital and education: it would

be a fundamental mistake to cut R&D and education spending in the current crisis. This investment is needed to set the foundations for the future.

- Commit to invest in education and in boosting Europe's skills and creative capacity as its main policy focus, recognizing that this is more important for the future than concentrating on short-term objectives; Europe's future depends on its human capital.
- Reform education systems across Europe, including higher education but also school education. Education must provide the necessary new skills for tomorrow's jobs as well as providing for non-material human needs. Education should foster more innovative and creative mindsets, focusing on dealing with all-pervasive complexity, encouraging learning-by-doing, opportunity creation and problem-solving rather than knowledge transmission.
- Invest in stronger collaboration, partnership and linkages between universities, research centres, the public sector and businesses and to create synergies in their activities. They should build on Europe's diverse knowledge infrastructure, including and going beyond universities, and encouraging networking between its different elements.
- Develop people's and organizations' competences to engage and deal with change and complexity and to take risks, including investment in lifelong learning and active labour market policies. Encourage mobility and collaboration and promote individual and institutional ability to change, learn and develop.
- Foster the innovative and creative capacity of individuals, communities and institutions. Support engagement with technology while at the same time recognising the importance of building the capacity of the human mind and strengthening and supporting cultural diversity.
- Improve support for artistic creation as a fundamental tool to improve the understanding of cultural diversity as a catalyst of creativity and strengthen future economic performance and the development of individuals and communities.
- Ensure that creativity and innovation are at the heart of responses aiming to deal with Europe's challenges, including the move to the knowledge society, demographic change, globalisation and climate change. Technology is a key tool, driven by creative and innovative individuals and communities. People need to be supported to develop competences in dealing with present day complexities.
- Fully use and, if necessary, review the potential of EU programmes and funds to support creativity and innovation, while simplifying the administrative procedures and institutions linked to them.