

Review of the Balance of Competences between the United Kingdom and the European Union

Arts Council England response



July 2013

Arts Council England is the lead body charged with developing the arts, museums and libraries in England. Our mission is Great Art for Everyone. We aim to deliver this by championing, developing and investing in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives.

Responses to the consultation questions relating to Culture:

1. How important is EU funding to the UK cultural sector?

EU funding is extremely important to the UK's cultural sector. Over the past decade, UK arts organisations have had a high success rate with applications to the Culture programme. In 2010/11, the UK had the 'highest number of successful projects of any applicant country in the most popular strand'.¹ EU Culture funding has encouraged transnational cooperation for cultural institutions, opportunities for artists to travel and wider distribution of exhibitions, performances and festivals.

The UK cultural sector has also been successful in accessing structural funds. From 2000 – 2006, 1200 projects were supported with funds totalling in excess of 400 million euros.² The 2009 EU Year of Creativity and Innovation brought a greater acknowledgement within the EU that investment in arts, culture and creative industries are vital to socio-economic development. Arts Council England is committed to realising culture's contribution to growth and to working with partners at local, national and international levels to achieve this. We have a track record of successfully matching our funding with European monies and we hope to build on this in partnership with LEPs as they seek to distribute EU Structural and Investment funds in future.

At a time of austerity, EU funding represents an opportunity substantially to augment funding at a national level.

2. How beneficial to the UK is the EU's focus on a shared cultural heritage?

The EU focus on a shared cultural heritage is beneficial to the UK in promoting cultural dialogue, exchange of knowledge and the promotion of creativity, both at European and more local levels. Arts Council England now has a much larger cultural footprint, having

¹ UK Cultural Contact Point, Visiting Arts: <http://www.visitingarts.org.uk/home/>

² EUCLID, 'Culture Delivers' report

taken on responsibility for museums and libraries. The sharing of skills, knowledge and leadership in **looking after** national institutions and providing learning opportunities for all are areas in which we see great advantage in being able to cooperate with international partners. Closer cooperation by the four Arts Councils based in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is taken forward by the work of the Cultural Diplomacy Group. The focus on our common heritage and aspirations provides a valuable meeting point for joint working on, for example, the selection of the new Cultural Contact Point from 2014 onwards. Arts Council England has also provided £750,000 funding towards an exciting programme of performances and installations as part of this year's City of Culture celebrations in Derry-Londonderry.

The new Creative Europe programme has also identified the challenge posed for artists and arts practice by the highly fragmented nature of the market for works of art. Arts Council England's work alongside the British Council on the Artists International Development Fund seeks to support the exchange of work, ideas and people and bring together artists from across the globe. The EU's commitment under the Treaty of Lisbon to 'respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and [to] ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' can only be strengthened by Creative Europe's aspiration to support transnational actions which will make cultural and creative products more widely visible and accessible across Europe.

3. Are EU Cultural programmes effective and how can they be improved?

EU Cultural programmes have been effective in investing in high quality arts and culture in England. The new EU programme, Creative Europe, will bring together previously fragmented programmes into three main strands: MEDIA, Culture and a trans-sectoral strand for all cultural and creative industries. The merging of these strands should be a more effective mechanism for delivery, reflecting the increasingly cross-sectoral approach of UK-based arts organisations to creativity, new technology and business. How the new system will work in practice remains to be seen but a more streamlined approach can only be of benefit to cultural organisations here. Better opportunities to benchmark data, share learning and stripped-down reporting requirements would result in improvements to evaluation and advocacy work and lighten the administrative burden on UK arts organisations which often operate at a small staffing scale. The direct links from the new programme through to the Europe 2020 economic strategy should not, however, overshadow the continued societal and cultural value that international artistic exchange brings.

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

Between 2007-11, more than 200 UK participants in 176 transnational projects received funding from the EU Culture programme. The Culture programme has supported a wealth of new artistic work which would not otherwise have been created. The opportunities provided by EU funding have facilitated partnerships across national boundaries which have encouraged the valuable exchange of knowledge, skills, work and ideas, as well as expanding audiences.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and Arts Council England's role in the Cultural Olympiad have proved the power of nation-state showcasing. In partnership with the British Council ACE is building on this legacy, in Brazil, in the run-up to Rio in 2016, and in India with a focus on 2017/18. These international exchanges and showcases are invaluable in aiding the UK's cultural sector - a key driver for economic growth, particularly tourism. EU funding is a vital part of our cultural ecology, without which many international partnerships and activities would not have been initiated or enabled to flourish.

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

There are many important opportunities for growth within the European cultural sector and a dedicated programme helps to facilitate the partnerships which will deliver it. Recent reports have suggested that the creative and cultural industries have been fairly resilient in the economic downturn. However, in a time of continuing economic austerity, it is vital to secure funding for these industries via Creative Europe. Domestic governments alone cannot provide funding at the scale of investment needed to enable UK and European cultural organisations to compete with their rivals in faster-growing international economies such as China and India. Arts Council's recent work with the British Council in the BRIC territories is another valuable route for supporting our world-class artists to take their work to new markets and to form new partnerships. Arts Council England is committed to promoting an enterprising and mixed-economy model and the Creative Europe programme, with its foregrounding of the Europe 2020 strategy for job and sustainable growth, is an important part in helping us to deliver on this vision.

Innovative, risk-taking work is often created by emerging artists and smaller-scale organisations. Without opportunities to join together at a larger, pan-national scale, this work would not reach wider audiences and bigger markets, limiting both its potential and its impact. Greater visibility for cultural products can best be achieved by greater international cooperation. These needs must, of course, continue to be balanced, as they are at present, with the promotion and protection of diversity of cultural expression in individual member states.

It is important to emphasise the value of the Arts Council's role as the policy and funding body for the arts, museums and libraries in England. Our ten year strategy – *Achieving Great Art for Everyone* – is the national framework within which we invest public funds in artists, audiences, readers and participants in England. While that strategy has an international dimension, the predominating focus is on serving the English public. We are committed to maximising the opportunities on offer in Creative Europe 2014, with the understanding that national funding in England, from the DCMS, is the primary investment tool at our disposal to realise our vision.

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

Through our memorandum of understanding with the British Council, we are building a range of contacts with cultural bodies beyond the EU, particularly focused in joint-working in the BRIC territories of Brazil and India to date.

We have a key role within the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA), currently Chaired by our Chief Executive Alan Davey. We hope to work particularly closely in future with our equivalent bodies in other countries and for instance have recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Arts Council of Chile. We are also closely involved with the International Society for the Performing Arts (ISPA). Through our membership of such bodies, we seek to advocate for the role of the arts in influencing international understanding and note the importance of negotiating such 'soft power' relationships both within the EU and beyond.