

Review of the Balance of Competences between UK and the EU: Culture

This submission is made on behalf of the National Museum Directors' Council (NMDC). The NMDC represents the leaders of the UK's national and major regional collections. For a full list of members please see www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/members. This response is made in response to the Review of Competences in relation to Culture however it will also make reference to the balance of competences on research, structural funds, intellectual property and the visa system because both are particularly pertinent to the work of large UK collections-based cultural institutions.

Summary

National and major regional museums have long-standing, multi-functional relationships with museums, galleries, universities and heritage sites across Europe. There are vital networks of like institutions which provide mutually beneficial professional development, the lending and borrowing of objects between institutions, joint scholarship, exchanges, education programmes and touring exhibitions. Some of this activity is sustained by the EU Culture Fund, or via networks of the European Union. Europeana has provided a focus for digitization which may not have been possible on a national scale. Research funding helps to sustain the academic partnerships which are critical to the continued interpretation of the collections, and structural funds has provided capital investment in major museums outside of London. This investment has driven tourism and subsequent economic investment. Europe remains an important tourist market for the major museums. Research has demonstrated that being European Capital of Culture has had a very positive economic and cultural effect on Liverpool (and previously Glasgow), by focusing investment and activity on an area and showcasing them to an enormous audience.

Museums have also benefitted from attempts to standardize copyright regimes across the European Union. Given the international nature of the UK's national and major regional collections and their pre-eminence, museums need to recruit from a global market for specialized posts and need to be able to work closely with colleagues in Europe. The visa system very much allows for this.

NMDC would support the present balance of competences in respect to culture, and also other areas of policy which allows larger institutions to fulfill their international ambitions. The work of the larger organisations is supported and there is an opportunity for smaller cultural organisations to engage in international work on a risk-reduced basis. This all has a net positive cultural and economic benefit for the UK because it allows the museums to produce better public programmes and continue to attract increasing numbers of visitors.

Shared Cultural Heritage

European cultural heritage organisations make good partners for many UK museums. The commonalities of history and culture, similarities in the collections and their like socio-economic context provide fertile ground for collaboration. The ease with which networking can take place, the lack of visa complications and similarities in museum practice allow for genuine collaboration.

The EU's focus on shared cultural heritage is very important – an audience cannot appreciate the history of the UK without understanding a history of Europe. 2014 will see the Centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. The UK cultural heritage contribution is being led by the Imperial War Museums. The centenary partnership includes cultural heritage

organisations across the world and will focus on the shared experiences of the war. Similarly, it is difficult to understand the world today (in an age of rapid communications, global cultural phenomenon fuelled by social media and easier overseas travel) without putting this in an international context. An exhibition of work by Valentina Bonizzi, *Migration Stories*, at the National Galleries of Scotland considers migration stories in Scotland from 1850 to the present day. The exhibition is supported by the Italian Cultural Institute in Edinburgh and considers both the experiences of the migrants and the resident population.

The EU Culture Programme's focus on shared heritage supports the way in which UK museums work with their European partners where that activity falls outside of the programme. National Galleries Scotland and the Wien Museum in Vienna jointly produced an exhibition looking at the work of Edith Tudor-Hart. The exhibition was shown in Edinburgh and then Vienna. Edith Tudor-Hart was born in Vienna and trained at the Bauhaus. She came to Britain in the 1930s having been arrested for her political activities, and pursued a career as a documentary and portrait photographer covering issues of poverty, child welfare and social division in Vienna, Tyneside, London, Wales and Scotland. She was also a low-level secret agent for the Soviets and operated in London and Vienna. It would be impossible to display Tudor-Hart's work or tell her story (and those of the subjects in her work) without considering wider European shared heritage.

Networks

Networks develop between like institutions such as national museums of science or natural history, or open air museums. These are particularly valuable where there may not be many like institutions within the individual Member State. Networks operate well within the common structure of the European Union and form the base for a huge variety of museum activity. In some cases these are formed as part of the Culture Programme, but others are formed as part of the EU's work on social cohesion, science, international relations or education. Beamish is one of six European open air museums in a network initially established as part of an EU Grundtvig Lifelong Learning Programme. The network includes Bokrijk (Belgium), Den Gamle (Denmark), Jamtli (Sweden), Hungarian Open Air Museum and Maihaugen (Norway). This Grundtvig programme explores ways to engage older people, including those with dementia, in open-air museums. However, the network has served other purposes: there staff exchanges between the institutions for the purpose of sharing good practice for professional and institutional development.

EU Culture Programme

The structure of the EU and the specific funds provide a structure and scale which an individual Member State could not replicate. Although a comparatively small fund in the context of the wider European budget, the EU Culture Fund supports important project work and can act as a challenge fund. It also provides an entry point for museums that may then go on to consider larger collaborative projects once they have established a network of suitable partners. This could not be replicated by a single Member State – the pool of possible partners is larger and the funding necessarily less prescribed, creating the opportunity for innovative projects.

Glam! The Performance of Style at Tate Liverpool (February – May 2013) was part of the EU Culture Programme. The exhibition considered the influence of glam rock which originated in British art schools before having an important social and cultural impact in Europe and the United States. The exhibition included works by Andy Warhol, Cindy Sherman, Richard Hamilton and David Hockney, and was accompanied by a film season (held at FACT), academic conference and textiles workshops.

The EU Cultural Programme allows for the development of certain aspects of cultural activity which may be difficult on a domestic scale only. Performance practice may be such an art form. Tate Modern, who recently opened a dedicated performance art space in the Tate Tanks, is involved in a two-year programme with institutions in France, Netherlands and Belgium to create six new performance works and consolidate specialist knowledge about

performance art. This project is part of the major project portfolio, however an attractive element of the Culture Programme is the funding made available for small projects which allows smaller organisations to develop their work in Europe. The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge had a small co-operation grant to work with archaeologists, media technologists and museum professionals in Italy, Austria and the UK to develop a pilot project for photographing ancient rock art and displaying images of Europe's largest find of rock art. This sort of collaboration would not be possible on a domestic scale and the impact would be much less. Rock art exists across Europe and therefore it is eminently sensible to collaborate and disseminate information on that scale.

It is difficult to comment on the effectiveness of the Culture Programme as the current programme has come to an end and the new programme (which is somewhat different) is due to start in 2014. NMDC responded to a consultation on the EU Cultural Programme in March 2012. The response is available on our website:

http://www.nationalmuseums.org.uk/media/documents/images/12_03_12_nmhc_creative_europe_consultation_response.pdf.

Digitisation

Europeana has provided a focus and funding for mass digitization of cultural assets held in public museum collections in the UK, and linked these to collections held in like institutions across Europe. The infrastructure required has been made possible by the scale (there are 24 million objects documented on Europeana), and allows researchers and members of the public to filter through different collections across Europe to more quickly find the content they require. Twenty-two cultural institutions in twelve countries (including the V&A) collaborated via Europeana to create an online archive of Europe's extensive fashion collections (www.europeanafashion.eu). Whilst of interest to the general public, it is also a tool for fashion designers, students and historians.

Research

Research funding is also important to the museum sector and particularly to the national museums. The Natural History Museum employs 300 scientists and is engaged in research programmes with universities, research institutes and museums across the world. They are involved in a number of EU funded projects. NHM received £1.8million from the EU for overseeing SYNTHESYS, the network of Europe's leading natural history institutions established to ensure that collections and knowledge are shared and used to the maximum benefit of all members. The museum also receives funding via Science Framework 6 and 7 for research projects focusing on marine biology.

Regional investment

Structural Funds

The European funding targeted at specific areas of the UK for the purposes of economic development have had a significant influence on the UK museums sector. The success of culture-led regeneration in the UK and elsewhere in Europe (supported by EU funding) has helped demonstrate the economic and social importance of the arts and culture to communities across the UK. One of the first developments around the Manchester Ship Canal at Trafford and Salford Quays was the building of the Imperial War Museum North. Opened in July 2002, the celebrated Daniel Libeskind designed building has received over 2.5 million visitors in the following ten years. It was built with funding from the local authority, regional development agency and a Manchester-based corporate sponsor, and £8.9m from the European Regional Development Fund. Following the establishment of Imperial War Museum North and The Lowry Arts Centre (which also received EU funding), the once dangerous and derelict Manchester Docks is now a cultural hotspot and also home to the BBC, ITV Granada, hotels and private residences, and is serviced by the Manchester Metrolink.

European Capital of Culture

The economic, cultural and social impact on Liverpool of being the 2008 European Capital of Culture is well documented. The festival itself saw an additional 9.7 million visits to Liverpool and the Capital of Culture accounted for 35% of all visits to the city. These visits generated £753.8m for the local economy. Of the audience attending events within the Capital of Culture programme, a third was from Liverpool. The social profile of that Liverpoolian audience matched that of the city as a whole – it was a democratic event from which no part of the city felt excluded.¹ Being European Capital of Culture and having to have a European element to programming, meant that the established arts organisations in the city could be ambitious. Tate Liverpool held an exhibition of works by Gustav Klimt which attracted 200,000 visitors and proved that there was both an audience and a capacity outside London to consider public programming on this scale. It has been followed at Tate Liverpool by exhibitions focusing on Picasso and Monet, and demonstrated that the same ambition and excellence shown at Tate Britain and Tate Modern (attracting in excess of 5 million visitors a year) is also possible in Liverpool.

When Istanbul was the European Capital of Culture in 2010, it provided the opportunity for the British Museum to lend the iconic *Discobulus* to the Istanbul Archaeology Museum. The exhibition and lecture programme was supported by Turkish Airlines. The benefits of the Capital of Culture Programme is therefore not just restricted to the host city, but to cultural organisations across Europe who can take the opportunity to develop their partnerships overseas.

Interreg

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service took advantage of funding available through the Interreg programme to develop a major partnership with museums and cultural heritage sites in Northern France. As the purpose of Interreg is to encourage cross-border harmony, then the basis of the project was the study of a period of history which connected both regions – the Norman invasion of Britain – and view the subject from both sides of the English Channel.

Importance of EU Funding to UK Cultural Sector

The examples outlined above which shows the breadth (geographically as well as in type of activity and subject matter) of engagement in EU-funded programmes demonstrate how important EU funding is to the UK museums sector. Although museums benefit from the cultural fund, they are also able to deliver projects across other sources of European funding. Although sometimes complicated to administer, EU funding nevertheless is a source of opportunities which do not exist within domestic funding. The economies of scale the EU provides leads to greater variety of opportunities and this variety could not be replicated on a single Member State scale. It is in the EU's interest to encourage greater public participation in science, invest in relations between neighbouring countries or create a single portal for digitized images of museum collections, and therefore they are able to operate funding programmes to encourage this in a way that would be too burdensome for a single state. For example, the Science Museum held the Robotville Festival in December 2011 which was originally conceived by EUNIC, the European Commission Representative in the UK and the EU Cognitive Systems and Robotics Programme (and later sponsored by Transformers: Dark of the Moon as the project). Robotville Festival showcased the latest in robot technology, demonstrating the innovation of universities and technology companies across Europe (including Plymouth University, University of Hertfordshire, University of Sussex and the University of Birmingham). The festival was hugely popular and attracted large amounts of media attention. This sort of event, and the research it showcased, would not have been possible with either the networks or structure of the EU, or the accompanying funding.

Nevertheless, whilst there are many examples of successful EU-funded projects, many find EU funding complicated. The systems themselves may be complex and involve more administration than the National Lottery (for example); however this is exacerbated by the

¹ http://www.liv.ac.uk/impacts08/Papers/Creating_an_Impact_-_web.pdf

very diverse way in which the UK Government makes information about funding sources available. A cultural organisation cannot approach the Department for Culture, Media and Sport for a definitive list of what EU funding they may be entitled to (in the same way that same cultural organisation could approach a domestic funding body such as Arts Council England). The fault lies not with the programmes, but in the way the information is disseminated back to potential applicants. The EU Culture Programme is clearly explained and facilitated by the UK Cultural Contact Point, however not all European partnership work a large museum wishes to do would be appropriate for the Culture Fund.

Intellectual Property

Museums and galleries have benefitted from moves within the EU to standardize and simplify some aspects of copyright law. The orphan works directive and the copyright directive have specifically put in place measures for museums and galleries to be able make more of their content available for non-commercial use and to make preservation of the objects easier. Having standardization of elements of copyright law can be helpful when negotiating with rights holders about the use and display of works, particularly when work is shown in different venues across Europe.

Visas

Recruitment

Many museum positions, particularly those in national and major regional collections, are specialized positions. The need to care for and curate some of the most comprehensive and internationally important collections of natural history, ethnography, technology, art, literature and design requires a very particular set of skills and knowledge base. Museums therefore need to recruit internationally to fill specialist posts such as Artistic Director of Tate St Ives, Curator of Contemporary Architecture and Urbanism or Curator of Italian Renaissance Paintings.

Tourism

Museums are incredibly important to the UK tourism offer: eight of the top ten most visited attractions in the UK are national museums, and four of the top five most visited attractions in Scotland are museums and galleries. Visitors from the EU make up a significant proportion of museum visitors: the Natural History Museum had 240,000 extra overseas visitors in 2011/12 than they did in 2010/11 with the largest growth in numbers coming from Europe. Western Europe remains important tourist markets for many UK destinations. Travel to the UK from the EU is made considerably easier with the present visa agreements. 45% of international holiday visitors to the UK and 55% of international holiday visitors to London go to a museum.