

## **Public consultation on a Future European Union Culture Programme Response of Pearle\***

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Pearle\* wishes to contribute through this response to the online consultation on a future European Union Culture Programme. However as the online text requires compulsory answers to questions which Pearle\* is unable to respond, we hope that our observations may equally be taken into account. The structure of the consultation has been followed and respected as much as possible.

### **1. Introduction**

Pearle\*, the European trade federation representing through its members associations over 4,500 organisations and companies in the live performance sector, welcomes the initiative of the European Commission to consult stakeholders on a future European Union Culture Programme. As a trade federation the members associations are concerned to safeguard a sustainable environment of the arts and of culture in Europe.

The background note describes a wide range of issues connecting Europe's strategy and current initiatives with those of the European agenda for culture. At the General Assembly meeting of Pearle\* last November the members held an exchange on the background note and consultation document published by the European Commission. Members were of the opinion that it was desirable from the perspective of the live performance sector to present its observations in order to complement the framework of the cultural sector as described in the text.

### **2. Observations**

1. New technologies have always been part of the sector's development throughout the history. The digital technologies, which are influencing today's history, are incorporated and included in the activities and the functioning of live performance. The tools to produce a performance have benefitted greatly from new technologies and digitisation, in the staging of a production itself, in increasing health and safety standards, in marketing on events, or in communicating with its

audiences and consumers. The digital environment is important as rightfully pointed out, but it should be put in the historic context and evolution of culture over more than 2000 years of history.

2. The core of live performance is to give the audience, participants or public a special and unique experience of what happens on a stage. It's a process that already starts long before the actual event itself, with beacons as the choice of the performance, the purchase of tickets, the arrangements for the evening or day out, the performance itself and the after talk. In each of those moments the digital technologies contribute and are complementary to the live experience.
3. New technologies offer indeed possibilities allowing access to culture to particular groups in society, as the cultural offer is more and more focusing on niche markets, which is a new phenomenon arising from the digital technologies, and which have influenced also the mass media as gatekeepers to culture.
4. The information note refers to the small size of cultural markets and under-optimised international mobility. The characteristic SME structure of Europe's economy in its whole, has been recognised by the European Commission in different areas as a strength that underpins entrepreneurship across the EU. SMEs typically operate in niche markets, which do not automatically mean to be small of size. They are the most flexible, often very innovative or creative and risk-taking and have the ability to develop a unique brand for the insiders. The luxury industry in Europe for example with a mix of large brands and hundreds of small designers is a good example of this, as is the case in other sectors. The hotel sector in Europe is another example: it thrives on the thousands of small hotels and bed & breakfasts, alongside the main hotel chains. In the live performance sector, one will find that alongside small theatre producing companies there exist big West End theatres, but the latter could not provide the quality for which they are renowned without the first as that is the place where many actors, stage designers and technicians gained experience and training. Diversity, choice, niche and large markets are complementary and are the intellectual and cultural richness of Europe.
5. The economic potential in terms of GDP and jobs (direct and related jobs in the economy), is there thanks to the rich diversity that exist. Characteristic to the output of the live performance sector, is that it is "made in Europe" and that it is a strong export product to other parts of the world. This underpins the potential for growth in the wider economy.
6. Whereas mobility and touring to other parts of the world remain important, it should not be forgotten that the growth potential of tourism and the predictions of overseas visitors in the coming decade (in particular from Asia) to Europe shall be significant. When people visit Europe, a top argument to travel to Europe's cities and countries is to be able to take part in the rich cultural scene. A wide offer and choice, relying at the same time on Europe's historic richness and immense creativity, makes of Europe an attractive brand.

These are points that Pearle\* considers to be important to take into account when developing a new programme for culture after 2013.

Pearle\* acknowledges that the objectives should help to achieve the EU 2020 Strategy of jobs and growth. Through flagship initiatives, through the integrated guidelines for the Member States, and in specific policy areas, this is also a framework for culture. Members of Pearle\* also take note of the fact that other programmes offer opportunities for support in the sector, not in the least with regard to training, education, learning, and capacity-building through the wide range of different education programmes. The recent studies conducted by the European Commission demonstrate the potential for support when related to projects in areas, other than education, related to regional development, research and innovation, youth, social affairs, etcetera.

### **3. Comments to the questions in the consultation document**

#### **3.1. In general:**

1. Pearle members agree that the EU should **maintain a specific culture programme** (question 2.1.) that allows to focus on particular aspects of arts and culture as it is enshrined in the Treaty.
2. Taking into account the small budget presently available for culture, Pearle\* is of the opinion that the culture programme should **avoid duplication or overlapping with EU programmes** that allow for projects to be financed in the context of other policy areas.
3. A European culture programme needs to be **unique** inasmuch that support for culture initiatives cannot be covered in other areas.
4. The future EU culture programme should offer **added value** to cultural policy and programmes in the different Member States and allow for the culture sector to develop own cross-border initiatives with a European dimension.
5. A future EU culture programme needs to pay special attention to foster cooperation between all Member States but in particular underlining cultural exchange and **cooperation with the New Member States**.
6. Fragmentation into different strands, focus on a few sectors, narrowing down support to defined areas, are rather **to be avoided** in a next programme. The initiative should lay with the grassroots level giving all sectors the same start position. Such starting point will allow for healthy competition between the best quality projects.

#### **3.2. On the objectives**

7. The culture programme post-2013 obviously needs to address objectives which will be relevant for the period 2014-2020. It is felt that the proposed objectives focus on themes which are currently high on the agenda and that are currently addressed in projects and by networks. Pearle\* is of the opinion that the consolidation of efforts strengthening capacities is an issue that is currently taken place which shall by 2014 already have reached results and achieved targets. The objectives for a culture programme 2014-2020 rather should focus on following aspects: **external relations** (in a two-way format of promotion and circulation), strengthen the **culture diverse offer** that exists in

Europe, ensure **that culture will be safeguarded** for future generations, and allow for **accessing culture** at different levels and groups.

8. The seven<sup>1</sup> proposed objectives in the consultation paper, could be prioritised and consolidated as follows:
  - Diversity of cultural expressions
  - External relations (excluding any prioritisation of countries) in a two-way mode of mobility and circulation
  - Accessing culture in all its aspects of learning, researching, preserving (archiving), dissemination, participation, inclusion, development
9. Referring to our general comments, objectives such as capacity-building and professional development and urban/regional development, are –although of importance to the sector- likely to be **covered in other EU programmes**. If relevant within the scope of an activity, capacity building or individual and territorial development could be integrated in the more general objectives.
10. It would merit could initiatives be let to the sectors itself to strengthen those areas which need further attention. The tools, means, activities or initiatives must be with the sectors itself. Important is that efforts can be carried through in a sustainable way. In its award criteria the Commission should seek for **concrete benefits to the grassroot level**. Whereas larger structures may be the applicant, the ultimate beneficiary should be the grassroot artists and organisations.

### **3.3. Activities**

11. The consultation paper presents a wide spectrum of activities that a future culture programme could support, including:
  - a. Development of the professional skills of artists or other cultural professionals in an international context
  - b. International networking for exchanging experiences and practice (peer learning/peer coaching)
  - c. Interdisciplinary partnerships between arts institutions and business to foster the entrepreneurial skills of artists or cultural professionals working in an international context
  - d. Creation of new works and performances by operators from different countries working together
  - e. Development of a space for experimentation, innovation and risk taking in the cultural sector
  - f. Development of innovative digital content, digitisation and new digital distribution and exhibition platforms
  - g. Cultural activities promoting understanding of common European heritage
  - h. Incentives for artists performing or touring outside of their own country

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<sup>1</sup> cultural diversity , Mobility /circulation of works and products, Access to heritage and works, Capacity-building and professional development, Third countries / external relations (Cooperation with third country operators/ specific or all countries), Urban/regional development, Social inclusion (Access to culture & participation for disadvantaged groups)

- i. Transnational exchange of artefacts or other works
  - j. Funding for cultural and creative companies/organisations that promote the development of artists and their works in different European countries specifically with a view to fostering cultural diversity
  - k. Support to enable artists and cultural operators to overcome barriers to transnational mobility (e.g. legal and administrative burdens)
  - l. Translation of fiction into different languages
  - m. Inclusion of other costs for literary translation, such as purchasing of rights, publication costs, translation of book summaries and other promotional activities
  - n. Festivals with a strong European dimension and visibility and featuring works and artists of European significance
  - o. European prizes in the field of contemporary architecture, cultural heritage, literature and pop music
  - p. Media initiatives giving visibility to European cultural themes and projects
12. The above enlisted activities provide for a wide range of possible projects and ways of support. Because of the diversity it is difficult to consider these as a framework which allows the culture sector to develop own activities. Furthermore Pearle is strongly of the opinion that the **EU should not prioritise certain parts of the culture sector above others** and that a culture programme should therefore be broad in its reach.
13. The EU should equally **avoid too narrow definitions of action strands**, for example on translation of fiction (see above point 10.l) which excludes other literature and to consider carefully if other programmes exist and offer access to funding with regard to specific topics, such as through the policy area 'multilingualism'.
14. The activities to be supported could go into strands which allow for all cultural sectors and cultural players to introduce proposals, such as :
- **Experimentation, research, creativity and innovation**  
This allows to be able to work during a year or longer on focus on a particular new area in a sector, related to new technologies or new research formats, including exchange with different groups of specialists in a particular sector or different business sectors
  - **Dissemination, mobility, access to different groups in society**  
This strand allows for projects that focus on exchange and touring, develop own programmes focusing on particular target groups, opportunities to improve dissemination in a sector itself or between different sectors, improve the use of digital tools, technologies and social media. There is a particular European added value to this as it concerns inherently cross-border themes.
  - **Promotion, visibility, representation**  
This strand would give the EU the possibility to support sectors to promote their cultural output within the EU and abroad, to be visible through the label 'culture made in Europe' and demonstrate the richness of cultures that exist across Europe. Applicants should be able to decide themselves to which parts of the world activities are developed as there is great

variation between Member states to which countries one is more related (e.g. there is an obvious relationship because of language between Spain and Latin-America).

This strand might also provide support for successful projects under the first two strands which merit promotion and visibility.

15. Activities such as **European prizes**, should be an initiative emerging from the sectors itself, rather than to be promoted by the European Commission. It should not be forgotten that in many member states there exists a wide scope of cultural prizes, including in the performing arts sector. If true visibility at a European level to showcase Europe's cultural diversity then this could be included in the strand focusing on promotion. The European Commission could consider to develop for example a European prize for people not from the culture sector itself (business, academic, politicians, diplomats...) but that have put culture in Europe on a higher level and as a result be awarded for this live achievement.
16. If the Commission intends to continue developing **structured dialogue** with the sector through the 3 currently established cultural platforms that support should be covered in a specific reserved budget.
17. Consideration should be given to the **support for studies, research, collection of data and statistical information** which is essential with regard to general knowledge about the culture sector and to respond to specific study subjects or in view of policy making processes.

### **3.4. Types of Support**

18. When considering that a project has an additional European dimension and is complementary to other activities that operate at a local, regional, national level then the support should as much as possible cover the costs for the project, i.e. at least 80%. In the logic of the above, a mixture of large and small projects, which are managed by organisations in the sector itself is recommendable.
19. As Pearle\* has never applied itself for an operating grant, such feedback should be given by those organisations that exist thanks to the support of the EU. Some structures, such as ambassadors, might fit into a strand such as promotion and visibility.
20. If the European Commission wishes to support a structured dialogue with the sector it might be advisable to have a specific strand for all kinds activities arising from dialogue between the cultural sector and the European institutions.
21. A major challenge is dissemination and communication on certain activities. The culture contact points can play in this a pivotal role and act as intermediaries to reach the whole cultural sector, in particular when it concerns projects of a real cross-border nature (for example on mobility).
22. For any start up projects or first time support, it is important that the organisation can receive a substantial part of the funding as soon as the application is accepted.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Pearle welcomes the invitation from the European Commission to consult stakeholders on a future culture programme after 2014.

Pearle underlines that:

- A culture programme must continue to exist
- Such programme should have broad objectives and give access to all cultural sectors on an equal basis
- Activities should emerge from the sector itself rather than be proposed by the Commission
- Funding should be as high as possible, considering the notion that it concerns projects with a real European dimension