

ANNEX 6

UNITED KINGDOM

Sue Harrison

I Summary

- Since the Boekman Foundation report in 2005 there has been significant changes in the number of UK organisations involved in developing international cultural policies;
- The new White Paper – “Active Diplomacy for a Changing World” will impact on all UK organisations involved in international activity involving cultural diplomacy;
- The UK Government is anxious that its departments should work more closely together and avoid duplication of effort;
- The Carter Review identified that the UK spent around £600 million on public diplomacy. The Public Diplomacy Board and its associated advisory group will be charged with bringing coherence, value for money and accountability to government foreign policy;
- The UK now sees the EU as a vital partner in helping to deliver elements of foreign policy;
- Virtually all respondents felt that the EU was overly bureaucratic, poor at communicating its policies, unclear of what it meant by cultural policy, and lacking a clear messages about its intentions in this field inside the EU, let alone elsewhere;
- Interviewees generally favoured the EU having a cultural competence if it could be clear about why it was doing it and was able to set clear values and broad policies
- Ideas about ways this could be delivered showed that there were opportunities in several areas of external policy. Practitioners felt that such work should be left to experts to develop and preferably practising artists with only a light touch from EU officials;
- Money should be found to deliver this cultural competence. It was not appropriate for individual Member States to foot the bill, as this would leave the wealthier states doing the work at the expense of smaller states;
- The EU should consider an external agency to deliver such work as this would avoid unnecessary competition and bureaucracy. Arts and artists should be at the centre of this organisation in order to make it work appropriately for culture and avoid instrumentalism.

II UK cultural and foreign policy development

There has been an important shift in a number of areas of the UK’s international activity since the desk research carried out by the Boekman Foundation in 2005. There is a revised foreign policy led by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), preparations for an international policy by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and efforts to draw together a Cultural

Foreign Policy, jointly led by DCMS and FCO. Arts Council England has published its international policy and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland all have policies in draft or at revision stage.

The background to these changes is the need to redefine UK foreign policy following the UK's role as a leading coalition member in Iraq and Afghanistan, the failure in helping to resolve the Palestine/Israel conflict and the terrorist attacks in London in June 2005. The DCMS as a mainly domestic department in the past has needed to come to terms with its role in the EU and the increasing internationalisation of the organisations it funds through the government grant.

In May 2006, during the research there was a ministerial reshuffle. The Foreign Secretary is now Margaret Beckett replacing Jack Straw, Geoff Hoon has replaced Douglas Alexander as the new Minister for Europe. The Secretary of State for Culture, Tessa Jowell and her ministerial team, remain unaffected by the reshuffle.

In preparation for a new foreign policy, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office undertook a review of cultural diplomacy, led by Lord Carter of Coles in 2004/5. He recommended a revised definition for public diplomacy, subsequently accepted by government, as "working to inform and engage individuals and organisations overseas in order to improve understanding of and influence for the UK in a manner consistent with governmental medium and long term goals".

The recommendations were submitted to a parliamentary select committee and, following on from this, new guidance was agreed for the British Council and the BBC World Service.

A white paper on foreign policy was launched in late May 2006 at the same time as the ministerial changes. The main points of the policy are set out below:

III Active Diplomacy for a Changing World: The UK's International Priorities

- Making the world safer from global terrorism and weapons of mass destruction
- Reducing the harm to the UK from international crime, including drug trafficking, people smuggling and money laundering
- Preventing and resolving conflict through a strong international system
- Building an effective and globally competitive EU in a secure neighbourhood
- Supporting the UK economy and business through an open and expanding global economy, science and innovation and secure energy supplies
- Promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction underpinned by human rights, democracy, good governance and protection of the environment
- Managing migration and combating illegal immigration
- Delivering high-quality support for British nationals abroad, in normal times and in crises
- **• Ensuring the security and good governance of the UK's Overseas Territories

The policy places heavy emphasis on partnership and, as seen from the extract below, the EU is seen to be an essential player in supporting the UK to meet its international aspirations.

IV Working with others

"No country can tackle this agenda alone. So, we have to work with others in the UN, the EU, the G8, NATO, the Commonwealth and other groups. We must work to reform international institutions in the face of new challenges. Our most important partnerships will remain within the EU, and with the United States. We will also need to build on our strategic relationships

with China, India, Japan, Russia and others. Relations between these major and developing actors will influence the international system for the next decade and beyond and set the context in which we will promote our interests and values.”

The focus on 50 countries mentioned in the previous FCO policy has disappeared, but there are clearly countries where the UK will be placing greater emphasis. China is a significant partner, not least because of the relationship that must be established for the Olympics in China in 2008 and in London in 2012.

There is no mention of culture within the white paper. British Council and the BBC World Service have responsibility for delivery of an international programme of cultural diplomacy and engagement; the arts are one element of this programme. The Carter Review of Public Diplomacy, which included the FCO, DCMS, British Council and the BBC World service, set out a number of recommendations, but the arts were in large left alone. Suffice to say they will need, in their delivery, to meet government objectives. It was agreed that the BBC World Service would continue to have editorial independence to protect its impartiality in news broadcasting particularly.

v Working with Europe

“Europe in a Global Age” is a publication by the Foreign Policy Centre in the UK. It was launched in October 2005 and written by Douglas Alexander MP, Minister for Europe at the FCO. In this publication the EU perspective and role is eloquently argued. Alexander raises important issues about culture and European identity.

“ globalisation affects more than just traded goods and services. It also affects our sense of who we are. Questions of identity underlie many of the contemporary issues affecting the legitimacy of the EU. The European Union provides a new framework in which to uphold nation states and national identities while at the same time symbolising and encompassing common European ideas and values. It also makes it easier for regional political identities to develop in a way which does not threaten national and regional identities. In other words, the European, national and regional identities are not a zero-sum game. So in the months and years ahead the EU must confidently assert its own identity as neither a nation state nor a super-state but a distinctive institution that adds value to the lives of its citizens.”

He goes on to argue that:

“ The Union is founded on the principles of liberty and democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law, principles of which are common to the Member States. These are the values of democracy in practice, of the accountable division of power, the checks and balance between the Executive, Parliament and the courts, the respect for law and due process, the defence of fundamental human rights and freedoms, fair and efficient public services; universal education, equal opportunity and social mobility.”

And finally, he reinforces the opinion of the majority of the people interviewed in this research:

“ There is a lack of vocabulary that explains simply what Europe is and what Europe does.”

This last point is supported by many of the people interviewed and notably by Baroness Kennedy, Baroness Young and DCMS.

VI How is the delivery of international policy progressing in relation to policy/ambitions/objectives?

A t g o v e r n m e n t l e v e l

As reported above, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has been preparing its own international policy for a number of years. Reasons for the delay are mainly due to the changes in FCO policy and the UK winning the Olympics for 2012. One of the problems facing this department of state is that money passes through it to the arts, sports, museums and heritage organisations and little is retained to assist in the delivery of such policy.

The DCMS outline statement for the arts in its international policy is set out below. How this aspiration will be delivered is still a matter for conjecture.

D C M S i n t e r n a t i o n a l A r t s P o l i c y

The UK's membership of international organisations offers the chance to:

- Promote British arts and culture overseas
- Secure national interests in cultural negotiations
- Share experiences and policies on the arts with other countries

By talking to each other about arts issues, governments can contribute to creating an environment in which the arts can flourish and develop.

We liaise closely with colleagues in the national administrations of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland to ensure that we reflect the needs of the whole of the cultural sector. We also exchange experience with other countries, in particular our principal European partners. The Council of Europe, UNESCO and the World Bank all support the arts. Our key message to these international organisations is that whether it be through the pursuit of artistic excellence, the encouragement of social inclusion, or the use of cultural wealth to create economic opportunities, the arts and other creative industries should be at the heart of our society.

To meet the UK government's international priorities, DCMS has five goals:

E x c e l l e n c e : The cultural, sporting and creative sectors are recognised as world-class leaders in their fields. This expertise is used to create international partnerships.

O p p o r t u n i t y : Unique international opportunities are provided. UK cultural, sporting and creative activity helps to address global challenges such as security, justice and prosperity.

E c o n o m y : The cultural and creative sectors generate a significant contribution to the UK economy through the development of international markets and audiences. The UK negotiates and competes successfully at international level.

D i v e r s i t y : the cultural and creative sectors support and showcase cultural diversity in the UK and overseas. They build vital links between communities here and overseas.

S u s t a i n a b i l i t y : International activity supports sustainable development. The DCMS international strategy lists international country priorities for each of these goals:

E x c e l l e n c e : China, India, Japan, USA and European states

O p p o r t u n i t y : Sub-Saharan Africa, China, Iraq and the Middle East and post Soviet states.

E c o n o m y : European states, Brazil, India, Russia, China, Japan and USA.

D i v e r s i t y : Key Islamic countries (e.g. Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia), Key countries with a UK resident or descended population (e.g. Bangladesh, India, West Indies, Africa).

S u s t a i n a b i l i t y : Brazil, Russia, India, China and post conflict states (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan, Angola).

A t q u a s i - g o v e r n m e n t a l l e v e l

Arts Council England (ACE) published its international strategy in 2005. In May 2006, it reported on its achievements to date. The organisation feels that through its policy and actions it has expanded opportunities for artists and arts organisations to work internationally. It has also enabled them to contribute to the objectives of its partners – British Council, FCO and DCMS.

The international arts policy has three main objectives:

- Working in partnership and encouraging international dialogue and debate;
- Empowering the arts community to work internationally; supporting the artists right to roam and supporting diversity;
- Building knowledge and expertise through increasing the capacity of their staff and bringing world class events to the UK;

There will be a review of this policy in the autumn of 2006. Already it appears that the current focus beyond the EU on artists' exchanges with China may be redirected to Brazil. Meanwhile, ACE has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Arts Council, Singapore, which supports the exchange of staff and sharing of best practice.

Wales and Scotland, as devolved administrations, have adopted their own international policies. An International Arts Strategy has been jointly produced by the Scottish Arts Council and British Council Scotland since the Boekman Foundation study. The purpose is to "establish Scotland as an internationally recognised centre of excellence for the arts and arts-related education and community work across all sectors and creative industries".

Wales has links to areas such as Catalonia, reflecting minority cultures and language. Scotland has been more ambitious targeting China, Germany, Finland, India, the EU accession states, the USA and Malawi. There are efforts to refine these policies to become more focussed. The impetus for these policies are primarily trade/economic and are driven by the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive. Northern Ireland has not yet developed as far as Wales and Scotland, but does work closely with the Republic of Ireland. It has, in the past, worked on projects with countries such as Cyprus and Malta. In other words, almost all activity is bi-lateral, not multilateral or focussed on showing or taking part in European or EU sponsored events as part of their own internationalism.

There is little evidence of dialogue at the policy level amongst these bodies. The British Council, which is funded by government to deliver international cultural activity, has a Memorandum of Understanding with Arts Council England and funds joint international posts with the Arts Councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. None of these policies make reference to FCO objectives other than to reflect country priorities.

The agencies supporting museums, galleries and heritage in the UK have nascent international policies. They are currently responsive to requests from international partners, particularly in Europe, and are actively engaged in European networks. However, the large institutions such as the British Library, British Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum all work internationally. The British Museum is extremely active in Africa and China at present and was one of the leading museums along with the Louvre Museum in Paris and the Metropolitan Museum in New York who worked together in Iraq to prevent further damage and looting of the museums there.

The British Council has taken on issues of multilateralism by regionalising its international network into thirteen regions. This is similar to the Goethe Institut, with whom it has signed a memorandum of co-operation. This, as yet, fails to manifest itself in anything other than sharing of premises in some countries, sharing the lessons learned about regionalisation and a number of one-off projects. However, this, and the relationship with the French Ministry of Culture described below, have the potential to develop more fully within an EU context.

VII Perceptions of the EU having a role in culture

There was a singular lack of knowledge by UK arts practitioners about the EU and its policies towards culture. Most interviewees were aware of Culture 2000 and there was a vague awareness of other funds that may support culture. This level of ignorance of the EU was not driven by any political motives; people found information about EU programmes impenetrable.

One interviewee said “Thank goodness EU communications are in English, otherwise we would know even less!”

There was awareness of the subsidiarity principle to protect individual cultures of Member States, but most interviewees were unmoved by this and had no idea what benefit accrued to the UK from this stance. Large, resource-hungry events such as the European Cities of Culture programme were not particularly well received. There certainly were challenges about the sustainability of the projects that came out of such events.

As far as EU collaborations with Third countries was concerned, most people were unclear of the benefits of such collaborations, but had no problem if such initiatives were funded properly and were sustainable.

A number of people who had been involved in EU projects commented on the weight of bureaucracy for what were small amounts of money, which dissuaded people from applying in the first place.

VIII Concerns about the EU having complementary or extended role.

None of the people interviewed in the UK showed any concern about the possibility of an EU competence in culture. In fact, most people began to discuss what it might be and how it might be different from an individual Member State’s international policy. When this discussion was developed further it transpired that where an EU cultural competence might be linked to other policies such as development or trade there was support for the idea. Where policies would directly affect the UK managing its own international cultural or foreign policy, people were more cautious. The DCMS were particularly strong on maintaining the principle of subsidiarity in the field of culture. The FCO and British Council were committed to greater partnership with other EU Member States rather than the Commission in the field of cultural diplomacy.

In several East/South East Asian countries, such as Thailand, Malaysia and Japan, there have been EU arts events involving collaboration between national cultural institutes. However in Thailand, the British Council Director felt strongly that the current situation for them was not sustainable. The EU Delegation office in Thailand is an example where proposals and ideas for cultural projects are developed and then Member States are asked to adopt the ideas and contribute financially to the events. The EU office has insufficient funds and seeks resources from Member States, several of whom feel that EU money is spent inappropriately. The requests for funding pose problems for the Member States represented in Thailand, as they are accountable to their head office for the money spent. It was considered that the events are often unfocussed and not targeted to Thai audiences, who are confused about what message the EU is promoting.

The British Council Director in one Asian country stated that:

“ T h e r e a l i t y i n t e r m s o f c u l t u r e i s
w o e f u l l y i n a d e q u a t e a n d a t r i u m p h
f o r t h e b r e e d o f i n t e r n a t i o n a l c i v i l
s e r v a n t s w h o h a v e l i t t l e e m p a t h y
f o r M e m b e r S t a t e s ’ c o n c e r n s a n d f o r
t h e c o u n t r i e s t h e y a r e r e s i d e n t
w i t h i n . T h e r e i s n o p a s s i o n o r
o w n e r s h i p , t h e l a n g u a g e u s e d i s
i m p e n e t r a b l e a n d e x c l u s i v e . T h e E U

i s a c t i n g a s l e a d e r s , n o t s e r v a n t s
w h o c o u l d f a c i l i t a t e t h e b e s t f r o m
t h e c o l l a b o r a t i o n s o f M e m b e r
S t a t e s ” .

It was reported that similar problems have occurred elsewhere.

ix How to take this idea forward

It was felt by interviewees that the EU needed to be clearer why it is embarking upon any cultural programme and what it is trying to promote about the values of the EU. This clarity would leave cultural projects to interpret these values in their own way. The idea that there would be control from the EU on how messages about the EU were to be presented was not welcomed. Artists believed they should be left to do it their way.

Several interviewees suggested that there should be an independent body, or an organisation outsourced by the EU that would hold a cultural budget for such activity to avoid the bureaucracy of the EU. It would require a strong EU policy for culture and geographic priorities. It should be mandated to move swiftly with good evaluation strategies and without overbearing bureaucracy.

The Member States in Thailand, during the UK presidency of the Union, established a strategy for promoting the EU with clear objectives and criteria. This strategy has been welcomed by the 16 Member States represented in Thailand, but the EU office has been less than enthusiastic. The aim agreed by the Member States is to enhance the profile of the EU and Member States within Thailand and establish the EU as a leading cultural relations provider in Thailand.

The purpose is:

- To celebrate the cultural diversity, the common values and unity of the European Union;
- To showcase innovation, imagination and talent within the EU so as to promote cultural understanding, tolerance and collaboration with Thailand;
- To demonstrate flexible and sensitive approaches towards collaboration between the EU and Thailand that builds sustainable cultural developments;
- To broaden awareness and understanding of the cultural background, achievements and skills of all the Member States and Thailand;
- To showcase the EU as a contemporary and vibrant community of arts;
- To achieve greater impact and influence through the collaborative actions of Member States;
- To achieve a high degree of reciprocity and cultural interchange in all areas of activity.

Baroness Helena Kennedy was passionate about what the EU could achieve with a cultural competence linked to external relations. She was clear that the basis of the value system for the EU was its freedoms and diversity, unique to the Union, and that these should form the core of any future policy and actions.

The British Council felt that the major question is whether Europe is greater than the sum of its parts. On the whole, cultural policy has emphasised the bi-lateral rather than multilateral, and relationships in Europe have been competitive rather than co-operative as far as European institutions are concerned. The new accession countries understand an international approach better than the old European powers. The Council considered the future of Europe lies in

imagination and creativity, and any cultural co-operation should include both the commercial and the cultural.

It is important to note that generally people felt that Europe worked well at the dialogue level rather than the policy level. Networks flourish although financially pressed and have good ideas. These ideas and proposals are often ignored or subjected to EU bureaucracy that dampens the innovation; decisions are often taken within a cultural policy vacuum.

Creativity produces new ideas, but there is no hybrid dialogue and discussion. EU film festivals etc don't in themselves create dialogue, but seminars and education programmes surrounding them could do, e.g. British Council Germany ran a season of films from Europe looking at European migration. The seminar programme attached to the event was well attended.

With potential new markets such as the US and Canada, China and India there is a challenge as to whether these large countries want to know about individual countries in Europe. The reasonable question is whether it would be more appropriate to build the relationship with and through the EU?

x Examples of projects already happening

There were few examples of European projects quoted by interviewees, but one stands out:

The British Council and the Ministry of Culture in France signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to co-operate. The intention in the projects that have been designed and led by Visiting Arts and representatives from the French Ministry of Culture are to build capacity in Third countries. So far, there have been three projects, two concerning professional development and the third, a collaboration between promoters.

The first programme involved creative industry managers from Central and Eastern Europe, who were invited by the French Ministry to attend a professional development programme in Paris for a period of three weeks, followed by one week's training in the UK. The second programme was organised by Visiting Arts and involved cultural managers from China, who came to the UK for a training and placement programme for three weeks. This was followed by a week in France where similar opportunities for orientation and placements were offered.

The third programme, again organised by Visiting Arts, took a group of promoters from South East England and Northern France to the Zanzibar International Film Festival, where there is also a fringe music programme. This provided an opportunity for promoters to work together on ideas and to begin to understand how each partner operated. Since returning from the visit the French and English groups have met again and are planning further collaborations with Africa.

xI Practitioner's attitudes and needs

S o m e c o n c e r n s

Some people felt that there is a danger of the EU hi-jacking culture from Member States and using it as a simplistic PR tool utilising the DG Education and Culture budgets for this purpose.

EU Commissioners must recognise the complexity and multi-layered nature of culture. It is not only manifested in the European Baroque Orchestra or European Opera, but in many other more subtle and exiting ways reflecting minority or migrant cultures in Europe.

One practitioner felt that film and broadcasting are good examples of EU co-operation. The one factor that encouraged this co-operation was the dominance of the US industries. There was a need to combat this to protect EU film and broadcasting industries and to counter the 'Americanisation' of EU Member State cultures. This dominance affects countries outside the EU

and strategies we have adopted could serve as useful examples. The EU also needs to boost the exports of the Member States in this field.

A number of people felt that there should be a consensus around cultural economic policies for all areas of culture. The EU should be responsible for this by adopting broad brush statements about policy and underlying principles.

Broader areas of EU policy, such as cultural diversity, should encompass culture within it and, again, establish general principles. The differences in understanding terms such as this are stumbling blocks within the EU. There must be an open debate on definition, approach and content of EU policies in such areas.

Arguably, the most important distinction between the EU and other large economic trade blocks such as the US and China is the diversity of its cultures and the commonality of its heritage. The EU must encourage indigenous cultures and avoid a single hegemony in cultural development. There is a lack of coherence about what the EU does in culture. There is poor communication at all levels. Networks worry about their own viability, growth and sustainability, failing to address issues such as access and diversity, nor is it clear whether the EU listens to the professionals in these networks and acts upon their recommendations.

If the EU were to adopt a cultural component in external policies it must first put its own house in order and then provide facilitation across national boundaries. The EU must avoid repeating old colonial relationships particularly with the US and re-think why the EU is there and what it must achieve for the greater good of its Member States. There must be a diaspora consciousness within any policy and be led by new, not old, relationships.

O p p o r t u n i t i e s

Any EU cultural policy should be based upon respect and understanding of individual Member State's cultures. There should be EU support for minority cultures creating interlocking spheres of cultural identities.

Conflict resolution - post war as well border conflicts - is an area where culture can play an important role. The EU is strong in the advocacy of human rights, which could be explored and communicated through artistic interventions. There is a theoretical understanding of cultural diversity and the EU has the rhetoric. The Year of Intercultural Dialogue would be a good platform to launch interventions and actions by artists.

Migration would also be an excellent area for common action shifting the understanding of migrating people and sharing this with other parts of the world. A project, run by British Council in Brussels – "New Young Europeans", explored new understandings of cultural diversity and migration moving from city to city in Europe. Such an initiative could be developed further.

Other areas where the EU could co-ordinate or lead on initiatives might include:

C u l t u r a l D i p l o m a c y - advocating human rights and promoting European diversity

C u l t u r a l E x p l o r a t i o n - this could be issues based and/or thematic

C o l l a b o r a t i o n s - a programme of testing ideas between cultures moving away from big iconic promotions to a more people based interaction.

C u l t u r a l E c o n o m y - using practice in Europe as models for economic regeneration with other countries

C u l t u r a l L e a d e r s h i p a n d C a p a c i t y
B u i l d i n g - Looking at wealth creation through culture, public-private partnerships, risk taking and team building.

Enshrined in the EU Treaty is an understanding that the EU will contribute to the flowering of cultures. There is a misunderstanding of what this means, it should be clarified more fully before further action is taken to smooth the route for a cultural component.

One arts practitioner summed up the frustration of others towards Brussels, by suggesting that “culture should be taken out of the hands of amateurs and handled properly and with integrity within the EU”.

I n t e r v i e w s

Ministers of Parliament and Members of the House of Lords:

Baroness Lola Young. Adviser to Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and Chair of British Council’s Arts Advisory Committee

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC. Ex Chair of British Council, Board member of Arts and Business and London International Festival of Theatre.

Gordon Conway. Adviser to Department for International Development, Board member of the Royal Society for Arts, Chair of Visiting Arts

The office of Douglas Alexander MP, ex Minister for Europe

Civil servants and personnel from national cultural institutions:

Michael Helston, Head of International Affairs, DCMS

Bruce Hellman, Policy Development Officer for “A Cultural Foreign Policy”, DCMS

Alan Davey, Director of Arts, DCMS

Andrew Scattergood, Policy Development officer for “A Cultural Foreign Policy”, FCO

Yvette Vaughan Jones, Director of Visiting Arts

Kate Board, Director Europe, Middle East and the Americas, British Council

Leigh Gibson, Director of Arts, British Council

Peter Upton, Director British Council Thailand

Kim Evans, Director of Arts, Arts Council England

Elizabeth Addlington, Head of Touring and International Policy, Arts Council England

Mark Taylor – Director, Museums Association

Chris Batt – CEO, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

Norah Campbell, Scottish Arts Council

Senior arts practitioners:

Val Bourne, Director of Dance Umbrella

Jude Kelly, Director of Arts, South Bank; Chair of Olympics Culture Committee and Board of British Council

Stephen Deuchar, Director of TATE Britain

Ken Bartlett, Director of the Foundation for Community Dance

Andrew Dixon, Director of the World Summit on Culture, 2006