

Your excellencies, distinguished  
guests,

On behalf of the Dutch Ministry of  
Education, Culture and Science, I  
would like to say a few words.

In 2014 the Netherlands hosted the  
6th ASEM meeting of cultural  
ministers in Rotterdam. As a leading  
theme, we choose the Creative  
Industries, because it is such a vital  
part of the Asian and European  
Cultural sectors.

The Rotterdam meeting reinforced the conviction that our economies are becoming more cultural in nature and that the economic and social significance of creativity is growing. That meeting also showed that the creative industries can act as a catalyst in enhancing the cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe. So the Netherlands is of course very pleased that the creative industries has stayed on the agenda for the 7<sup>th</sup> ASEM meeting of culture ministers here in Gwangju.

The start of the 21st century has required Asia and Europe to employ development strategies in order to foster human creative potential which can respond to the cultural, economic, social and technological shifts taking place.

Globalisation and digitisation has radically changed the way we produce, distribute and consume culture. It has blurred traditional borders and has greatly enhanced the working area of artists and designers. Also reaching new audiences and new consumers is

more easy. Internet and social media make it possible to disseminate cultural offerings in a superfast way. All these developments give way to new forms of cooperation between artists, designers and companies working in the field of the creative industry.

There is a growing understanding both in Europe and Asia about the social and economic relevance of the creative industries, and the contribution that artists and designers could have in providing new insights and new solutions for

societal and economic challenges.

For example healthy aging,  
sustainability and healthcare.

At the same time we ASEM Culture Ministers acknowledge the challenges faced by many countries and therefore placed the creative industries on the policy agenda. But how to create links between creative entrepreneurs in the cultural sector itself and between entrepreneurs in creative and 'non-creative' sectors? How to broker opportunities for education and science to interact with creative industries? And how to

make these developments reinforce initiatives at regional and city level reciprocally?

As it is a subject that is close to my heart, I would like to share some observations about the creative industries and government policy regarding the creative industries over the last 10 years.

The creative industries is characterised not only by innovative products and services with a cultural and economic value, but also by its working methods.

A creative entrepreneur will take the needs of the consumer as a starting point. He will use the powers of imagination and prototyping to make the end result of a product tangible to the public, already in the early phases of its development. It is this approach that makes it possible for the creative industries to tackle complex issues and to come up with unexpected, innovative solutions. And it's one of the reasons why the market is looking at creative industries to provide creative solutions for societal problems.

There is great artistry and craftsmanship in the creative industries, throughout the world. Ranging from spectacular architecture to magnificent fashion and from jaw dropping films to pop sensations, this sector knows how to entice it's audience.

Each of our countries has it's own success story. For the Netherlands it's Dutch Design. I mention as an example the Dutch clothing manufacturer G-STAR, that has developed a clothing line with

Pharrell Williams, with clothes made from plastic waste in the sea. For Korea it's the exciting K-pop.

But the dynamics of the sector also carry a risk. For example in a country like the Netherlands, the number of new companies has risen much more sharply than the amount of people working in the creative industries. This downsizing in scale tends to lead to a loss in productivity and a loss in added value. As a result the creative entrepreneur often lacks the time and the financial resources to develop a sustainable business

model. This is compounded by the fact that traditional financial instruments are often not suitable for creative entrepreneurs.

In a policy paper that the ministry for culture recently submitted to parliament, a number of areas were identified where government support can be instrumental in supporting the creative industries.

One area is education. For an industry that relies on creativity, innovation is essential. That calls for a strong emphasis on personal

development and permanent, life long, learning. The demand for responsive and creative professionals requires that we look at our educational system. It is our educational system that needs to prepare us for the future. Not only by providing the knowledge and skills that we currently know, but also by providing the capacity to develop new ways of thinking and the ability to adopt to new, at present unforeseen, changes in our environment. I see in the Netherlands and many other countries promising signs that we

are moving in the right direction. In the field of cultural education as well as in technology education. These are fields of education where teamwork, free expression, working with your hands and a critical mind set are important ingredients.

Another area that deserves special attention is craftsmanship.

Next to each designer stands a craftsman who can work side by side with the creative entrepreneur to develop his or her ideas and who is able to translate these ideas into practical solutions and products. It is

important to continue to train these craftsman in our countries and to treasure and safeguard traditional crafts that are still useful and relevant for the creative industries of today and the future.

And finally research. One the most important bottlenecks for a creative entrepreneur is the inability to invest in research. A lot of creative industries are too small and lack the financial means for research. At the same time the type of research that can be done in the creative industries, is of tremendous value to

other sectors. Think, for instance, about what smart design can do to help elderly people to keep their independence with especially designed kitchens and bathrooms or special housing designed for three generations living together. To make it worthwhile and relevant for small and medium sized companies to participate in long term research, government can invest in private/public research programmes where creative industries, big industrial sectors and knowledge institutes all cooperate in the kind of research that benefits the whole

society like for example zero energy housing; virtual reality healthcare.

The ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting provides an exceptional opportunity to exchange ideas on how to support cooperation between the Asian and European cultural and creative sectors. And I believe South Korea is an excellent environment to meet each other in this context. With its rich culture and heritage, from beautiful temples to the greatly innovative Digital Media City in Seoul.

I believe that with South Korea as host, we have a very inspiring 7th Culture Ministers Meeting.

Thank you.