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Wednesday 3 July 2013

Department for Culture, Media & Sport  
4th Floor  
100 Parliament Street,  
London SW1A 2BQ

Dear Sirs,

**Review of the Balance of Competencies**

Thank you for including us in the Balance of Competencies review. Our responses to the Culture questions are attached overleaf.

We shall look forward to the findings of the review.

Yours faithfully

Simon Mundy  
Chairman

Encs: 1

## Culture Questions

***How important is EU funding to the UK Cultural sector? And how beneficial to the UK is the EU's focus on a shared cultural heritage?***

EU funding under the Culture programmes has to be for activities that are not normally paid for by a Member State, therefore direct grant EU funding is a small part of any arts organisation's budget. However, the exceptions to this are the EU music organisations based in the UK. It needs to be forcibly pointed out that Britain hosts all of the largest and best known classical music training institutions: the EU Youth Orchestra (EYO), Baroque Orchestra (EUBO) and Opera Academy. These receive no, or very little, national money and are heavily dependent on grants from the Commission. The EU Media Programme has also been important for the British Film Institute and independent producers.

Indirectly, the contribution the EU makes to supporting professional networks has, in the last twenty years, revolutionised the ability of UK arts organisations to play an important collaborative role with colleagues in other countries. Networks like IETM-the international network for contemporary performing arts, the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA), Culture Action Europe, the European Festivals Association and the European Conservatoires Association have allowed British organisations to expand their ambitions and influence hugely.

Other EU programmes of importance are particularly those available to local authorities for development of facilities, skills, training, education and business.

***Are EU cultural programmes effective and how can they be improved?***

They are effective up to a point. Inevitably the axiom applies that the smaller the amount of money, the more restrictive the application criteria. The 7 cents per citizen per year the EU devotes to culture means that the competition for money is so fierce that applying can be a destructively exhausting process. This is compounded by the accounting procedures put in place (largely at the insistence of the UK) which mean that compliance is discouragingly onerous for small arts organisations. A more relaxed attitude would both lower the Commission's workload and enable far more flexibility in the projects funded.

Were the EU able to devote 70 cents per citizen per year to cultural activity, the benefits to the UK would change the nature of the ability of the arts to collaborate internationally. However this aspiration has consistently been blocked by a small group of Member States, in which the UK is

depressingly prominent.

## General Questions

***What evidence is there that EU action in the areas of Culture, Tourism and/or Sport benefits or disadvantages the UK?***

This is not our area of expertise.

***Do you think the EU should do more, or less in relation to Culture, Tourism and Sport, and why?***

The EU should do much more for cultural operators. Their ability to take advantage of the mobility that the single market offers is constrained by the disparity in the support available to culture and other industries (for example agriculture and manufacturing).

***What are the benefits or disadvantages of directing funding through the EU rather than national arrangements?***

Since the EU cultural budget ONLY funds activity that national budgets do not, the benefits are clear. In the past the UK government, through organisations like the British Council, Visiting Arts and the DTI, made significant contributions to British international collaboration but only on the basis of bilateral, rather than multilateral, relationships with selected favoured nations. Since the arts regard coproduction in much broader and more flexible terms, such a basis is severely constraining and outdated. In any case, the funding to these bodies has been consistently eroded (and in the case of Visiting Arts abolished) and devoted to other sectors, for example language teaching and helping institutions in developing countries. In the near future there is little prospect of this changing. There is therefore no realistic alternative to EU programmes and certainly no appetite in the Treasury to allow our funding institutions to take on a similar task with new money.

***Have you noticed any change in EU activity or emphasis since the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon and is this welcome?***

Yes. The development of the Commission's mechanisms for cultural co-operation support are now more efficient and regarded as closer to the heart of the EU's Mission. The focus on growth in the Lisbon Agenda has emphasised the contribution the creative and wider cultural sector can and does make to European economies. As one of the few areas where there is both labour mobility and cross-border collaboration on a large scale, the potential is considerable.



***What other areas of EU competence or activity impact on your sector and how?***

Rural development, education (particularly the ERASMUS programme), the External Action Service, the removal of labour mobility restrictions, EU Working Time Directive.

***What international bodies or arrangements are important to your sector beyond the EU?***

UNESCO, ILO, WTO, WIPO, Council of Europe; however, none of these devote the resources to cultural sector co-operation that the EU does.

It is a great relief that culture has been excluded from the US-EU free trade agreement. Had it not been, many of Europe's cultural support mechanisms could have been endangered.

***How could the EU co-ordinate its activity in these areas of competence to greater effect?***

As with national governments, the problems do not lie so much within the office of the Commissioner for Culture. Most difficulties are caused by other offices failing to observe the treaty clause requiring them to take account of the effect of all legislation and actions on culture. However, the defensive attitudes of Member States, which regard culture as 'national' in a way that cultural operators (especially artists) do not, are more obstructive.