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New challenges for the circus

European Parliament resolution on new challenges for the circus as part of European culture (2004/2266(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its Resolution of 16 March 1984 on education for children whose parents have no fixed abode¹,
 - having regard to Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 22 May 1989 on school provision for children of occupational travellers²,
 - having regard to Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 22 May 1989 on school provision for gypsy and traveller children³,
 - having regard to the Commission's reports on the implementation of measures envisaged in the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education meeting with the Council, 22nd May 1989 (COM(1996)0494 and COM(1996)0495)
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97 of 9 December 1996 on the protection of species of wild fauna and flora by regulating trade therein⁴,
 - having regard to Council Directive 1999/22/EC of 29 March 1999 relating to the keeping of wild animals in zoos⁵,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 539/2001 of 15 March 2001 listing the third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders and those whose nationals are exempt from that requirement⁶,
 - having regard to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1808/2001 of 30 August 2001⁷ laying down detailed rules concerning the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 338/97,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Culture and Education (A6-0237/2005),
- A. whereas most cultural, education policy, technical and legal aspects of circus activities are regulated at Member State level rather than at Community level,

¹ OJ C 104, 16.4.1984, p. 144.

² OJ C 153, 21.6.1989, p. 1.

³ OJ C 153, 21.6.1989, p. 3.

⁴ OJ L 61, 3.3.1997, p. 1.

⁵ OJ L 94, 9.4.1999, p. 24.

⁶ OJ L 81, 21.3.2001, p. 1.

⁷ OJ L 250, 19.9.2001, p. 1.

- B. whereas by and large there are no specific laws to regulate circus-related matters and, as a rule, the circus is subject to the laws governing other areas such as education, entertainment, infrastructure, transport, equipment, artists, mobility, public gatherings, fire safety and animal protection,
- C. whereas the fact that cross-border mobility is a main feature of circuses highlights the need to look at the status of the circus from a European point of view and to consider EU measures in this area,
- D. whereas owing to the mobility of circuses, the schooling of children in such travelling communities is problematic, since attendance at school must be regular, and whereas it would also be useful to promote and provide support for vocational training centres for circus professions, thus justifying the need for Europe-wide measures,
- E. whereas the integration of these children and their assimilation into European social and professional life must be effectively ensured,
- F. whereas it would be desirable for it to be recognised that the classical circus, including the presentation of animals, forms part of European culture;

Recognition of the circus as part of European culture

- 1. Calls on the Commission to introduce specific measures to ensure that the circus is recognised as part of European culture;
- 2. Urges the Member States who have not already done so to recognise the circus as part of European culture;

School education and vocational training

- 3. Calls on the Commission to draw up a study on the school education of children from travelling communities to bring the abovementioned 1996 report on implementation in the Member States of the Council Resolution of 22 May 1989 up to date and to submit the results of this study to the European Parliament within a year;
- 4. Urges the Commission, together with the organisations representing the parents of these children, to introduce mechanisms for the cooperation of the Member States in order to guarantee and promote an adequate education for children from travelling communities regardless of the Member State in which they happen to be; to this end, it would be useful to prepare a new Council resolution guaranteeing high-quality school education and vocational training for children, young people and adults in travelling communities and recognising and supporting the vocational training offered by circus schools;
- 5. Calls on the Commission, together with the Member States and the organisations representing the parents of these children, to make a commitment to improving the welcome extended to such families and to stepping up the dialogue with school establishments in order to raise parents' awareness of the need to enrol their children in school, with such establishments appointing someone to take charge of this communication and monitoring;
- 6. Calls on the Commission, in connection with the integrated action programme on life-

long learning, to provide the necessary means, inter alia, for pilot projects to determine appropriate models for the schooling of children from travelling communities, notably as regards:

- developing and supporting e-learning and distance learning projects as a component of a comprehensive education initiative for travelling communities;
 - developing concepts for independent/self-reliant learning;
 - developing concepts for school education, notably through the introduction of pedagogical monitoring tools;
 - developing a teacher profile for tutoring children from travelling communities;
 - Europe-wide exchange of information and experience for teaching staff tutoring travelling children;
 - the introduction by the Member States working together with the Commission of a system for the regular assessment of scholastic attainment of children from travelling communities;
 - the establishment of temporary measures to remedy the academic difficulties facing children from travelling communities;
7. Considers it at the same time necessary to provide support to enable a 'service point' to be established to coordinate a network linking all relevant bodies within the Union, and act as a point of contact for travelling communities seeking information on educational and vocational training requirements and opportunities;
8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to carry out an information campaign to guarantee quality assurance in education and vocational training and to ensure that the education and vocational training of children from travelling communities are based on the standards applicable to conventional education and professional-training systems;

Temporary structures

9. Calls on the Commission, following consultations with the European circus community, to create a standardisation mandate for the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN) to prepare a comprehensive set of standards relevant to mobile circus facilities, including finalisation of current work on the Safety Standard for Temporary Structures (such as tents), to facilitate the movement of circuses among the Member States through harmonisation and thereby contribute to the conservation of the classical European circus and public safety;
10. Calls on the Member States to publish in a user-friendly way applicable requirements and then to adjust those requirements once standards are created;

Circus workers: mobility, employment of third country nationals

11. Calls on the Commission to carry out an analysis of the current visa and work permit issuing systems for peripatetic artists and on that basis to draw up a proposal for a European regulation in this area; such a European regulation should:
 - take account of current difficulties in obtaining visas allowing for work permits and their current unreliability;
 - eliminate existing requirements which are hard for artists with short-term contracts to meet (e.g. the requirement to prove a lack of equally-qualified people within the EU);
 - provide the possibility of issuing short-term visas/residence permits valid for up to 12 months, taking due care to avoid any conceivable abuse of such a possibility in order to engage in human trafficking;
12. Considers that it would be desirable in this connection to draw up a uniform and comprehensible guide for the artists and the public administrative bodies concerned, explaining the new provisions;

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13. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission.