

Final report and recommendations to the Cultural Affairs Committee on improving the conditions to support the mobility of artists and culture professionals

June 2010

Removing obstacles to mobility of artists and cultural professionals has been included among the five priority areas for action in the Culture Work Plan 2008-2010.

The final report of the expert working group on mobility of culture professionals is available now at the URL http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1569_en.htm

This report will feed into discussions by the Cultural Affairs Committee of the future Council Workplan on Culture for 2011 onwards.

The report includes a background introduction and recommendations to Member States, the European Commission and to the culture sector to

- improve information service on mobility in the culture field;
- develop programmes and schemes to support mobility;
- install and improve intermediary functions;
- address visa issues;
- take initiatives on measuring mobility.

The document also describes the working process and proposes some issues to be (further) explored: social security coordination; training and capacity building; taxes and the environmental footprint of culture mobility.

The "Expert Working Group on Improving the Conditions for the Mobility of Artists and Professionals in the Cultural Field" was set up by the Council on 1 March 2008 as one of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) working groups of experts nominated by Member States to consider, report and make recommendations (including in the form of validating best practices, making proposals for cooperation initiatives between Member States or at EC level and for elements of methodology to evaluate progress), as appropriate, on the following areas:

- mapping the existing practices in each Member State in order to make it possible to suggest ways of improving the regulatory conditions and related administrative processes for mobility,
- suggesting solutions at the national and Community levels regarding the inclusion of mobility (in and outside Europe) in the professional training curricula of artists and culture professionals,
- ensuring the collection of and access to the relevant information on the conditions for mobility in Europe (tax, social, entry and residence conditions in different Member States),

- reinforcing regional, national and Community-level support mechanisms for mobility and ensuring their complementarity.

22 Member States expressed their interest to work together on this issue. Experts from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Slovenia, United Kingdom met regularly to progress towards these objectives.

The OMC group on mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field defined five priority areas as a general framework for organizing their work:

1. Improved information, advice and guidance
2. Development of programmes and support schemes promoting mobility
3. Mobility professionals and intermediaries in different sectors of culture
4. Removing obstacles to mobility relating to legislation, rules and administrative practices
5. Improving statistics on mobility in the European Union

A sixth item on training and capacity building occurred regularly in the discussions but was not treated in an in-depth and structured way and is proposed for follow-up.

The following pages contain an Executive Summary of the Final Report.

Introduction

For multiple reasons the mobility of artists and culture professionals¹ in Europe is seen as a positive phenomenon which deserves to be actively promoted by the European Union and the Member States. Removing obstacles to mobility of artists and culture professionals relating to legislation, rules and practices in different administrative sectors such as taxation, social security and visa policies, is usually not in the remit of the culture authorities at national or EU levels. However, it is vital to send clear political signals to other administrative sectors about identified needs to change or adjust present practices on the grounds of Article 167.4 of the Lisbon Treaty, which stipulates that the European Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties.

The Expert working group on culture mobility was charged with a broad and complex task. The work benefited greatly from "external" input.

Recommendations

The expert working group wanted to stress that culture policies supporting and promoting the arts and cultural activities at large, lay the basis for mobility.

The group highlighted three transversal issues forming a backdrop to all recommendations:

- The professional status of artists is a crucial question in relation to their mobility;
- The existing imbalances - East-West imbalances (in Europe) and North-South imbalances (globally) – resulting in fewer culture professionals being mobile in and to these areas, need to be addressed.
- Information sharing on new initiatives and regulations is often organized vertically e.g. within a competence or remit, but rarely horizontally. The diverse culture sector is self-organized in disciplines with their own specific demands and needs. Breaking down these barriers and enhancing information sharing is a priority.

The OMC working group on mobility of artists and culture professionals recommended measures

- to improve information service on mobility in the cultural field;
- to develop programmes and schemes to support mobility;
- to install and improve intermediary functions;
- to address visa issues;
- to take initiatives on measuring mobility.

1. Improve information service on mobility in the cultural field

At this point information to support the mobility of culture professionals is not responding to the needs. Various information systems - initiated by different stakeholders at different levels – do exist, but information remains too general and/or fragmented. The proposed Mobility Information Services are primary services providing relevant, reliable, accurate and regularly updated information.

¹ By "artists and culture professionals" we indicate all artistic, managerial, logistic, communication and other persons working professionally in the culture sector as well as artistic professions exercised in other sectors.

The main objectives of the recommendations are:

- To make accurate mobility information accessible and usable for a specified target group all over Europe, namely artists & culture professionals who are qualified as highly mobile workers;
- To meet the needs for development and employment of persons working in the culture sector and foster the positive effects and impacts of culture mobility on individual, organizational and societal levels.

2. Develop programmes and schemes to support mobility

The OMC group reached a wide agreement on a certain type of organisations that need funding opportunities. They are called "small-scaled" and were described as more informal, less institutionalized work associations and organizations. In this context "small" is referring to a type of working methodology: dynamic, short term, less red tape, network-like relationships, peer-learning and vocational training, experimental, exciting, innovative, influential, etc.

The main objectives of these proposals are to:

- Strengthen the position of emerging, small-scale, often less formalised arts and cultural initiatives in support programmes and schemes;
- Minimize the imbalances in opportunities between regions within Europe, especially between East and West as well as globally between North and South;
- Stimulate the participation of arts initiatives, inter alia residencies and artists' initiatives, from third countries in two-way exchange programs.

3. Install and improve intermediary functions

It is very difficult to define the group of culture professionals called "intermediaries". A fundamental interface function is the common denominator and implies high managerial and networking skills. The working group observed a diversity of actors in this interface function: a market of commercial private professions/ enterprises active in this field, public authorities' initiatives and a range of granted or mixed initiatives in some countries.

The main objectives of the following recommendations are:

- To better understand the role of intermediaries and enhance their visibility and recognition;
- To get a better picture of the needs of the culture sector and the work of intermediaries and to identify those specialised in core issues fostering mobility;
- To support intermediaries in their international activities as they have a multiplier effect on mobility of the culture and artistic field.

4. Addressing visa issues

The main objectives of these recommendations are:

- To emphasize the practical importance of visa issues for the mobility of artists and culture professionals and to adjust implementation processes where needed;
- To recognize the urgent need for implementing a monitoring process;
- To point out the need for close cooperation between culture and visa authorities at all levels;
- To raise awareness of the implications of the new Visa Code for the culture sector and the participation of the sector in the monitoring process.

5. Take initiatives on measuring mobility

The OMC working group did not recommend the launching of an exhaustive procedure for measuring artistic mobility throughout the European Union but gave priority to a pragmatic and simple approach. The collected data, without being exhaustive, will constitute an indicator base.

The main long-term objectives of the following recommendations are:

- To make better use of existing bodies and instruments, e.g. Eurostat and national statistical institutes or observation posts, to measure mobility even when the data obtained are incomplete and restricted;
- To make better use of existing data available in culture organizations at national level;
- To engage the culture sector in the process of data collection and sharing;
- To start collecting data at EU level and analysing mobility flows, complemented by a qualitative approach to measuring mobility of artists & culture professionals.

Follow-up

- Visibility and sustainability of project results and outcomes: The expert working group calls on Member States, the European Commission and the culture sector, to take up the results from relevant pilot projects and build upon them as necessary.

- Issues to be further explored: Social Security Coordination; Training and capacity building; Taxes; Environmental footprint of culture mobility

List of recommendations

1. Improve information service on mobility in the cultural field

Recommendation 1- to the Member States and the European Commission

Member States, in cooperation with the European Commission, should establish and finance national mobility information services for artists and culture professionals and build a network of these services. In this network activity is critical on the Member State and the European level.

Member States should make a strong political and financial commitment to the implementation of the Mobility Information Services, as the main focus of follow-up will be placed on the national, or in some cases regional level. The main financial responsibility lies at national and regional levels.

Member States should join the network of Mobility Information Services by using the organisational structure/s considered most appropriate in their own context.

Member States should ensure that their Mobility Information Service cooperates with similar information services in (all) the other Member States.

Recommendation 2 - to the Member States

Member States should provide the necessary conditions to ensure that their Mobility Information Service for artists & culture professionals cooperates

- in strategic partnerships with existing services at national level to gather and build up information provision on national regulations and procedures,
- with authorities and culture operators at EU-level and at national level.

Mobility Information Services for artists & culture professionals also should collect the data on mobility in the culture field that they build up whilst providing the service.

Recommendation 3 - to the Member States and to the European Commission

Member States should agree upon guidelines for Mobility Information Services for artists & culture professionals, including common minimum standard of quality information service at national level.

The Commission is requested to establish a working group of experts to concretise further the guidelines on information topics, quality standards, strategic partnerships and communication. This elaborated draft protocol/agreement should then be presented to the Cultural Affairs Committee.

Recommendation 4 - to the European Commission

The Commission should explore the possibilities to co-finance the start-up and maintenance of the network of Mobility Information Services for artists and culture professionals in the current Culture Programme and incorporate the support into its proposal for the future Culture Programme.

Recommendation 5 on evaluation and monitoring – to the Member States, the European Commission and the culture sector

Member States and the Commission should monitor and evaluate regularly the Mobility Information Services and their network.

The culture sector and its various actors are invited to cooperate in setting up and supporting the activities of the network of Mobility Information Services for example to clarify the needs, to build up capacity and to provide feedback.

2. Develop programmes and schemes to support mobility

Recommendation 1 – to the Member States and the European Commission

The European Commission and Member States should screen and assess their mobility support programmes and schemes in order to identify barriers and problems to small-scale culture operators and their projects or networks regarding possibilities to benefit from these programmes and schemes.

The European Commission will be requested to create a group of field experts to analyse and assess the results of the screening of the support schemes and to translate these findings into concrete adjustments to the criteria and procedures of the support schemes and programmes.

The European Commission and Member States should earmark a budget for small-scale or less institutionalised cultural operators and their projects, including projects in which artists and cultural practitioners from third countries actively participate.

In preparing the support programmes on EU and Member States level the Nordic-Baltic model should be closely looked at as it includes small-scale projects and individual artists.

The European Commission support schemes on Lifelong Learning, like the Grundtvig Programme in the field of adult education, should be promoted in the culture sector and adjusted to better serve its needs.

Recommendation 2 – to the European Commission

Small-scale grants should be available in short-term application procedures and administered in a non-bureaucratic and decentralized way, preferably (partly) beforehand.

Recommendation 3 – to the Member States and the European Commission

The European Commission and the Member States should initiate funding for the development of professional infrastructures and schemes in Eastern and Southern Europe in order to create networks involving start-up initiatives and to provide support for future professionals.

Recommendation 4 - to the culture sector

The culture sector and its various actors are invited to combat and lessen mobility imbalances at grassroots level and to raise awareness of the ecological footprint caused by mobility.

Recommendation 5 on evaluation and monitoring – to The Member States, the European Commission and the culture sector

The European Commission, Member States and the culture sector should support the measurement (quantitative and qualitative) of the approach that gives more opportunities to small-scale initiatives.

3. Install and improve intermediary functions

Recommendation 1 – to the Member States and the European Commission

Member States and the European Commission should recognize the role and the importance of intermediary functions in their culture policy and in the promotion of culture mobility.

Financial strands related to mobility of artists and culture professionals should be accessible to intermediaries.

Recommendation 2 – to the culture sector

The culture sector (e.g. networks of intermediary organizations, interest organisations) with the support of the European Commission and interested Member States should organise a seminar for intermediaries in order to allow them to meet and present their needs.

Recommendation 3 – to the European Commission

The European Commission should launch an exploratory study mapping the jobs, functions and services of intermediaries and proposing options for their organisation and different forms of facilitating their activities.

4. Addressing visa issues

Recommendation 1 - to the Member States and the European Commission

The Member States and the European Commission should take all issues related to long and short stay visas duly into account in integrating and strengthening the cultural dimension in external relations of the European Union.

Member States and the European Commission should effectively monitor visa policies and practices in the cultural field.

The European Commission and Member States should strive to enhance cooperation in visa issues with European non-Schengen countries as regards artists and other culture professionals.

Recommendation 2 - to the Member States

The Member States should closely follow and adjust the implementation of the Blue Card Directive from the perspective of the specific needs and concerns of the cultural sector.

Recommendation 3 - to the Member States

The Member States should promote close cooperation between culture and visa authorities at all levels and especially within embassies on implementing the Visa Code.

The Member States should organise training for the consular staff regarding the specific concerns of artists and other culture professionals.

The Member States should see to it that the national Mobility Information Services will from the outset serve artists and other cultural professionals as regards visa issues.

Recommendation 4 - to the culture sector

The culture sector should closely follow the application of the Visa Code and the use of the Handbook in the cultural field and actively contribute to the monitoring process.

5. Take initiatives on measuring mobility

Recommendation 1 – to the Member States and the European Commission

Eurostat and the national statistical institutes should be aware of the relevance of common criteria for definition and a more accurate identification of culture and artistic professions among the data on employment and economic migration.

The Member States and the Commission should invite the ESSnet-culture (the European Statistical Systems Network Project on Culture Statistics Development), to take the need for improving culture mobility statistics duly into account in its work.

Recommendation 2 – to the Member States

Member States should set up or improve the collection of existing data at national level for example by:

- soliciting public or/and semi public bodies directly responsible for mobility to collect and share data at Community and international level.
- setting up in each country a way to extract each year the number of non-national cultural productions hosted/welcomed by using data from a sufficiently broad and representative group of cultural institutions.
- tracking down, as a source of statistical data, the national origin of collected rights in relation to interpretations/performances, creations, revivals, translations related to artists' tours and co-productions. The sales of art works on the art market could be included.

Recommendation 3 – to the culture sector

The culture sector should actively take part in and contribute to the collecting of data especially in the frame of the proposed "light" methods or practical approach, e.g. by reporting to existing structures/structures put in place (inter alia) to collect data on mobility of artists & culture professionals.

Recommendation 4 – to the Member States, the European Commission and the culture sector

All stakeholders are invited to start collecting data at EU level and analysing mobility flows. To complement this quantitative data a qualitative approach in measuring mobility should be developed.

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