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Commissioner Androulla Vassillou  
European Commission  
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(BERL 10/110)  
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Belgium

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Dear Commissioner Vassillou

On behalf of the Scottish Government, I am pleased to let you have views in response to the public consultation which is being conducted currently by the European Commission on the possible structure of a future EU programme for culture, to replace the present programme from 2014 onwards.

Let me begin by saying that the Scottish Government supports the fundamental premise that a specific EU programme for culture is necessary and should be continued beyond the lifespan of the existing programme. We further support the **key objectives** of the protection and promotion of cultural and linguistic diversity; the promotion of transnational circulation of cultural works; widening access to European heritage and culture; professional development and capacity-building of artists or cultural operators; the promotion of urban and regional development through culture and, particularly relevant to the Scottish Government as it chimes with one of my own Government's manifesto commitments, the widening of access and participation in culture, with particular reference to disadvantaged groups.

However, my Government's support for the continuation of the culture programme notwithstanding, I would venture that, given ongoing budgetary constraints on all member states, the need to ensure value for money at all times should be paramount, as should a strong evaluation process which embraces full evaluation and defined and measurable outcomes. The programme should also have clear focus.

We have no particularly strong views in regard to most of the questions posed. However, I do offer a firm endorsement of the importance of ensuring that the new programme supports interdisciplinary partnerships between arts institutions and business to foster artists' entrepreneurial skills, etc, within an international context; and also encourages the development of digital cultural content and all that stems from that.

I would also be keen to see the new programme underpinning cultural activities promoting understanding of common European heritage; the transnational exchange of artefacts or other works; and support to enable artists and cultural operators to overcome barriers transnational mobility.

In regard to the **types of support** within the new programme, I am broadly content with the suggested rate (50%) for EU co-financing of co-operation projects, but in relation to the co-financing of European-level organisations I believe that the current rate of support - 80% - is too high.

In general, I believe that a programme which supports fewer (but more relevant) key objectives; is less bureaucratic, demonstrates greater flexibility and offers a simplified application process; and which offers better value for money while at the same time demonstrating greater transparency of accountability, is a programme which must be welcomed.

I am also sending a copy of this letter to Anne Branch, Head of the Culture Programme and Actions Unit.



**FIONA HYSLOP**