

**Report on the mobility operators' meeting of the European Neighbourhood
(Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and Western Balkans)**

European Commission – DG Education & Culture

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Present:

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Unable to attend:

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Georgio Ficarelli, DG Development, European Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Presentation by Xavier Troussard, (will be written by Sana Ouchtati)

Main framework

We must fix a common agenda, define our common interests and examine possible synergies between our different organisations or institutions.

He underlined two main themes that are relevant to today's discussion:

- 1) Mobility in the Culture Sector
- 2) Strengthening the role of Culture in the Neighbourhood

In the framework of point n°1 : Mobility in the Culture Sector

- A feasibility study was made - "Mobility Matters" - that underlines the lack of information on mobility
- The European Council of Ministers is currently working on recommendations for mobility
- The European Parliament had extra financial resources and allocated this to the launching of pilot projects on mobility
- Mobility has a high political profile

In the framework of point n°2 : Strengthening the role of Culture in the Neighbourhood

- The European Commission is currently working on the 3rd objective of the Agenda for Culture in different frameworks
- Neighbourhood policy is weak and there are no clearly defined programmes.
- The French presidency 2008 conclusions underline the importance of Culture in External Relations
- It is important to redress imbalances and strengthen cultural policy

Geographical framework: EuroMed

Firstly: There was a call for a new strategy for the first time in Athens during the Conference of Culture Ministers (May 2008). The Culture Ministers stressed the need for the strategy to focus on dialogue between cultures but for the first time they also introduced a new element, that of the need for cultural policies: and the difficulties in the region to shape cultural policy.

Secondly: The EU has established an Eastern Partnership Development Programme that concerns all fields of policies and has set up a number of platforms. Platform 4 is dedicated to Culture and Education and has received strong interest. This gives more potential for a strategy.

Thirdly: the UNESCO Convention defines a legal setting. The EU is obliged to act.

What are the EU's instruments?

Culture programme in Eastern Partnership: 3M€ - technical preparation and capacity building

Cultural cooperation programme: very open

Heritage/audiovisual/media Programme open to the South

The EC is developing a new idea of more flexibility in instruments. There is a new understanding of what Culture contributes to in External Relations (active part of civil society : commitment and outreach)

X. Troussard would like the group to define aims and send him a report following our discussions.

Outline of the main issues for mobility operators working in the European Neighbourhood by Ferdinand Richard

It is important to define the type of mobility framework we are working in. For example our focus will not be on digital or virtual mobility. What groups us together is the mobility of people, the necessity of meeting one another as a tool out of many for increasing the global level of artistic and cultural benefits. Mobility is not an aim in itself. The aim is an equal access and facility to mobility as a way of developing arts and culture in the four corners of the globe. The aim is also to increase the autonomy and emergence of artists and their producers.

As mobility operators we know that mobility is also a global policy issue. As such it is a cultural policy issue for Europe, for member states and for local governments. In this context we aim for mobility to be understood as a round trip concept, directly linked to local development at the starting point. One-way trips from one corner of the world to another are a human rights issue more than a cultural policy/development issue and not particularly relevant from a European public-funding perspective. Even if this issue is a central pillar of democracy building (and this is very related to our topic) we would cause confusion by mixing this human rights issue with what we have to discuss today.

EVALUATION/MAPPING OF MOBILITY

Geographical, artistic and directional imbalances

Geographical imbalance is a question that relates to a wider territorial approach, which is not only concerned with the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe, or the Western Balkans. The question is also to be asked everywhere else. We must take stock of the following: in Europe as in many other parts of the world, we are witnessing the "golden triangles" syndrome in which circulation between major cities defines a territorial favouritism that is detrimental to other areas in economic and cultural terms. In other words there is a tendency to cultural passivity elsewhere. Areas that are not part of the "golden triangles" will not be considered as a generator for innovation, trends, specificities, thereby increasing geographical imbalance and going against the ideal of the European project. Geographical imbalances are the lot of policymakers as well as active citizens. The methods we define for Europe are also applicable to neighbourhood regions. By supporting mobility, do we increase this centralising factor for the benefit of these "golden triangles" and the loss of local development or do we understand the mechanisms that are operating and try to counterbalance them in favour of cultural development at local level everywhere?

The Roberto Cimetta Fund published two documents concerning mobility in the Mediterranean entitled "Made in Med" which was published in December 2007, which has served to provide concrete experiences and ideas on mobility in the Mediterranean and the Study on the profile of arts and culture Professionals in the Mediterranean that are non-European which was published around about the same time. The Study is based on questionnaires and interviews with approximately one hundred people from 4 countries (Morocco and Tunisia) and (Egypt Syria). The study reveals that all of the interviewees recognised the importance of mobility for the arts. They would like more equality in the exchange. The bilateral mobility with some European countries (namely France, Spain, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Switzerland) is the most dominant for reasons linked to colonial pasts, language, funds provided for hosting foreign artists, a well structured sector as in France that allows for training and space for experimentation for example. Many people regret that travel from South to South ie Maghreb to Mashriq is so problematic due to visas, lack of adequate and adapted funding mechanisms, rivalry between countries, weak arts infrastructure...

Because we have been working at grassroots level for a number of years, we are convinced that artistic potential exists in anyone of us, everywhere. Artistic imbalance is therefore related to the degree of facilities, equipment or human resources, which one can find at the local level. When speaking about "human resources", we include of course the political decision makers. Potential to overcome artistic imbalances depends on the setting up of policies related to given sectors that respond to the operators and artists working at local level. Building up democratic platforms to address the needs and ideas and transform them into concrete policies in various sectors of artistic activity remains a key issue in these countries as well as in the rest of Europe.

Let's say it frankly: directional imbalance is a colonial heritage. This is also the difficult part of the discussion, since the European Union is made up of Member States who do not come from the same situation in this regard and therefore do not have the same attitudes to mobility within and outside of the EU. If you consider the "lettre de cadrage" related to Cultural Diplomacy orientations from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, dated 19th December 2009, mostly dedicated to the distribution of national Culture, mobility is clearly understood as a one-way process. In this regard, it would be interesting and important to define our position and make it known to Member States. This would create a lobby force in a proactive manner at national levels, that would feed into the European and EuroMed levels, so that the EU and the Union for the Mediterranean would have to take stock of this. Of course, we know that the democratic processes where civil society has its say are not operational or only very weakly.

On another hand, in many so-called "south" countries, decision-makers always understand mobility on a nations-wide exchange level, a foreign affairs issue. Internal plans for artists and cultural operators' mobility between the capital city and the other regions of the country are non-existent, or not visible.

Questions:

How can we get around the idea of national funds for ones own nationals and move towards funding that involves partnerships based on incoming and outgoing mobility as an accepted, relevant, responsible and coherent policy?

How can we convince diplomats and policymakers about the potential of culture for development aims?

Quality of mobility:

The quality of an individual mobility is related to partnership building. In the framework of today's discussion, partnership building refers to those built between Europe and its Neighbours. Artists and cultural operators, professionals and administrators travel to the Neighbourhood zone to meet fellows and engage in a collective working process. Quality mobility also refers to partnerships built back in your own community on your return, through the experience gained that can be used to transform and enrich your own practice and that of your fellow citizens. If we are to be writing a road map on how to make mobility successful each and every stakeholder would have an opinion on this point from his or her own perspective or point of view in relation to the added value obtained through mobility for each and every stakeholder's interest or practice. An artist would consider that the quality of mobility resides in the capacity building experience. However if we are to look at the quality of mobility as a condition of public policy then it is clear that mobility should always bring added value back home, back to the community. At the end of the day, local development is the ultimate mission and this is strongly related to the Development policies of the EU in this context of today's debate.

Networking is a crucial objective of mobility and also determines its quality.

Preparation is a key factor for quality. In most cases, last minute opportunistic decisions do not bring much in terms of quality.

Ideas

Could we encourage travel of artists with decision makers for the setting up of real mobile projects?

The obstacles to mobility:

The Study on the profile of arts and culture Professionals in the Mediterranean that are non-European, published by the Roberto Cimetta Fund, indicates that the major obstacles to mobility are seen as:

1. Formalities: Obtaining a visa or allowing art works to travel often prove to be difficult due to problems in time delay, lack of institutional representation between some countries, growing costs for visas, professionally recognised artists only obtain their visas not the others, and local artists are recognized professionals once they are gone which shows the limits and inefficiency of the current system.
2. Funding: little funding from inside these states, be it public or private, hardly any regional funding, lack of funding for touring and the precarious and poor living standards of many artists especially independent, or emerging professionals means that even if visa issues were resolved, artists would not necessarily be able to travel. Cooperation, artistic exchange, creativity is weakened through this and artists and operators cannot be the actors of development, of culture...

Another obstacle to quality mobility would be the lack of understanding of the political environment in the South by artists and cultural operators from Europe who believe they can "repair", which is not a pre-requisite of intercultural dialogue. Are organisations prepared to receive artists from other cultures? The idea of co-transfer of know-how and co-development is not sufficiently recognised and reflexion on the necessary curiosity and permeation in the confrontation with other cultures is not sufficiently understood as a process of experimentation and creation, leading to new forms of art and ultimately culture. Free spaces of confrontation and experimentation seem to be the appropriate way to come to a better, more relevant type of intercultural dialogue.

The level of consciousness of the arts and culture sector in Europe is a crucial factor. European professionals must have a clear view of the utmost importance of these exchanges. Of course, paternalism, clichés, arrogance, versatility are not acceptable here. When investing the field of "accompaniment/sharing", we are on a long term process, we are on an equal level of responsibility and moral investment.

A further obstacle to mobility would be the lack of coherent funding and policy mechanisms from the governing bodies that articulate them. Travel grants exist, but make no sense if funds for production do not follow through. Official exchanges exist, through international bodies, but make no sense if they are not related to arts and culture local development policies. In other

terms, mobility cannot make sense without articulated cultural policies. Again as mobility operators we should lobby our national governments on this issue as well as other international organisations.

VALORISATION OF RESULTS, POTENTIAL SYNERGIES AND NEW ORIENTATIONS

How can we valorise the results of mobility/of our work?

We must set standards for capacity building at EU and Neighbourhood levels and make use of the aims of the trips that are suggested to us by the candidates in order to define the categories that we work on.

It's important to evaluate our work in order to convince political decision makers. We should set up a methodology on how to evaluate mobility in order to feed the outcomes for 2020 on the question of sustainable development in the Neighbourhoods. We should look at qualitative and quantitative data. We should define partnerships with other organisations that can work on this issue with us at EU and Neighbourhood levels and use operators to disseminate results.

Three areas of common interest have led to the **establishment of a common agenda** that requires synergies between the mobility operators present:

1. Quality indicators
2. Communication: joint actions
3. Political argumentation

1) Quality indicators:

What are our indicators in a non-mandatory and non-coercive fashion?

a) Expand upon usual numbers. Not only how many travels grants and how many countries, but all kind of numbers: age of the beneficiary, how many travel grants already received, how many travel grants in the same country, how many travel grants in this field of cultural/artistic activity, etc... Statistics : length of stay, economic impact,...

b) language skills. What inputs are necessary? How many languages known/spoken? Where were the language difficulties?

c) long term effect. What are the outputs? Determining impact is difficult because it is a long term process and we have to supply statistics on a short term time scale.

d) partnership dimension. How many contacts did you make? What exchanges took place while you were there? Did the travel lead to partnerships?

e) local development effect. Determining the implication on local development is crucial but how do we measure it?

e) curriculum and local context. Have they already used Erasmus or Gruntvig grants? Is this the first time you travel? What would indicators be at local level?

f) "transgressing generation gap" factor

g) "favouring collective emancipation" factor

h) What is the time span necessary? Was sufficient time given to your trip?

Ideas:

Determining artistic quality is difficult and requires art critics which is a problem in the region.

Determining where the artist is coming from or his/her nationality is a difficult indicator because mobile people do not adapt to this type of question

We could also determine the political situation in a given country (where are the "sounds of silence": the countries that we do not hear about but where there is considerable repression and where artists are not represented because they are repressed in some way or another).

We should jointly articulate a position on what we expect from mobility – quality and quantity.

2) Communication:

- a) a website presenting short individual stories from travel grants beneficiaries from all mobility operators.
- b) a regular event co-realised by the mobility operators, including "the Funders Club", speed-dating between "old" and "new" travel grants applicants, workshops, "accompaniment" market, translation/transmission atelier, art exhibition/performances, pitching or matchmaking for all stakeholders, etc... Could we organise a meeting together with decision makers on this issue (ie mobility in EuroMed region for artists and cultural professionals)
- c) a travel guide written by former beneficiaries. Through an electronic version, and through a paper version.
- d) a transmission/translation permanent "joint operator". A glossary of related terms.
- e) Have a common format of database gives us the possibility to interact
- f) Build up a narrative on mobility of output

3) Political argumentation:

- a) What are the political costs? What are the political gains?
- b) "Europe is too virtual". We must meet each other
- c) Mainstreaming Culture ? Horizontal policies. Mainstreaming mobility is at the heart of the funding process for culture but it is also a trap that could sap mobility. Cultural mobility as a witness, as an "equilibrium" factor
- d) foreign artist as a matter of exotic culture/tourism, or as a true added-value for local development?
- e) solidarity: are you ready to fund mobility even though some of those travels do not directly concern your strategic area ?
- f) Hospitality as an investment, not as a charity action. Could we agree that mobility and hosting are policies that should go together and be endorsed by every country?
- g) Mobility lessens the generation gap (transgressing generations). Example of Jawah initiative where a mobile actor can receive accommodation during his/her stay from a former theatre director.
- h) Social cohesion : linking mobility and territory : territory is more peaceful because through art there is a stabilising effect. There is a role model or connector leader model that could come out of this. Mobility acts as a releaser of pressure because there are openings and alternative solutions and connected with others (emancipating oneself and emancipating a community).
- i) Mobility is oxygen for development

Ideas:

Can we use agreements with governing bodies as a guideline to define the results. Such documents could be used by politicians to convince that funds be used for mobility.

Conclusions

Next meeting : 6th to 8th July 2011 for the beginning of the Polish EU presidency