

Thursday 21 August 2008

For immediate use



Edinburgh International Festival and the Festival of Politics host a **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue** event tomorrow, on **Friday 22 August** at the Scottish Parliament.

What does the New Europe mean for Artists and Cultural Policy Makers?

Scottish Parliament, Friday 22 August, 2.30pm – 5.15pm

This year's Edinburgh International Festival explores the nature of borders.

The changing political and geographical borders of Europe mean changes in social, spiritual and cultural relationships. Artists increasingly work and collaborate across international borders, and nations large and small employ culture to support their international ambitions and identity.

The event at the Scottish Parliament on Friday 22 August is chaired by writer and broadcaster James Naughtie, with a key note speech by Linda Fabiani (Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture). The event will explore the topic in two parts.

In part one a panel of political and cultural leaders - Linda Fabiani, Odile Quintin (Director General for Culture & Education, European Commission) and Sir John Grant (former UK permanent Representative to the EU) - explores cultural identity, looking at what these trends mean for European nations and regions, whether cultural identity and national identity coincide. and questions around the interaction of culture and identity for individuals, regions, nation-states and Europe.

Later in the afternoon a panel of policy makers and artists discuss whether national and international arts policies are keeping up with political changes, what responsibilities cultural policy-makers have towards encouraging intercultural dialogue, and whether this movement of artists and work increase access to culture. Nelson Fernandez (Visiting Arts), Sam Jones (Demos, and author of Cultural Diplomacy) and Festival Director Jonathan Mills discuss these questions and explore the practical aids and obstacles to intercultural dialogue.

Jonathan Mills said: Europe is a very different place today than when the Festival was founded in 1947. It is important that we continue to explore what living in Europe means to us as artists, policy makers and citizens. It is particularly appropriate to be holding this event in association with the Festival of Politics, and as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. I look forward to a stimulating and lively discussion.

Keynote speaker Scotland's Culture Minister Linda Fabiani said: "This year's Festivals present us with the opportunity for rich debate around our culture and its power to impact and shape the Europe we live in. Scotland's cultural life is fundamental to our collective national identity, as a reflection of who we are and as an aspiration for what we want to be. As the Scottish Government works to raise our voice in Europe, our distinctive and vibrant culture will play a key role in communicating all that is great about this country.

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For further information and if you would like to attend, please contact Susie Burnet, Edinburgh International Festival press office on +44(0)131 473 2020 or press@eif.co.uk