A. Key messages and requirements

I. Culture and cultural diversity must be seen as a priority issue in the wider public.
   - Cultural identity and diversity must be made a high priority objective with the same privileges as extending the motorway and rail networks, rescuing the banks, or purchasing new fighter planes. Supporting culture is one of the primary missions of Federal, Cantonal and municipal authorities.

II. In the general media crisis, art publishing that offers far more than just information about cultural events, is shrinking. This hinders public access to culture.
   - Innovative measures should be implemented to stem the disappearance of art publishing.

III. Public museums are starving and suffering in competition with private collectors’ museums. Their insurance budgets eat away the funds available for exhibitions and impede their duty of safeguarding the regional heritage through acquisitions.
   - Federal aid is needed for insurance requirements in the arts without this aid being taken from the fostering funds themselves.

IV. Art in public spaces, but also projects for art and building, suffer from randomness. It is unclear under what conditions art can be placed in public spaces and then be cleared away later.
   - Procedures and rules are required for public art to protect artists but, above all, society.

V. The preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage is in danger in Federalist Switzerland.
   - In order to safeguard the Swiss cultural landscape that is unique in its characteristics and diversity, inventory and statistics is required, as well as a more workable Spatial Planning Act.
   - The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC, must include the conservation of cultural heritage monuments in their mandate.

B. The proposals in detail

I. Cultural diversity should be emphasized in public discourse
Significantly, the principle behind the UNESCO Convention, cultural diversity, should be strengthened between, and in, countries; as an engine for cultural development and identity, it deserves equal rights with the short and medium term objectives of economic growth. Accordingly, more weight should be given to this in the balancing of goods and interests.

I.1. In-depth awareness at the Federal level
Although there is a parliamentary culture group with 72 members, its meetings are poorly attended. There are hardly any cultural statements to be found on the websites of the parliamen-
tarians. Significantly, the statement of the Minister of the Interior and Culture, Mr. Couchepin, in the 2007 report on the draft of the law supporting the arts, says the eligibility rules would not “lead to any cost increase”. This “Couchepin paradigm” should be fought against.

The tight control of funds reflects the growing importance of culture in our society and does not take into account current changes in values. In economically unstable times, the State-supported role of culture becomes more important, as less work requires of each individual enhanced responsibility and an awareness of one’s own identity. This is defined not only through work but also by membership of a social, cultural community. The awareness and tolerance for diversity in these various ideological groups is a crucial peace-building factor. Therefore:

- Cultural identity must be retained as an objective with the same privileges as an extension of the motorway and rail networks, rescuing the banks, or the purchase of new fighter planes. Supporting culture is one of the primary missions of Federal, Cantonal and municipal authorities.
- 300 million, not 30 million, Francs for Pro Helvetia!

I.2 The ‘church steeple view’ is too narrow

With respect to the allocation of funds, the question will always be asked: Is the artist living here and will the effect of support be here? Instead of asking: is a work useful for the local population or the decentralized cultural dissemination? (An example: unlike in Australia, it is not possible for a Swiss gallery to obtain from Pro Helvetia a contribution towards the transport and insurance costs of participating in an art fair in South Korea although it serves to represent Swiss culture abroad.)

- The promotion criteria for cultural dissemination must be reviewed.

I.3. Public cultural and artistic discourse must be stimulated

If the legislative work on the Cultural Promotion Act and its regulations are ever completed, a Cultural Council should be created after the model of the well-established “Round Table” of the cultural organizations managed by Suisseculture. However, such a consultative body of NGOs has been called for several times but a regulation at the legislative level has been rejected by the National Council and Council of States up to now.

- As of 2010, various options will be looked at with respect to establishing a Cultural Council.

II. The structural media crisis should not be laid on the back of cultural reporting.

II.1. Culture and arts publishing is a favourite victim of the structural media crisis of 2009. The
Cultural diversity – more than a slogan

Presidential Conference of Suisseculture said it was extremely concerned about the disappearance of feature pages. “The Art Newspaper” laments the declining production of art books and art criticism. The budget that already forces art programmes into the off-peak times on television has been massively cut in favour of individual event broadcasts that are oriented to the mainstream. The visual arts are especially affected because of the high entry barriers. Symptomatic: The Radio and Television Act 2006 covers films, literature and music as part of the cultural contract – visual arts are mentioned nowhere.

II.2. Changes to the types of text run parallel to the reduction of the specialised art journalists – an endangered species. However, criticism is part of a discussion that reflects the work of art in a public and professional manner. Art criticism shapes art policy, the procurement by public authorities and private collectors. The “tip” has prevailed; the positive or sometimes negative short recommendation in entertainment magazines or in the pages of newspapers. Frequently the “making of” and the portrait of the star are the product of the PR departments, whether he is now called Jeff Koons or Damien Hirst.

As for art publishing, there has been an even clearer market failure of both print and electronic media. Some publications have jumped into the gap like the pan-Switzerland/Europe “Kunstbulletin” published by the Swiss Art Association, the “Swiss Art” published by visarte or regional cultural magazines such as “Das Kulturmagazin” (Central Switzerland), “Artinside” (a special publication of the Basler Zeitung). What is needed is as follows:

- Subsidized subscriptions should be made available for school libraries and teachers’ rooms with the help of the regional school concordats.

- Media diversity should be supported through collective subscriptions to Swiss culture and art magazines for Federal/Cantonal agencies and cultural tourism offices, Swiss representation abroad (embassies) and other institutions.

- Amongst the requests of the Publishers Association of Swiss Newspapers should be examined in greater detail the following: subscribed publications should be exempt from Value Added Tax, subject to lower postal taxes and tax deductions.

The funding of a foundation is worth examining in order to be able to contribute to culture and arts publications so to obtain deeper analysis and critical projects in periodic media, and where project eligibility and the willingness of media editors to publish a project can be shown (as in the example of the New Zealand TV Promotion, 2009). The funds, which the Swiss Press Supplement Service now receives, could be included in such a foundation.

- Models for culture and art publishing should be assessed and a foundation established for their maintenance with an initial amount of 50 million Francs.
III. Art museums and artists should be relieved from the insurance burden

The National Council and the Council of States have approved a version of the Arts Promotion Law, in the context of which the Federal government can allocate grants to museums and collections for operating and project costs, as well as insurance premiums for major exhibitions. Insurance premiums for particularly important collections in public museums have to be included in the operating costs in the Regulations. Furthermore, direct art education by the museums as part of art education should be compensated. (For example: free admission for school classes and a second free admissions for children with an adult.)

- The acquiring of art by museums should be strengthened – by improved funding of the Gottfried-Keller Foundation and the Swiss Federal Art Commission for purchases of Swiss art.
- Full-time artists and other professionals often suffer when commissioned works are cancelled and they fall through the gaps in our social security system. This creates fear and anxiety thus compromising cultural diversity. The divergent approaches of the Parliament in the new Cultural Promotion Act should be harmonized and implemented.

IV. Procedures should be defined for art in public places

In most urban areas (“space design”) but also in rural transport renovations (“roundabout art”), there is an opportunity for artistic presentations. Often it is part of renovation potential – rather than traditional sculptures by innovative interventions (“contextual art”). Existing works have to be dealt with respect, but without taboo. The city of Zurich has set up a commission establishing such criteria. With the help of such bodies, municipal or Cantonal cultural representatives could seek meaningful coordination that would have to include copyright and cultural aspects. (For example: “Expiration Date” and reassessment of a site-specific character after twenty years; rules for dealing with “discarded” works.) There are similar questions with respect to “art and building” projects. For publicly commissioned works, local interests are often more heavily weighted than are variety and quality. (For example: uniform competitive procedures in accordance with model regulations, extension of the well-established compulsory Federal and Cantonal art and building requirements to private construction projects of more than CHF 20 million.) A number of measures should be examined:

- Appeal to Federal and Cantonal cultural officials, inclusion of sia (Swiss Association of Architects and Engineers) – model procurement, competition rules –, and eth (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich), Werkbund (Work Federation of Architects, Artists, and Builders), homeowners association, establishment of a competence and counselling centre; involvement of experts at a community level with respect to public art issue; for example, to stop a further flood of unqualified “roundabout art” efforts.
V. Secure the tangible and intangible cultural heritage in its diversity.

V.1. International dimension

The UNESCO Convention also extends cultural diversity to an object protected by international law. Thus, Switzerland is encouraged to respect its aims even in foreign policy and external economic activities. (For example: no export risk guarantees should be granted for projects forcibly inundating irreplaceable cultural goods or displacing ethnic minorities.) It is therefore not enough for the Confederation in its activity to support without commitment, “local culture” through the SDC. The agency should also include the safeguarding of cultural heritage.

V.2. National dimension

Only what is known can be legally recognized, promoted and protected. The statistical basis for culture and art industry in Switzerland is underdeveloped. For example, between 20 and 50 percent of small businesses and enterprises of the creative industries are not included in the statistics. Accordingly, knowledge about the art and design field is unreliable. Culture statistics must fully take into account the cultural diversity of contemporary art and cultural heritage.

Cultural diversity also means respect for materials. (For example: no plastic windows in buildings worthy of protection for reasons of economy; no energy renovations that are inconsistent with the actual site or building worthy of protection.)

Cultural diversity manifests itself in the regions with their regional characteristics, in the typical regional architecture, and in the specifically trained craft and environmental techniques (agricultural knowledge). The Swiss cultural landscape is unique in its diversity and distinction. Its integrity is of the highest importance for national cohesion and tourism.

It is in the regional cultural landscapes that the cultural characteristics of each kind (dialect, building culture, theatrical approach, art, etc.) are crystallized which, together, represent the diversity. They need sustainable conservation and careful maintenance.

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- This proposed partial revision of the Spatial Planning Act (RPG) should be immediately taken in hand in order to halt the continuing urban sprawl, even if the revision failed recently. The aim of this revision should be to create a handier law that takes into account cultural diversity and to strengthen the role of the Federal government in regional planning, especially with respect to the Cantonal master plans.

Art and education – a project of the Swiss Commission for UNESCO – should not be sacrificed to the trend for accelerated natural sciences’ loading of the curricula.

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- Passive and active art education belongs in the curricula; art museums have to be included.