

Mobility Matters

Programmes and Schemes to Support the Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals in Europe

Executive Summary

1. Approach to this study

With the support of a team of six key experts and national correspondents in 35 countries, the ERICarts Institute carried out a six month study for the European Commission between April and October 2008 on mobility incentives in the culture/creative sector. This was not intended to be an audit of all mobility related schemes in Europe, but rather a survey and analysis of the range and scope as well as motives and results of such programmes.

During the course of the study, ERICarts collected information on *mobility trends in different regions of Europe, on recent debates taking place within individual countries, on existing mobility schemes* (their objectives, kind of support, target beneficiaries, eligibility conditions and the nature of benefits), *on the main motives for funding bodies* to support mobility and *on the main sources where professionals can find information* about mobility incentives or barriers. The team developed a classification of the main types and objectives of mobility schemes and tried to assess, on the basis of a rather limited supply of comparable data, their impact/effectiveness.

The results of the study are presented in a final report with extensive annexes including case studies. The report is divided into five sections:

1. Background, methodology and conceptual issues;
2. A diverse mobility environment: trends, drivers, restraints;
3. Mobility schemes for cultural professionals;
4. Assessing the impact and effectiveness of existing mobility schemes; and
5. Recommendations: towards more balanced and productive cultural mobility programmes

Recommendations for action are targeted to mobility funders within Member States and call for complementary action on the part of the European Commission, which respects the principle of subsidiarity for EU action in the cultural sector.

2. Defining mobility

The ERICarts *study recognises mobility not simply as occasional movements across national borders* that may be useful to gain professional experience required for career advancement, as well as advance artistic endeavour, *but more as an integral part of the regular work life of artists and other cultural professionals*. The study focused on the mobility of the individual, but also examined mobility in the sense of the touring of arts organisations.

At the outset, three groups of professionals could be distinguished: First, there are those *seeking to become mobile* and for which *mobility schemes* can be of particular importance. Mobility may be their free choice, e.g. to gain new inspirations or engage in artistic endeavour, but could also be a matter of professional survival. In the latter case, mobility is often tied to the issue of (public) provision of funding and infrastructure within the country, including incentives for local market developments.

- A widespread concern of those cultural professionals who *are already mobile* or where *mobility is a regular part of their professional practice* is how to deal with 'red tape' or how to overcome other *impediments to mobility* caused mainly by social, tax and, for nationals from third countries, visa regulations.
- Finally, there are some who *do not really see an urgent need for trans-border mobility* (e.g. artists living in 'hot spot' cities or specialist staff of regional arts institutions), particularly if this would mean separation from their families and friends or learning a new language. Providing *intelligent motivations* to encourage cross-border mobility may be the main policy challenge.

Reliable and comparable data that would present a clear picture of the size of these different groups, of their actual mobility flows and of their potential mobility needs do not exist. This calls for empirical surveys and other research efforts at the EU level.

3. Assessing mobility support schemes for cultural professionals in Europe

Data on 344 mobility schemes from 35 countries across Europe was collected through a project questionnaire. These include schemes or funds offered by national, regional or local governments, transregional bodies, arms-length or semi-public bodies, cultural institutions, foundations or other private sector actors. The mobility scheme examples served as a basis to identify a number of meaningful cases in the diverse world of mobility funding for artists and cultural professionals.

On the basis of the information gathered, a typology of mobility schemes was developed that comprises nine main types of measures. These are:

- Artists / writers residencies;
- Event participation grants (e.g. at international festivals);
- Research grants or scholarships to live and work for a certain time abroad;
- 'Go and see', 'come and see' or short-term exploration grants for individuals;
- Scholarships for further/postgraduate training courses or similar forms of capacity building;
- Market development grants (e.g. scouting and other cultural export schemes);
- Project or production grants, e.g. to support translations or participate in film co-productions;
- Support for trans-national networking of professionals;
- Touring incentives for groups, e.g. for music or dance ensembles.

A further distinction can be made between *outgoing schemes* i.e., those which provide support to the mobility of nationals/residents cultural professionals to travel and work in other countries and *incoming schemes* i.e., those designed to attract foreign cultural professionals to visit/work in their country.

In addition to distinguishing various types of schemes, the study identifies *seven main objectives underpinning mobility programmes and schemes*: improving foreign relations; career enhancement; creativity / new production opportunities; international market development; talent development; intelligence / information gathering / sharing; and project cooperation / co-production. Evidence suggests that mobility is not always an explicit objective, but is often an implicit outcome or a means to an end.

An assessment of the schemes made against these objectives shows that, in many countries, *mobility continues to be an important component of international and regional cultural cooperation agreements*, be they multilateral or bilateral. In this context, activities involving mobility are often seen as tools to promote the image of a country abroad and to export culture. Traditional bilateral agreements, where they exist, are seen as outdated and out of step with the changing, but definitely more international practices of artists and cultural professionals. The study suggests that more opportunities are needed for practitioners to develop their own research and exploration ambitions that are not tied to meeting diplomacy or other political and economic agendas.

The results also indicate that there is a shift taking place towards the introduction of *new mobility schemes aimed at promoting creativity and productivity* through e.g. production/project co-operation, as well as *career enhancement* schemes aimed at enabling artists/cultural professionals to participate in major festivals or other events; fewer countries offer 'go and see exploration grants' or 'networking grants'. Support for pan European networks is considered, in many countries, a responsibility of the EU Culture programme. Schemes which introduce artists and cultural professionals to emerging cultural markets in other regions of the world, e.g. Brazil, China or India, have been newly introduced by some Member States.

In recent years, the objectives of mobility schemes of governments, arts agencies and foundations have begun to reflect new political objectives and national priorities such as *promoting the creative industries, cultural diversity or intercultural dialogue*; priorities also identified in the *European Agenda for Culture (2007)*. Such schemes are found within, for example, creative industry export strategies, international job placement schemes, or capacity building programmes.

4. Identifying gaps in provision

While the study revealed a diverse landscape of cultural mobility schemes, gaps and imbalances in provision remain.

There appears to be *a continuing mismatch between resources and demands* from a growing number of artists and new groups of cultural professionals who want to travel abroad. Although there is evidence that financial resources for mobility have increased in some countries, the general message emerging from national correspondents and experts involved in the study is that, with some exceptions, mobility funds are insufficient to cover the full range of expenses associated with a mobility experience. It is argued that the levels of mobility funding set limits on the choice of country an artist or cultural professional can travel to, whether within Europe or to new destinations such as Brazil, India or China.

There is a significant *imbalance in the number of schemes promoting nationals to engage internationally compared with the smaller number of schemes supporting inward visits of creative people from other countries*. This gap in provision perpetuates East-West imbalances (in Europe) and North-South imbalances (globally). The main challenge identified in many

countries is the lack of funds, programmes or infrastructure to receive artists from other countries. Rectifying the balance of incoming-outgoing schemes could be encouraged in the spirit of commitments made by governments when ratifying the 2005 *UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*.

It was to be expected there would *be imbalances between different regions of Europe*, with Central and Eastern Europe in particular not offering the range of mobility opportunities to be found in many Northern and Western European countries. This in itself is not surprising, but it does remind us that despite the developing *European cultural space*, opportunities for cultural professionals to travel, make contacts, build partnerships, conduct research etc., will depend to a great extent on where they live in Europe.

5. Recommendations: towards more balanced and productive cultural mobility programmes

5.1 Adopt a developmental approach to mobility

The study recommends maintaining the *plurality of actors and funding sources* for cultural mobility. It also calls for the *adoption of a developmental approach* that recognises mobility not simply as an adhoc activity or as a one-off experience but as a longer term investment in a process leading to specific *outcomes* (not outputs) over a period of time, e.g. in the course of a career.

Five key building blocks or pillars were identified on which this developmental approach could be based: intelligence – exploration – resources – fairness - sustainability. In short, artists/cultural professionals need *intelligence*, not just information, to ascertain what opportunities are available for them to *explore* the creative process with their peers in other countries and make productive contacts; but this is dependent on the availability of financial and human *resources* and the appropriate capacity to engage in mobility; it is also dependent on *fairness* in having access to mobility opportunities. Finally, productive engagement internationally often needs to be *sustainable* if it is to be effective in the longer term; one-off grants make it difficult to achieve sustainability or leave a legacy.

The following recommendations are built upon these five pillars and are addressed to the European Union and also to governments, regional bodies, NGOs and the research community in EU member or applicant states.

5.2 Adopt a cultural diversity dimension to the overall mission and activities of mobility programmes and grants

Bodies and organisations promoting mobility could:

- a) *recognise social and cultural differences* through more targeted measures to empower those who want to engage in mobility activities. Such activities can promote genuine dialogue;
- b) work to ensure that *open mindsets that appreciate diverse experiences and cultural expressions* are nurtured through artistic and educational activities. Culture can help to stimulate curiosity and instil empathy, as well as provide a basic stock of knowledge about other cultures and about one's own neighbours; and
- c) develop joint programmes and projects to *increase language capabilities* needed for cross-border cooperation and co-productions especially those spoken in border regions. This could involve not only educational institutions and related activities, but also activities of the culture/creative sector.

5.3 Pursue mobility programmes and schemes that support productive mobility experiences

Mobility funders could:

- a) endow residencies and travel grants with adequate funding in order to *increase the number of 'incoming' artists or cultural operators* from different parts of Europe and the world;
- b) give priority to foster *individual professional advancement, capacity building and exploration* through intellectual encounters, artistic innovation and creative engagement across borders, without an imposed mandate;
- c) *offer additional support which could help optimise mobility experiences* by providing professionals with the time and resources to engage in dialogue with the local community, interact with other artists/cultural professionals, lead workshops or training opportunities, etc;
- d) support *direct, productive encounters and project initiatives of cultural professionals* from all parts of Europe, including in new member states/candidate countries;
- e) target the typical, i.e. *small-scale arts institutions/organisations and culture industry companies* to enable them to participate in international co-productions;
- f) encourage *sustainability, networking and legacy building in mobility processes* with, for example, follow-up funding, post-production funds, and dissemination aids. Post-mobility workshops for cultural professionals to share their experiences with peers could also be considered in this context, as much of the valuable expertise is not always put back into the sector;
- g) introduce *evaluation processes* that focus on the outcomes ('impact') rather than the outputs of mobility schemes; and
- h) *provide additional support to intermediaries* as instrumental actors providing 'intelligence' (advice, guidance etc) needed to enhance the effectiveness of cross-border mobility.

5.4 Re-examine cultural diplomacy / international cultural co-operation programmes

The European cultural space is both common and diverse. When cultural professionals are sent abroad by e.g. national cultural institutes to participate in events or programmes, they are often regarded as ambassadors of a particular country. The public in other parts of the world, however, often see them as Europeans influenced by Europe's cultural diversity. This in mind, governments or cooperation agencies and EU bodies could:

- a) increase the number of *joint European activities by national cultural institutes* and by other cultural diplomacy actors outside of Europe, which could mean an extension of existing forms of collaboration e.g. in the EUNIC network or in cooperation with international bodies such as the Asia-Europe Foundation to which EU states belong. Similar cooperation initiatives could be created in other world regions such as Africa and South/Central America; and
- b) encourage *trans-regional bodies to introduce cultural mobility programmes*, where they do not currently exist, and to foster cooperation between the various larger regions in Europe.

6. Concerted efforts to address mobility at the European level

The mobility of cultural professionals figures as a strategic objective of the European Agenda for Culture (2007) and in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. The Commission's increased engagement with mobility responds to demands from networks and cultural operators for other financial opportunities to support their work in addition to that which is provided for trans-national cooperation projects through the *Culture Programme 2007-2013*. Therefore, the following recommendations are directed to the European Union:

- a) Initiate action through *pilot projects aimed at artists/cultural professionals* in 2009, with a possible focus on:
 - *the creation of a matching fund for mobility* to strengthen existing funds and provide incentives for trans-regional, national, local and independent bodies in order to implement a developmental approach to mobility funding;
 - *improving the transfer* of mobility experiences through support for cross-border training modules targeted to different user groups, i.e. funders, intermediaries, professionals seeking to become mobile, in order to ensure a more lasting impact. The involvement of artists / cultural professionals as 'trainers' is key and would enable them to share their experiences with others; and
 - *the development of online mobility toolkits that provide intelligence*, not just more information, by synthesizing good practice. Such kits could be developed with the help of agencies, foundations with a European scope, mobility information providers, regional bodies, sector associations and independent experts.

- b) Introduce additional activities into the various strands of the current EU Culture programme 2007-2013, as well as in the next generation of the Culture programme:
 - *Multiannual cooperation projects*: introduce support for the building of trans-national cultural links and project cooperation between cultural operators, networks and institutions whose programme priorities are aimed at promoting the visibility and mobility of artists/cultural professionals from more diverse cultural backgrounds;
 - *Support for cultural action - cooperation projects*: through this programme strand strengthen the capacity of the informal infrastructure for mobility, which is sustained by underfunded or non-funded independent artist-led initiatives that either house visiting artists or provide them with work spaces. This could be done through a call for structured cooperation projects lasting two years; and
 - *Support for analysis and dissemination activities* aimed at:
 - collecting data on the mobility flows of artists and cultural professionals;
 - developing an impact assessment scheme of cultural mobility programmes that focuses on the 'outcomes' of mobility rather than the 'outputs'; and
 - designing a SCOREBOARD to monitor how governments address the obstacles to mobility in the cultural sector.

- c) *Make use of the open method of coordination (OMC)*, the new working method in the field of culture, as a means of strengthening policies on mobility at the national and European level. In particular, encourage the expert working group on improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and culture professionals, which was created for the implementation of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010, to:
 - promote policy development on mobility through the exchange of successful practices in Member States;

- engage in a regular dialogue with all stakeholders i.e. culture sector platforms, European networks, art councils, national agencies and local level organisations; and
 - initiate reflection on cultural mobility indicators and establish a working relationship with the new Eurostat working group on culture and explore synergies with other bodies that have competence in mobility research to discuss indicators on the impact of mobility funds/programmes.
- d) Use the possibilities offered by the EU Leonardo and Grundtvig programmes to *improve the mobility and exchange of professionals working in arts institutions/administrations and training facilities*;
- e) Address the *imbalance of mobility flows* both inside and outside of the EU through new strands in Structural Funds or the INTERREG IVC Programme and through its Neighbourhood Policy;
- f) Encourage *international mobility and project driven cooperation*. Key to this are efforts to support the development of better market conditions for the creation, production, distribution or exhibition of artistic and literary works in other countries, as well as the strengthening of local infrastructure such as artists' residencies. This could be accompanied by support for technical, financial and managerial capacity building activities such as those foreseen in the *EU-ACP Cultural Industries Support Programme*. Such initiatives could help address the problem of 'brain drain' and strengthen dialogue and encounters with cultural professionals on an equal footing;
- g) Building on the experience gained in the context of the EU-Europe for Citizens programme 2007-2013 *explore the development of new mobility schemes with a view to nurture a culture of tolerance and mutual understanding*.

While the team considers the recommendations above to be realistic, it is important to point out that their intended outcomes could remain aspirational rather than achievable unless *continuing obstacles to mobility are seriously addressed*. According to in-depth expert studies and to recent proposals made by the European Parliament and culture sector networks, such obstacles are often due to inconsistent visa, tax and social regulations in the Member States.

To overcome these barriers and to support the healthy development of a diverse creative / culture sector, it seems important for European and national authorities to:

- gradually harmonise *definitions, procedures and application forms* in fiscal / social matters;
- simplify procedures and reduce costs of *visa and work permit applications*;
- enhance the capacities and collaboration of existing online information systems; and
- introduce or support *training workshops on legal and social regulations in different countries*.

The study on mobility information systems currently being undertaken by ECOTEC is to address such issues.