



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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balanceofcompetences@culture.gsi.gov.uk

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Dear Sir

UK – EU Balance of Competences review – Culture

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the review. I am responding on behalf of the Minister for Culture and Sport. Our Department for Economy, Science and Transport will be responding under separate cover in respect of tourism.

Overall, the Welsh Government welcomes the opportunities that the various European programmes afford to our cultural organisations. The opportunities that these programmes provide facilitates engagement and participation on the European stage.

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 including Structural Funds, the Media and Culture programmes and the wide range of other EU funding programmes such as Lifelong Learning, Youth in Action etc. is significant to the cultural sector in Wales. Projects with a cultural dimension can and do contribute to meeting a variety of social, educational and economic goals.

In many cases the availability of structural funding was the catalyst for a project's inception and development. Examples of the importance of the Structural Funds to the sector include the creation of the Mwldan complex in Cardigan, Aberystwyth Arts Centre and the Galeri in Caernarfon; adding to the Welsh cultural infrastructure which has had and continues to have cultural, social and economic benefit. The economic impact of Aberystwyth Arts Centre was highlighted in the influential KEA report on *The Economic Impact of Culture in*

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Europe (2006, p.183). Similarly, the *Assessment of the economic, cultural and social impact of Galeri Caernarfon* (2010) showed that the annual economic impact generated by Galeri is almost £1.3m which means that each pound spent in Galeri is worth over £2 to the economy of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn. These towns are in Welsh speaking areas, therefore the projects have a positive impact on the language, as they provide venues for Welsh language performance and community activities in the medium of Welsh.

The rural development fund supported the recent development of the Welsh National Wool Museum which has galvanised the site and led to a 60% increase in visitor numbers while the ESF project Reach the Heights supported 27 arts organisations to undertake work that has helped over 9000 young people who were not in education, employment or training to re-engage, improving their career opportunities leading to hundreds of success stories.

In the case of the cross border, transnational and inter-regional Interreg funds, projects like Artswave, Toolquiz (on skills in the creative economy) or the European Cultural Tourism Network have created strong relationships with partners across the EU that have led to a wide variety of bi or multi lateral initiatives and contributed to domestic policy development.

Led by Wales Arts International, the sector has actively participated in the Culture programme – recently leading three projects, including Practics and Toolquiz, and being a partner in a further six – which represents an upward trend,

Apart from financing, other benefits include:

- learning and professional development
- building capacity to work internationally
- driving innovation
- access to new and different audiences
- improving quality of work
- opportunity for the promotion of Welsh culture and language
- maximising international market potential of works
- a greater degree of early stage creative focus and visualisation required to enter international co-production markets and cultural co-operation projects

The way in which the EU recognises the diversity as well as the shared elements of the European Union's cultural and linguistic diversity is valuable. Article 2 in the Treaty of Lisbon is clear. "[The European Union] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced". The role of culture in encouraging cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue - through improving citizens' knowledge and appreciation of other European cultures - is at the very heart of European cultural policy, for example, as set out in Article 167 of the Treaty which states that the aim of EU action in the field of culture is to support: "...the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore". From a Welsh perspective, being a bi-lingual nation, this focus is welcomed.

This duality is reflected in all the Decisions governing funding programmes and all Council Conclusions agreed at the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council.

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

As outlined above the EU cultural programmes are generally very effective. The Welsh Government concurs with the findings of the ECORYS mid term evaluation of Culture 2007 which states that:

“The promotion of the mobility of cultural players and the transnational circulation of cultural works and artistic products are encouraged by the design of the programme”.

“The cultural sector operates in an international and rapidly changing environment where transnational co-operation, mobility, international circulation and the capacity to work on an international level are becoming more and more important.. Looking ahead then, it can be anticipated that EU action in the field of culture will continue to be required to stimulate cultural diversity and encourage intercultural dialogue”.

Administratively, the Culture 2007 programme is far better managed than its predecessors which were often criticised for being too slow and overly bureaucratic. The European Commission has listened to the views of the sector and made the administrative requirements more sensible, proportional to the size of grant and more sector orientated.

General Questions

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

EU action in these areas is beneficial. The funding programmes add value to domestic funding streams and provide valuable opportunities for co-operating with organisations or companies in other Member States. Within Culture for example we have already mentioned Galeri in Caernarfon. This organisation runs a number of outreach programmes that targets deprived and disadvantaged communities. The Welsh Government is pleased that the new sports programme within Erasmus Plus will prioritise grassroots sport. The culture and sport Open Method of Coordination can provide useful learning opportunities – for example we found the recent work on how the cultural and creative sector can access the structural funds, notably the work-stream on smart specialisation, particularly interesting. In addition, officials from the Welsh Government and Arts Council of Wales have represented the UK on OMC groups on Culture and Creative Industries and artist mobility respectively, generally reporting the experience as positive and useful.

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

As already indicated the way in which the EU recognises the diversity as well as the shared elements of the European Union’s cultural and linguistic diversity is valuable. Further encouragement and support for minority cultures and languages would be welcomed. For example in relation to Celtic cultures and languages found within the EU. would be welcomed.

It is suggested that programmes should consider programmes to support and promote the diverse European physical, historic and natural environment of member states.

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

EU funding provides security of funding over a seven year period and the certainty that a specified level of funding will come to Wales.

The transnational funds are competitive. For successful applicants, participation is beneficial as it allows organisations and individuals to co-operate on joint projects which provide enormous learning, capacity building and development opportunities, on a EU wide basis, which would just not be possible on UK funded programmes.

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

The Treaty of Lisbon gave the EU competence on sport for the first time which should help to ensure that single market laws, such as those concerning freedom of movement and competition, as well as other relevant policy areas sufficiently recognise the specificity of sport. It is however too soon to judge the impact.

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

Given the cross-cutting nature of culture and sport a very wide variety of EU areas of competence impact on the sectors (regional policy, freedom of movement, competition, health, education, youth, enterprise, information society etc).

On our heritage sites European State Aid procedures can be a barrier to promoting local products at sites, as the State Aid rules legislate that there needs to be a balance between local products and those from elsewhere in the EU. Depending on what the products are, it could be argued that this is preventing us from celebrating and promoting our own culture.

Sport Questions

- To what extent should the EU be exercising its supporting competence for sport to add value at a European level?

As noted above the Welsh Government welcomes the new sports sub-programme within Erasmus Plus and is pleased that it will prioritise grassroots sports.

- What value have you seen from the 2011-14 EU Work Plan on Sport, and what should be the EU priorities for sport in the future?

The overarching priorities of the work plan are the right ones and the Welsh Government is particularly interested in the work around promoting health enhancing physical activity, participation in grassroots sport notably by young people and people from more disadvantaged backgrounds. This should be a clear priority for future work. As with the culture OMC, the outcomes of the sport work plan should be more clearly visible to stakeholders.

Yours faithfully



PP
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