

The Wallace Collection is a National Museum and has, as such, an educational mission but it is not an educational organisation directly affected and supported by the relevant European programmes. I am rather writing with observations from an employer's perspective.

As a National Museum, we are regularly looking for highly qualified candidates for specialised, often academic jobs. The museum sector is reliant on excellence, expertise and on a high degree of inter-cultural literacy and experience. We feel that British candidates often do not bring the desired full set of skills, and that we are considerably benefitting from the open access to the EU labour market. This is particularly true for Curatorial, Research and Conservation Departments. We have repeatedly hired curators, conservators, curatorial assistants and research assistants from other European countries who make important contributions to the museum's research profile, skill set and activities. Two of our best British appointments have taken part in ERASMUS and in European research exchanges.

The two core skills that do not always exist to a satisfying degree are:

- Language skills
- The intimate and inside knowledge of another culture with its own language

Both are crucial for research, cultural understanding and analysis required for the academic activities of the museum, but also for the international collaborations and negotiations museums are regularly involved in. Our international partnerships can be much more powerful, when both sides understand each other in wider cultural terms.

I am writing the above to evoke why an increasing importance of European programmes in the training of British students and a strong presence of their European counterparts in the country is highly desirable for us. Programmes that are organised within the EU have the great advantage of being open, multilateral, easy to use and international. They involve large numbers of potential partners to support very different interests and careers. The high degree of compatibility among EU degrees facilitates study abroad and the resulting immersive experience. The existing programmes are very important for the qualification of British students (and for the understanding of Britain by foreign students). At present, these programmes are not sufficiently widely known and information given by British institutions is occasionally patchy. I strongly feel that these programmes have to be expanded and that a more active PR has to be developed around them as well as, more generally, around the benefits of studying abroad in a non-English speaking environment. A better use of EU programmes and opportunities could be very helpful to produce more fully qualified British candidates and make it easier for a National museum to hire them.

Many of the competences that we are looking for today are language based and require experiences in different cultures. I would strongly urge that the UK takes a more active part in European exchange programmes like ERASMUS+ that are highly beneficial and often produce successful careers and candidates.

I hope that some of these remarks might be helpful. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have further questions.

With best wishes,

Dr Christoph Martin Vogtherr