Study on the impact of the EU Prizes for culture

European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Executive Summary

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Introduction

The four EU Prizes that are the subject of this study are:

- The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture and the Special Mention for an Emerging Architect;
- The European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards;
- The European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL);
- The European Border Breakers Award (EBBA).

The aim of the EU Prizes is: "*to highlight excellence in a number of fields in order that artists, works or cultural and artistic achievements become known beyond national borders, thereby encouraging mobility and exchanges*". These are significant, high profile initiatives, which the Commission supports within the wider Culture Programme. The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of the four Prizes, specifically in terms of their prestige and reach, but also their influence on the sectors in which they operate and the wider social and economic policy imperatives they support. The study identified and captured evidence of impacts on a number of levels; at the EU level, at the sector level, for the individual, and for the general public. A range of qualitative and quantitative research methods were used and the evidence base comprised documentary information and a series of interviews with 64 stakeholders, including winners and sector experts.

Findings

Impact on sector

All of the Prizes address a need identified by the relevant sector and are considered high quality. They are distinctive in their focus (emerging architects/authors/musicians and breadth of cultural heritage activities); and all have a strong degree of complementarity with components of wider EU culture policy. There is no evidence of duplication. The architecture prize enjoys the highest prestige in its field, followed closely by the cultural heritage prize. Both of these Prizes manifest strong sector ownership. In terms of the two younger Prizes the profile of the EBBAs is growing and it is steadily becoming a more media-driven public event, having benefited from the move to Eurosonic Noorderslag. The EUPL is a valued addition to the sector, and awareness of it is increasing slowly.

In the case of the two longest-standing Prizes – architecture and cultural heritage – adequate impacts may be identified, in particular through knowledge sharing, adding a distinctive European dimension, promoting increasing internationalisation and cross-fertilisation of ideas and approaches. In most cases awards processes and events provide a platform for networking and debate and a valuable opportunity to showcase achievements. The cultural heritage prize is the most integrated in terms of the different actors involved, whereas there is potential to use the architecture prize to better integrate clients and students. The EBBAs are supporting positive messages about the strength and diversity of the sector. The EUPL is starting to stimulate networks but needs more time to find ways to engage publishers and retailers.

Any geographical imbalances in the Prizes are largely a result of contextual factors (market realities, resources, capacity, tradition and language). For cultural heritage the prize is much better known in western than eastern European countries; in the case of the literature prize, smaller countries and New Member States derive the most benefit, but the Prize struggles to achieve recognition in the larger markets (UK, France and Germany). The dominance of northern and western European acts over southern and eastern ones in the EBBAs has been addressed through revisions to the selection criteria

and extension of the European Talent Exchange Program (ETEP) festivals initiative to include a dedicated Central and Eastern European component (CEETEP).

In general the Prizes are effective at highlighting the achievements of their respective sectors (in line with their primary purpose), although for the younger EUPL Prize this is limited as a result of the relatively low profile at this stage. The travelling exhibition and catalogue produced for the architecture prize showcase the best of European architecture and the cultural heritage awards provide access to a wide range of examples of successful and innovative projects to inspire others. The cultural heritage prize is making significant progress in the education and training field. The EBBAs are highlighting international successes effectively, promoting positive messages about Europe's strengths in this area. There is potential to do more within all of the Prizes, by exploiting existing content, including via new technologies and social media.

The architecture prize exhibits a clear strategic view that focuses on highlighting and promoting a distinctly European approach to architecture, which finds strength in diversity and innovation. Internationalisation is also a key part of this vision, given that the sector is to an extent already more international in outlook than many other sectors, at least at the highest levels. The cultural heritage prize carries a strong ethos around the 'power of example' which is manifest in its promotion of high technical standards, but also by providing opportunities to recognise the contributions of non-professionals (including volunteers and local communities). A coherent strategic vision, in tune with the sector, is yet to emerge for the literature prize. The strategic view apparent in the EBBAs is much more focused on public awareness than the other EU Prizes, with a clear long-term goal to build the EBBA brand and to re-position trans-national popular music in terms of wider perceptions of quality.

Benefits for laureates

Winning brings significant benefits to most laureates of the Prizes. Benefits include increased national and international exposure, an increased number of work opportunities and wider networks. Winning cultural heritage projects have experienced a wide range of benefits including securing follow-on funding and increased visitor numbers. For the architecture prize those who are shortlisted also derive significant professional benefits. In particular, emerging architects derive great benefit from an association with globally well-known members of the same profession. This is not the case for the literature prize however, since there is no public shortlisting component in the selection process. The awards events, although to a lesser extent for the literary prize, play a role in establishing the credibility of the prizes, in particular where international personalities can lend added glamour. For this early stage of the EBBAs it is difficult to separate the effect of winning from other factors that influence an artist's career path.

In terms of the internationalisation of careers, the literature prize offers the most straightforward example: most winning authors have their works translated into 10-12 foreign language versions. Winning architects are able to point to increased interest in their work from outside their own country – although this can take time to translate into commissions, the positive effects appear long-lasting. Winning cultural heritage projects report increased interest from abroad. It is challenging for European musicians to perform and sell music internationally and the EBBAs provide much needed publicity to boost this process.

Exchange of good practice and know-how at a European scale is a key component of most of the Prizes, using winning projects as exemplars. For architecture this means comparing and learning from different cultural approaches, setting high technical and artistic standards and fostering a shared vision of the distinctive strengths of European architectural custom and practice. The cultural heritage prize is spreading good practice and raising standards across Europe, through knowledge sharing as a guiding principal of its mission. For all Prizes there is further potential to exploit content, including using it to engage non-professionals from inside and outside the sector; raising awareness of the winners can help to draw in other stakeholders. For the EUPL the emphasis is more on highlighting opportunities and

linking authors to information, networks and support. Similarly, networking and personal promotion are more appropriate to the EBBAs than knowledge exchange per se.

General public

In common with a range of national and international prizes, the EU Culture Prizes have a low profile amongst the general public, so in reality their potential value in raising the visibility of each of the sectors, or specific issue, is therefore limited. Fostering interest in and increasing access to non-national works is an indirect objective of the Prizes, since the level of resources needed to have any impact on the general population is likely to be prohibitive. The current focus on visibility within the relevant sectors and fostering interest in the cross-border dimension is therefore appropriate and proportionate. However there is further potential for all the Prize organisers to increase their visibility amongst the general public in a number of ways, without entailing excessive additional costs, including increased use of web and social media, more effective monitoring of web usage, tailoring of information, and more accessible events.

There is some evidence of public interest (attendances at exhibitions, events, and awards ceremonies, as well as press coverage and web visits), but this is comparatively limited and usually secondary to exposure within the sector. It might be argued that the stated objective of the EU Prizes, "…*to highlight excellence in a number of fields in order that artists, works or cultural and artistic achievements become known beyond national borders, thereby encouraging mobility and exchanges",* need not necessarily require that they enjoy a high degree of visibility amongst the general public. The EBBAs have a much greater emphasis on building public awareness and brand visibility than the other Prizes and this is appropriate.

Overall impact

All of the Prizes are serving to encourage the protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity in the EU to some degree; mainly through showcasing high-quality examples and providing a platform for developing a shared vision of the relevant sectors' roles. All include a strong component that recognises and values diversity and knowledge sharing. In the cases of the EBBAs the overall impacts are more likely to concern reaching new audiences and increasing the number of performances (in other countries), without necessarily supporting linguistic diversity.

The EU Prizes should properly be seen in the context of the wider portfolio of EU actions in the field, the Culture Programme in particular. As such the role of the EU Prizes is as a symbolic action, rather than one that has explicit targets (in terms of some of the quantitative targets set by Europe 2020 for example). However the Prize's role in encouraging cross-border knowledge exchange, showcasing emerging talent, emphasising skills and expertise and highlighting the achievements of the different sectors is relevant to a range of Flagship initiatives such as the Digital Agenda for Europe[1] (e.g. digitization of cultural works), Youth on the Move[2] (mobility, students, popular music), an industrial policy for the globalisation era[3] (internationalisation, sector support and competitiveness) and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs[4] (education and training, quality, creative industries). Of all the prizes, it is most likely that promotion of the European music sector through the EBBAs makes a positive contribution to Europe's economy, given the dominance of the U.S. industry in this respect. The Prizes are also contributing to the goals set out in the

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/youthonthemove/index_en.htm
[3] http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/industrial-competitiveness/industrial-policy/index_en.htm
[4] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=958

EU Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World[5] and recent Communication on the Cultural and Creative Industries Sector[6].

The European Commission's role in each of the Prizes reflects the specific circumstances that apply to each individual prize, and, crucially, the length of time since each was established. The profile and prestige of the architecture prize derives mainly from the Mies van der Rohe Foundation, and to a similar extent Europa Nostra is almost indistinguishable from the cultural heritage prize. This should not be a cause for concern, since the EU complements both of these brands and brings an added dimension. The partnership arrangement appears to work well in both cases. In the case of the literature prize, there is no pre-history or established organisation to provide a solid underpinning and the EU therefore has had to play a more proactive role. The EU's role in the EBBA's is widely recognised and this successfully associates the EU with success in a popular sector.

Recommendations

The European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture and the Special Mention for an Emerging Architect

1. Widen the appeal of the Prize by building on existing events and/or holding a larger number of events, depending on resources (including public debates and discussions), taking the exhibition outside the EU more frequently (in particular to the so-called BRICs countries), and making improvements to the website in terms of the presentation of projects (e.g. virtual tours).

2. Set clear and achievable goals for the organisers in terms of the general public, recognising the low background levels of awareness in this and other fields. This will require a focused set of objectives – since it is unlikely that the resources required to make a measurable impact are available. Rather, through an agreed work programme or communications plan, realistic targets should be set on an annual or six-monthly basis (this might for example target specific issues, countries or stakeholder groups in turn).

3. Encourage greater use of social media channels, to widen the constituency of the Prize (professional and non-professional) and increase the number of visitors to the website. This and other elements of a communication strategy should be accompanied by systematic monitoring and evaluation to check progress against targets. User surveys online and at events would provide valuable feedback to inform the development of future activities.

4. Ensure any specific objectives set meet the needs of both partners. In terms of brand awareness the EU's role in the Prize is secondary to the Mies van der Rohe Foundation. Although this does not present any difficulties at this stage, future objectives should reflect needs of both parties.

The European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/Europa Nostra Awards

1. Develop stronger and more systematic linkages in future with the EU Heritage Label, and European Capitals of Culture (ECOC), for example. Encourage the growing educational and training component of the Prize, for example through targeted marketing.

2. Use targeted marketing to continue to address any west-east imbalances. These appear to be diminishing, although only gradually, and this process might be accelerated. Perhaps through targeted marketing campaigns by Europa Nostra, through EU Cultural Contact Points (CCPs) and

[5] European Commission COM (2007) 242, 10.05.2007 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF

[6] European Commission COM (2012) 537, 26.09.2013 "Promoting cultural and creative sectors for growth and jobs in the EU".

by making it possible to apply for an award in a range of EU languages, not only English or French.

3. Set clear objectives on what is affordable and achievable in terms of having an impact on public awareness, using the wealth of material on winning projects that has the potential to attract the interest of the general public. The general level of awareness of this Prize is likely to be higher than of the architecture and literature prizes, and it is also likely that publicity results in increases in visitor numbers. There is therefore potential to ensure winning projects receive more press attention, by providing support and advice on how to do this.

4. Take a more systematic approach to data collection and monitoring and evaluation of the numbers of visitors to winning sights. While clearly requiring the cooperation of the projects, this would provide a valuable and clearer picture of the impact of the awards, and could be used to inform the future development of public relations aspects of the Prize.

5. The Prize organiser should take greater account of the use of new technologies in the cultural heritage field, through seeking ways to boost the proportion of project entries around digitization and by improving the Prize website to host more interactive content on winning projects.

6. Continue and build on the policy to make greater use of social media channels, including as a means to direct more traffic to the website. This should form part of a wider, explicit communications strategy covering other aspects set out above.

European Union Prize for Literature

1. Continue supporting this Prize to enable it to achieve its full potential; as the EU Prize for Literature is the youngest of the four EU Prizes and arguably operates in the most challenging sector. Activities at the London and Frankfurt Book Fairs are appropriate, but are not sufficient in order to result in greater visibility and prestige of the Prize. The impact of the Prize could be increased by achieving a higher degree of engagement with publishers in particular, potentially through a more systematic communications strategy (e.g. approaches to increasing prestige of the Prize, branding, increased visibility at national level) accompanied by more resources, matched against agreed deliverables).

2. Review the original concept of the range of stakeholders participating and format of the event. The organisers of future Prize events should be encouraged to present proposals for more high-profile, accessible, and industry-focused events. Explore opportunities to organise the award events in different countries in conjunction with literary festivals (e.g. Gothenburg) or other high profile events (e.g. during the European Capital of Culture), with increased participation of publishers and agents of winning authors.

3. Consider how the shortlisted authors might be identified in advance, since this would provide significant scope for improving the scope and scale of media work.

4. Make greater use of social media channels, including as a means to boost interest in the announcements and events and to direct more traffic to the website.

The European Border Breakers Awards

1. Support the plans already in place for further audience development targeting the industry, media and the general public. Enlist the support of a wider range of industry stakeholders to disseminate information via their own networks to help to develop the Prize as a focus or platform for debate and discussion on key issues).

2. Explore ways in which the awards/conference might make most of everyone coming together, by providing opportunities for sharing practical knowledge, lessons on how some artists and managers have broken markets, or how to overcome common boundaries. Equally, such activity might be staged as a follow-up after the awards.

3. Consider collecting more hard/measurable evidence about the four EBBA objectives or rationalising the objectives to focus on something more measureable, and less subjective. This would help identify more clearly where the awards can make an impact, shifting from less tangible objectives (e.g. growing the appreciation of European repertoire) to more quantitative indicators (e.g. the number of tickets sold to concerts staged subsequent to winning the award).

Overall considerations

1. All EU Prizes occupy a niche or gap in the cultural landscape, so have the potential to make an impact: EU intervention is therefore justified and should be continued. The model ensures transparency and independence of the selection processes, which confer reputational capital and credibility The co-funding partnership model (maximum 60% EU grant) works well, and the effects delivered have to be seen in the context of the comparatively modest amount of EU support provided (in terms of funding and staff resources), so the leverage effect is significant and cost-effectiveness therefore high.

2. The first of the three aims of the EU Prizes as Special Actions of the Culture programme (‘highlight artists, works or cultural and artistic achievements’) is being met; the second (‘‘making them known beyond borders’) is also being fulfilled, although this aim is not explicit enough in terms of amongst whom; and the third (on ‘encouraging mobility and exchanges’) is hard to measure but there are clearly effects in this area. The need or desire to increase sector visibility amongst the general public cannot realistically be a central goal of the Prizes.

3. All organisers should be provided with clearer instructions setting out what is expected of them. Equally, future calls for proposals should ask for specific proposals in response to specific objectives and issues identified (e.g. “…please set out how you would propose to increase visibility (including EU visibility), exploit social media, raise awareness in third countries, increase synergies between EU Prizes, engage with publishers etc”.)

4. The potential role of tourism, in particular in relation to the architecture and cultural heritage prizes warrants more attention in future, given the potential for engaging public interest in culture and capitalising on physical assets at the local level.

5. There is significant potential for Prize organisers to learn lessons from each other (particularly in the case of architecture and heritage), and this might be addressed through the European Commission organising periodic meetings to discuss communication strategies and use of social media in particular. The two best established Prizes (architecture and cultural heritage) have the benefit of many years’ experience to offer, but the EBBAs are strongest on audience development.