Evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination and the Structured Dialogue, as the Agenda for Culture's implementing tools at European Union level

Final Report

European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture

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Final Report for the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This *Evaluation of the Open Method of Coordination and the Structured Dialogue, as the Agenda for Culture's implementing tools at European Union level* provides an assessment of the extent to which the tools – the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and the Structured Dialogue (SD) – contribute to the achievement of objectives set for the European Agenda for Culture.

The implementing tools (OMC and SD) of the European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world[1] ("the Agenda") are intended to help bring together the various actors at European Union (EU) and Member State (MS) level to take action in pursuit of shared objectives and to address cultural challenges of European dimension. Such challenges include, most notably, the high fragmentation of the market for cultural works limiting the choice for consumers, lack of capacity to operate internationally and limited organisation of the cultural and creative sectors at EU level. At the same time, the design and implementation of the tools reflects both the requirements of the EU to act, as well as the (limits to the) competences of the EU in this field. Based on the principle of subsidiarity, action at EU level can address problems of European scale and dimension in a more effective way than can action by Member States or civil society stakeholders alone.

This evaluation comes in a period of reflection and future planning, such as those on Creative Europe and the preparation of the Culture Work Plan which will succeed to the current one. This evaluation is therefore an important step in determining not only the success to date of the implementing tools, but also in identifying the key success and areas of improvement of the process itself in order to provide recommendations for the future.

Methodology

The research methodology was based on a set of evaluation questions, structured according to the principal evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The following data research tools were used:

- Desk research, including review of the EU culture policy documents, outputs of the OMC working groups and SD platforms, and other documentation related to each implementing tool;

- Two online surveys including a survey for members of the OMC working groups and Cultural Affairs Committee (108 responses) and a survey of civil society representatives taking part in the work of SD platforms and European Culture Forums (288 responses);

- Qualitative and quantitative interviews including 13 with European Commission representatives, 11 with Cultural Affairs Committee members, 42 with representatives of OMC groups (including 4 interviews with Presidency representatives) and 46 with civil society stakeholders;

- A focus group with civil society representatives on 30 April 2013; and

- Country case studies on Austria, Estonia, Spain and Sweden.

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[1] Commission Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world; COM(2007) 242 final.

The evaluation methodology and data collected was sufficient to develop robust conclusions. The key strengths of the methodology were: the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the consultation of wide range of stakeholders, and the significant body of documents made available for the evaluation team on the functioning of the OMC working groups and SD platforms.

The key limitations of the methodology and data collection are related to the fact that the majority of interviews were undertaken with those directly involved in the OMC working groups and the Structured Dialogue process. This provided significant insights on the functioning and the work of each of the tools; but the views of those who are beyond the direct sphere of interest are represented to a smaller extent in the evaluation.

The online survey results provided valuable quantitative data for the evaluation, especially in terms of civil society organisations involved in the work of the Platforms and/or taking part in the European Culture Forums (results with a margin of error of 4.8%). However, the survey for the OMC working groups and Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) members produced results with a margin of error of 8%, which meant any differences in responses between sub-groups of respondents were not statistically valid. This is partly due to the smaller total population size, which requires a relatively higher response rate in order to reduce the margin of error. In general conclusions are therefore drawn at the level of the tools as a whole, rather than at the level of individual OMC or Structured Dialogue themes (except where qualitative evidence can be used).

Conclusions concerning the Open Method of Coordination

Relevance

- Through the range of activity generated and level of participation and engagement, implementation has demonstrated the relevance of the Culture OMC process to the **policy objectives** set out in the Agenda for Culture.

- The **Work Plans for Culture** provide a set of priorities for the OMC working groups, which are relevant to a number of key EU policy objectives. An appropriate set of operating principles is provided, which reflect the political context, time and resources available and policy development needs of the sector. The Work Plan (WP) for Culture 2011-2014 provides an improved and more integrated guiding framework and better defined objectives, compared with the previous process (2008-2010). The provision for a mid-term review under the current Work Plan presents a valuable opportunity to assess the continued relevance of the priorities and target activities, and to make any necessary adjustments.

- The Culture OMC is consistent with the **wider set of OMC processes** being implemented across a range of EU policy areas. It has a distinct identity and modality appropriate to the specific conditions found in the field of culture policy, characterised by a high degree of subsidiarity, general absence of EU legislation and a diverse and fragmented sector in Europe.

- The **specificities** of the culture OMC process bring a number of positive benefits, including high levels of attendance, and providing valuable opportunities for individuals from different backgrounds to participate in high quality exchanges and mutual learning activities around issues of common interest. Communities and interest and knowledge networks are also developing as a result.

- The **Culture OMC** also brings potential weaknesses in terms of outputs that are too generalised, over-dependency on the effectiveness of the chair, variations in the level of expertise of participants, weak

(although improving) dissemination approaches and lack of effective mobilisation of research capacity for building a solid evidence-based approach.

- However, the changes made under the **second generation of OMC working groups,** (emphasising the need to agree well-defined, specific topics as early as possible in the process, and to define precisely the expected outputs), have provided clearer direction and helped to focus activity better, compared with the first set of OMC working groups.

- Overall, the **themes and topics** covered by both generations of the OMC process have proved equally relevant to policy-making at national and EU level and the working groups are meeting demand for mutual learning opportunities between Member States. The breadth of the topics and themes addressed by the OMC process (through sub-groups for example) has increased the relevance of the working groups to a wide range of participants. The evidence suggests a two-fold need is being met: to share and learn about practices in other countries, and to learn about and participate in the development of EU policies in areas of particular relevance to national interests. However, this has also meant sometimes struggling to quickly agree on an appropriate balance in terms of technical/non-technical content and on which issues deserve most attention, especially in the working groups for the period 2008-2010.

- The **European Added Value** of the Culture OMC lies primarily in providing opportunities for mutual learning on issues of common interest, which would not otherwise be available to participants. This allows knowledge to be made available at national level more effectively than would be the case through other routes (which should help decision-making), and links a wider cohort of governmental representatives to the EU policy-making level.

Effectiveness

- **Participation** in meetings was satisfactory overall. The mixture of officials, practitioners and external experts strengthened the quality of the activity carried out. Some members are more active than others, reflecting variations in the state of policy development between countries, varying expertise and competences, and resources. Some attend in order to share knowledge; others to listen and learn. Language is sometimes an obstacle. One of the most important factors to consider in terms of the profile of participants concerns individuals' connectivity to key decision-makers in their home country (e.g. in Ministries).

- The **outputs** of the second generation OMC show a marked improvement compared with those of the first generation OMC, as a result of more clearly defined subject areas and target outputs, and a re-orientation towards more practical material (guides, handbooks, tools etc.). There remains potential for further improvements in outputs, although a lack of time and research capacity means an evidence-based approach is not yet possible (whereas this could enhance the quality of the outputs developed).

- Under the initiative of the European Commission, significant efforts have been made to **disseminate** outputs at national level, via a range of channels, but this has been largely unstructured and a number of factors are limiting progress here, including the lack of connectivity between OMC country participants and national ministries, the low profile and lack of influence of some country participants, and issues around translation. Each country has to work within the constraints of its own national structures and systems.

- **Benefits and impacts** mainly concern mutual learning, best practice exchange and the building of knowledge networks, rather than any far-reaching effects on national policies. Although it is difficult to gauge the extent of the impact overall, some activity and outputs have fed through into impacts on national policy, and a proportion of these results appear directly attributable to the OMC.

- There is potential to achieve greater impacts, through stronger **connectivity and dissemination channels** between OMC participants and key decision-makers at national level. The use of dissemination plans of the outputs has been a useful development and should be developed further. Improvements in the quality of outputs (including a more thorough, evidence-based approach) should also encourage higher take-up.

- **Interaction** between the OMC working groups and the Structured Dialogue process has been limited and there are potential benefits from closer integration (for example it could bring a wider range of expertise to bear on common themes). The transversal aspect of culture policy has been addressed, but again to a rather limited extent within the working groups. The participation of external experts and efforts to engage with other DGs were useful components of the work of the OMC.

Efficiency

- The **organisation and management** of the OMC process has been efficient - support from the Commission and the working conditions are considered very positive. Characteristics of the process have been satisfactory overall.

- The **process adaptations** made for the second generation OMC have had a broadly positive effect in terms of applying a more specific mandate and defining intended outputs more precisely; but there is a risk that time pressure might negatively affect output quality in future.

- There is a strong preference among participants for **working interactively**, in small groups, and more advanced preparation and more activity between formal meetings would help participants to increase quality and improve productivity. More use of study visits would also potentially enhance interaction and engagement, and lead to improved results.

Sustainability

- The OMC has evolved through two generations (2008-2010 and 2011-2014) and as a result a number of **key improvements** have been implemented to increase focus and clarity. This has included an improvement in the quality of outputs, which should encourage wider take-up of results at national level.

- The OMC is **sustainable** in its current format. Further, incremental improvements could be made in a number of areas, while keeping the fundamental structure and process intact. For example there is potential to make further improvements to address weaknesses in certain, inter-linked areas (profile of participants, a more evidence-based approach to developing outputs and strengthening dissemination).

Conclusions concerning Structured Dialogue

Relevance

- At the time it was established the Platform model represented a **relevant mechanism** with the potential to address sectoral needs including strengthening advocacy capacity, encouraging trans-sectoral working among the cultural organisations and fostering dialogue between civil society and the Commission. Civil society organisations strongly welcomed the opportunities provided, and were committed to implementation.

- There is still a **need to continue dialogue** between civil society and the Commission, to support cross-sectoral working, structuring of civil society so that local, regional, national concerns feed into the dialogue process through representative interlocutors, bridging the gap between the EU institutions and the culture sector.

- The European **Culture Forums** are relevant tools for achieving the objectives set for Structured Dialogue especially in terms of exchanges of good practice, encouraging cross-sectoral awareness and increasing collaboration. They bring a number of benefits, including widening engagement in and awareness of European culture policies. Their openness to all organisations and individuals is a positive feature.

- The **themes** covered by Structured Dialogue tools were relevant to civil society organisations especially for their work at European level but the relevance decreased for cultural organisations active within the Member States. However, the themes covered by Structured Dialogue were not explicitly linked to the themes and priorities identified in the Council Work Plan for Culture and do not mirror the themes covered by OMC groups.

- The **European Added Value** of the Structured Dialogue tools is strongest in facilitating trans-sectoral cooperation, networking and exchanges among the culture sector representatives. Without the funding provided by the Commission it is unlikely that similar results could have been achieved by civil society organisations themselves. This is especially the case for the European Culture Forums, which are organised entirely by the European Commission.

- At the time it was set up, there was a need to complement other, more formal **consultation mechanisms**, especially those in the framework of legislative proposals and key policy documents. However, the potential added value of the Platforms in terms of consultation between civil society organisations and the European Commission was not exploited fully, at least in part because of the lack of a common understanding about ownership of the process and how it should work in practice.

Effectiveness

- Overall, **participation** was satisfactory in terms of geography, sector coverage and types of participants. However, smaller Member States and some sub-sectors (radio, architecture, youth and artistic crafts) appear to be comparatively under-represented. National cultural organisations are well represented in the Forums and Platform for Intercultural Europe but are not directly involved in the work of the other Platforms. Increasing engagement between the Platforms and national cultural organisations would bring a number of benefits in terms of wider engagement, stronger evidence base and increased links to the culture sector at national and local level.

- The quality of the **outputs** produced was satisfactory overall, but there is limited evidence on the extent to which these responded to the needs of the Commission, were used to inform policy process or reached a wide audience. The outputs would have benefitted from being underpinned by a stronger evidence base reflecting the concerns and views of wider cultural sector as well as organisations working at national level. In addition, more exchanges between the Commission and civil society on how the outputs would be used could help define and target them better.

- **Interaction** between the OMC and Structured Dialogue Platforms was limited, especially during the implementation of the first Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. It improved significantly during the second phase, through increased participation of Platform representatives in the OMC groups. However, exchanges would benefit from alignment of the thematic areas covered by the two instruments, within the overall framework of the Council Work Plan.

- The **objectives** set for the Structured Dialogue process have been achieved in relation to bringing the sector closer together, increasing the capacity to undertake advocacy work at EU level, and opening up new opportunities for exchanges between civil society and the Commission. The Platforms brought together organisations that had never worked together before.

- The **benefits** of the process started to reduce after the first phase of the process, especially in relation to the dialogue with the Commission. This was the result of a number of factors including the need for clearer ownership of the process, limited visibility of the work of the Platforms among those not directly involved, member organisations and wider audiences. The work of the Platforms would have benefited from better alignment with the Council Work Plan for Culture and the OMC groups. This would have ensured that the outputs produced by the Platforms were disseminated more widely among the Member State representatives and would have increased the complementarity of the two initiatives.

- **The impact** of the work of the Platforms at national level is comparatively low, beyond capacity-building and network effects. There was a lack of opportunity for national members to feed into the work of the Platforms and there is a low visibility of their outputs at national level. The PIE is the exception here since its membership includes national organisations, unlike the other two Platforms.

- **European Culture Forums** have played a valuable role in increased awareness of European culture policies and in improving cooperation among sector organisations. The opportunities for networking, exchanges and debate was emphasised by large number of survey respondents as an area for improvement of the forums.

Efficiency

- **Mainstreaming** of culture has been addressed by all three Platforms, and the interpretation and approach was very different for each one. Thematic areas covered were often very transversal, e.g. the Platform for Intercultural Europe (PIE) discussed such issues as education and social inclusion. The nature of the membership of the Platforms ensured that the transversal nature of the culture policy was addressed. The participation of external experts and efforts to engage with other Directorates-General of the European Commission were a key part of the work of the Platforms.

- Each Platform developed its own **management structures** and organisational arrangements leading to very different approaches. This sometimes created tensions, lack of transparency and inconsistencies. For example, PIE developed an institutionalised approach with very different membership structure from the other platforms bringing together European networks, national organisations and private individuals. While the Platform on Access to Culture (ACP) and the Platform

on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) were set up to bring together existing networks in a less institutionalised way.

- Stakeholders are generally satisfied with the **organisation of the European Culture Forum (ECF)** by the Commission. These events provide a valuable contribution in terms of engaging a wide range of cultural and civil society organisations in EU policy work and there is a strong case for continuation of the support provided.

Sustainability

- The extent to which **Platforms** depend on the financial support for the Commission depends on the set up of the Platform, the sectors and the scope of activities. For example, the CCI already operate without dedicated funding, with a strong potential for sustainability. It is likely that some advocacy work for all three Platforms could continue without further funding. However, dissemination, research, project activities, involvement of the organisations from wider range of Member States would not be possible without financial support.

- The **European Culture Forums** could not exist without the support from the EU. They make a valuable contribution to the implementation of the Agenda for Culture and should continue as an initiative organised and funded by the Commission, largely following the current format.

Recommendations

Culture OMC

1. Consider producing more detailed guidance to describe the key competences, profile and participants for OMC working groups, to be shared with Member States to encourage them to nominate members with sufficient knowledge and influence to enhance the visibility and quality of the groups.

2. Continue and reinforce the focus on concrete outputs in the OMC working groups, while also considering the provision of more research capacity and support to working groups to assist them to produce stronger outputs, more efficiently (either through research support from within the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) or via a service contract with external providers).

3. Also consider extending the duration of the working group cycle, for example to include one or two additional meetings.

4. Retain and further develop the use of dissemination plans for OMC outputs and in collaboration with Member States consider how more resources can be made available to translate more outputs in order to improve dissemination.

5. Consider ways in which a wider range of locations and formats for meetings might be introduced for the OMC working groups, while maintaining an appropriate balance between formal and informal activity (such as study visits).

Structured Dialogue

6. Dialogue between civil society and the Commission should continue, but the way the Platforms are organised in this respect post-2013 needs to be revised. It is important to build on what has been achieved so far especially in terms of increasing the advocacy capacity of the sector, cross-sectoral cooperation and developing the framework for exchanges between civil society and the Commission. However, it is important to address the issues that started to appear during the last few years, such as the need to clarify the ownership of the process, increase visibility of the Platforms among those not directly involved,

7. Realigning the work of the Platforms to the Council Work Plan is likely to offer a number of benefits such as increasing dialogue between OMC working groups, civil society and the Commission; introduce the flexibility of adjusting the themes on the basis of the needs; introduce the possibility for mid-term review of the implementation process and allowing a stock-take mid-way through the implementation of the Work Plans.

8. The ownership of the dialogue process needs to be clarified. On the one hand, civil society organisations should take the lead in terms of developing common positions, identifying common issues that are agreed among wide range of stakeholders. On the other hand, the Commission should play a larger role in setting out the framework for implementation of the dialogue process. Rigidity and unnecessary institutionalisation of structures should be avoided and greater flexibility and adaptability introduced where possible.

9. Participation in the dialogue process needs to be built on flexible participation, where all the organisations interested to contribute have an opportunity to take part, according to circumstances (capacity, resources, theme etc.), not just members of a platform. Participation should also be as transparent as possible and the criteria harmonised among thematic areas, where national level organisations also have opportunities to contribute.

10. The involvement of national level organisations should be considered as a necessary condition for European civil society to engage in the dialogue process. This could take place through a variety of forms such as providing opportunities for member organisations to contribute to the outputs produced, undertaking tailored consultations on specific issues, or through surveys, events and/or projects.

11. Funding for civil society organisations needs to focus on specific initiatives and projects with minimal support for administrative functions. This could take place for example through providing funding for research projects, events and workshops that have potential to feed into the policy process.

12. European Culture Forums should continue to be organised by the Commission in order to build on the success of the events to bring wide range of the organisations together, exchange of good practice and increasing awareness of EU culture policy. Future forums should increase the opportunities for discussions, debates, networking and interaction among participants. This means potentially shifting the balance from plenary sessions and lectures to the provision of more interactive formats.

1.0 Introduction

Ecorys UK is pleased to present this final report for the *Evaluation of the Agenda for Culture's implementing tools at EU level* undertaken on behalf of the European Commission DG Education and Culture, under the Framework Contract – EAC/50/2009. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the assignment are presented in annex one. The evaluation is intended to provide an assessment of the extent to which the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) and the Structured Dialogue (SD) contribute to the achievement of objectives set for the European Agenda for Culture.

1.1 Evaluation

The implementing tools (OMC and SD) of the European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world[2] ("the Agenda") are intended to help bring together the various actors at EU and Member State level to take action in pursuit of shared objectives and to address cultural challenges of European dimension. Such challenges include, most notably, the high fragmentation of the market for cultural works limiting the choice for consumers, lack of capacity to operate internationally and limited organisation of the cultural and creative sectors at EU level. At the same time, the design and implementation of the tools reflects both the requirements of the EU to act, as well as the (limits to the) competences of the EU in this field. Based on the principle of subsidiarity, action at EU level can address problems of European scale and dimension in a more effective way than can action by Member States or civil society stakeholders alone.

This evaluation comes in a period of reflection and future planning, such as those on Creative Europe and the preparation of the Culture Work Plan which will succeed to the current one. This evaluation is therefore an important step in determining not only the success to date of the implementing tools, but also in identifying the key success and areas of improvement of the process itself in order to provide recommendations for the future. This balance of evaluation and forward-looking assessment is reflected in the Terms of Reference that outlined three key objectives:

- To evaluate the Open Method of Coordination in the field of culture;

- To evaluate the Structured Dialogue process;

- To evaluate how mainstreaming has been taken into account when implementing the OMC and Structured Dialogue.

The evaluation therefore required an approach based on critical thinking, where standard evaluation questions are complemented by a willingness to engage with the specific nature of the implementing tools, in order that success factors and lessons may be more easily identified. In addition it was apparent that classical models of evaluation were not entirely suited or applicable to an intervention such as the implementing tools of the Agenda: when considering any impacts on the objectives of the Agenda, we cannot realistically hope to isolate the influence of external factors and thus cannot expect to attribute a quantitative impact to the implementing tools (OMC and SD) which is truly independent of those factors. Instead, the evaluation was required to identify the contribution that the Open Method of Coordination and the Structured Dialogue made at different points along the causal chain, taking account of the influence of external factors.

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[2] Commission Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world; COM(2007) 242 final.

1.2 Research methodology

Taking into account the considerations identified above, our research methodology was based on proposing and testing a view of the likely impact of the implementing tools relative to the objectives of the Agenda. This comprised:

- Developing the "logic" of the implementing tools;

- Identifying the effects that we would expect to observe for each type of stakeholder and comparing them against a set of indicators;

- Proposing and then testing assumptions regarding "key success factors" that explain how the desired effects have been brought about; if necessary, considering alternative explanations for any observed effects;

- Analysing each of the individual OMC working groups, Platforms, and other implementing tools (e.g. Culture Forums) to illustrate how the effects have been;

- Looking at how Member States have engaged in the various processes in order to help identify instances of impact, but also to learn lessons about the best way to engage in the process;

- Developing recommendations that draw on any confirmed explanatory factors and also on good examples of individual tools.

An overview of the intervention logic is presented in the table overleaf. It outlines the objectives set out for the Agenda, specific objectives for OMC and SD as well as expected outcomes.

Table 1.1 Intervention logic for the implementing tools of the Agenda

Objectives	Specific objectives	Reach & engagement	Immediate outcome	Final outcomes
• Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue • Promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the EU2020 Strategy • Promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations	• Foster exchange of best practice • Structure co-operation around the strategic objectives of the Agenda • Generate policy recommendations to feed EU and national policy-making	OMC working groups	• Outputs of OMC working groups (reports, good practice compendia, policy recommendations) • Instances of dialogue – formal and informal, immediate and on-going; with policy makers in the field of culture and in other policy fields	• Specific new tools or approaches adopted • EU, MS and cultural stakeholders reporting policy learning, positive influence, adoption of best practice approaches and principles • EU & MS policymakers receiving and responding to policy recommendations and designing better actions • MS taking account of the strategic objectives of the AfC when shaping cultural and other policies • New/improved networking, co-operation and dialogue between cultural stakeholders at MS & EU level • Higher profile for culture and for cultural stakeholders • Greater advocacy capacity for the sector at EU / MS levels • Mainstreaming of cultural considerations into other EU & MS policy areas
	• Strengthen the advocacy capacity of the cultural sector in policy debate at European level • Provide a framework for the regular exchange of views and structured dialogue with Civil Society stakeholders • Encourage the culture sector to work in a more trans-sectoral way and better structure and organise itself at EU level	Culture Platforms European Culture Forums	• Outputs of Culture Platforms (reports, good practice compendia, policy recommendations) • Dissemination of good practice, debate and learning generated by European Culture Forums • Instances of dialogue – formal and informal, immediate and on-going, with stakeholders in the field of culture and in other policy fields	

1.2.1   Evaluation questions

The evaluation questions considered are presented in the Table 1.2 below, under the standard evaluation headings of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

Table 1.2 Evaluation questions

No.	Evaluation question
Relevance	
1	To what extent has the implementation of the Agenda tools shown that the instruments chosen are relevant and inspire sufficient commitment and trust to ensure an effective implementation of the initiative?
2	To what extent have the themes covered by OMC groups been relevant to policy making at EU and national level?
3	To what extent are the specificities of the culture OMC (voluntary nature, reporting approach, absence of benchmarks or indicators) a useful approach to implement the OMC in the field of culture?
4	To what extent has the thematic approach (Intercultural Europe, Access to Culture and Cultural & Creative Industries) used to organise dialogue with the Culture Civil Society Platforms proved relevant? What alternative approaches could be envisaged?
5	What is the EU added value in all of the above mentioned processes?
Effectiveness	
6	To what extent has mainstreaming effectively been taken into account in the implementation of OMC and Structured Dialogue? To what extent has it contributed to the awareness of the transversal aspect of culture among stakeholders?
7	To what extent has participation in the OMC process appeared satisfactory in terms of geographical coverage, expertise and profiles of participants?
8	To what extent has the OMC allowed a satisfactory and fruitful cooperation between Member States (understanding of the process, satisfaction with the results, networking, etc.)?
9	To what extent has the OMC process stimulated debate and structured cooperation around key priorities?
10	To what extent has the OMC process fostered an actual exchange of best practice between Member States, thus contributing to improve policy-making at national level?
11	To what extent has the support provided by the Commission to the OMC process proved adequate?
12	To what extent have the concrete outputs (policy/good practice handbook) delivered by the OMC groups been valuable policy documents? How could the quality of these outputs of the groups' work be improved?
13	To what extent have the outputs (toolkit, recommendations, etc.) of OMC groups and culture Platforms been fully exploited by the target group they were intended for? What could improve the follow-up and impact of these outputs?
14	To what extent has participation in the Structured Dialogue process appeared satisfactory in terms of geographical coverage, representation of the different cultural sectors and types of participants?
15	To what extent has Structured Dialogue with the Platforms strengthened the advocacy capacity of the cultural sector?
16	To what extent has the Structured Dialogue actually improved the dialogue between the sector and the European Commission?
17	To what extent has Structured Dialogue contributed to improve dialogue and cooperation within the cultural sector itself?
Efficiency	
18	To what extent have the implementing conditions of the OMC process (structure, duration and frequency of the meetings, reporting, interpretation, etc.) of the first and of the second OMC rounds proved efficient for the work and outputs of the groups?
19	To what extent is the current Platforms' support system (operational grants) adequate? How could the Commission's support to platforms of civil society be improved?
20	To what extent have the 2009 and 2011 European Culture Forums been useful tools in the structured dialogue with civil society?

No.	Evaluation question
21	How efficient and effective are the structures and processes put in place at the EU and national levels (in particular by MS) for applying the Agenda implementing tools and evaluating them? To what extent could they be fine-tuned and/or modified to increase efficiency and lessen the burden of actors and stakeholders?
Sustainability	
22	Which of the current elements of the implementing tools would be likely to continue and in which form?
23	What is the exploitable potential of the results of these tools, and how could it be further exploited?
24	What measures could improve the sustainability of the implementing tools of the Agenda?

1.2.2 Data Collection methods

The evidence base required to address the evaluation questions was developed using the data collection tools outlined below:

- Desk research, including review of EU culture policy documents, outputs of the OMC working groups and SD platforms, and other documentation related to each implementing tool;

- Two online surveys including a survey for members of the OMC working groups and Cultural Affairs Committee (108 responses in total out of 388 invited to take part, giving a margin of error 8%) and a survey of civil society representatives taking part in the work of SD platforms and European Culture Forums (288 responses in total out of 895 invited to take part, giving a margin of error 4.8%);

- Qualitative and quantitative interviews including 13 interviews with European Commission representatives, 11 with Cultural Affairs Committee members, 42 with representatives of OMC groups (including 4 interviews with Presidency representatives) and 46 with civil society stakeholders. The list of interviewees is included in the Annex Four;

- Focus group with civil society representatives on 30 April 2013; and

- Country case studies in Austria, Estonia, Spain and Sweden.

1.2.3 Evidence base

The evaluation methodology and data collected was sufficient to develop robust conclusions. The key strengths of the methodology were: the use of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the consultation of wide range of stakeholders, and the significant body of documents made available for the evaluation team on the functioning of the OMC working groups and SD platforms.

The key limitations of the methodology and data collection are related to the fact that the majority of interviews were undertaken with those directly involved in the OMC working groups and the Structured Dialogue process. This provided significant insights on the functioning and the work of each of the tools; but the views of those who are beyond the direct sphere of interest are represented to a smaller extent in the evaluation.

The online survey results provided valuable quantitative data for the evaluation, especially in terms of civil society organisations involved in the work of the Platforms and/or taking part in the European Culture Forums (results with a margin of error of 4.8%). However, the survey for the OMC working groups and Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) members produced results with a margin of error of 8%, which meant any differences in responses between sub-groups of respondents were not statistically valid. This is partly due to the smaller total population size, which requires a relatively higher response rate in order to reduce

the margin of error. In general, conclusions are therefore drawn at the level of the tools as a whole, rather than at the level of individual OMC or Structured Dialogue themes (except where qualitative evidence can be used).

1.3   Structure of the report

The rest of the report is structured as follows:

- **Section 2:** Open Method of Coordination (OMC) - description, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability;

- **Section 3:** Structured Dialogue - description, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability;

- **Section 4:** Conclusions and Recommendations.

- **Annexes:**

  - Terms of Reference;

  - Recommendations of OMC working groups and Structured Dialogue Platforms;

  - Survey data;

  - List of interviewees; and

  - Research tools.

2.0 Open Method of Coordination (OMC)

2.1 Overview

The concept of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) was formally introduced by the Lisbon European Council of March 2000, as a largely intergovernmental method which uses non-legislative tools in order to achieve convergence on declared goals. It provides a framework for cooperation between Member States, whose policies can be refocused towards certain common objectives (as agreed by the Council) with progress encouraged by benchmarking (e.g. comparison of Member State performance, exchange of best practice) and measured by jointly-established instruments (e.g. statistics, indicators, guidelines). The common factor in all OMCs is that "*open coordination enables policy-makers to deal with new tasks in policy areas that are either politically sensitive or in any case not amenable to the classic Community method*"[3].

The OMC is a process applied to a range of EU policy areas that fall within the competence of Member States and is designed to provide a framework for cooperation between national governments, primarily via peer learning. The process is voluntary and often described as a 'soft law' measure, i.e. one which does not take the form of EU Directives, Regulations of Decisions[4]. OMC activity usually comprises:

- *Jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved (adopted by the Council);*
- *Jointly established measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines); and*
- *Benchmarking, i.e. comparison of the Member States' performance and exchange of best practices (monitored by the Commission).*

OMC operates in the fields such as employment, social protection, youth and education. However, there are significant variations in the way it is operated in different policy fields; for example in the context of the Lisbon Strategy the OMC required Member States to produce National Reform Programmes; and within Europe 2020, the OMC on social exclusion and social protection is seen as a "…*platform for co-operation, peer review and exchange of good practice*", as well as an *"…instrument to foster commitment by public and private players to…take concrete action, including through targeted support from structural funds, notably the ESF"*[5].

2.2 Objectives of the Culture OMC

As far as culture is concerned, the Lisbon Treaty (Article 167, paragraph 4; formerly EU Treaty Article 151) requires the EU to take culture into account in all its actions so as to contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, whilst respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. However, some of the features of OMC processes in other policy fields are absent from the Culture OMC, notably the development and application of benchmarks and indicators.

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[3] Radaelli, C. 2003. The Open Method of Coordination: A new governance architecture for the European Union?. Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies.
[4] http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/open_method_coordination_en.htm
[5] COM(2010) 2020, 03.03.2010, Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf

The OMC in the field of culture was proposed by the European Commission in the Agenda for Culture in 2007 and endorsed by the Council in a resolution adopted in November 2007. It has taken its own unique form which is consistent with the spirit of the OMC concept, but different in its modus operandi to some of the other OMC. Unlike some OMC, the Culture OMC does not feature the setting of targets, national action plans or surveillance (of Member States' progress) by the Commission. Instead, the Culture OMC features a more flexible approach and a voluntary reporting system. It is conceived as a non-binding framework for structuring cooperation around the strategic objectives of the Agenda for Culture and fostering exchanges of best practice.

The topics dealt with by the Culture OMC are determined in the Work Plans for Culture adopted by the Council. These topics are addressed by a series of OMC working groups that bring participants from EU Member States together to share experiences, exchange best practices and generate policy recommendations for policy at EU, national and regional levels.

Four OMC working groups were established at the outset by the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010, covering cultural and creative industries, culture and education synergies, mobility of artists and other culture professionals, and mobility of collections. In 2010, with a report on the implementation of the Agenda for Culture[6], the Commission proposed a number of adaptations to the Culture OMC process, including a definition by the Council of broad themes and specific topics, the definition of target outputs for each topic, and greater emphasis on dissemination of outputs. In response, the second Work Plan for Culture covering the years 2011-14 sets six priorities[7] of which four are to be taken forward by OMC working groups. In addition to defining practical arrangements (such as definition of the timeframe, etc.), the Plan also gives a concrete mandate to each OMC group and specifies that the working groups will submit a report containing concrete and useable results, such as good practice manuals or policy handbooks.

The table below summarises the two cycles (or generations) of the Culture OMC (2008-2010 and 2011-2014) and associated Working Groups.

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[6] COM(2010) 390 final of 19.07.2010 on the implementation of the European Agenda for Culture, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0390:FIN:EN:PDF

[7] Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 (2010/C 325/01). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF

Table 2.1 Overview of the Culture OMC

Work Plan for Culture	OMC working groups
2008-2010[8]	• Cultural and creative industries; • Culture and education synergies; • Improving the conditions to support the Mobility of Artists and Culture professionals; and • Mobility of collections.
2011-2014[9]	**Priority A: Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture:** • The role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of better access to and wider participation in culture (2011-2012); • The role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue (2012-2013). **Priority B: Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs):** • Strategic use of EU support programmes, including Structural Funds, to foster the potential of culture for local and regional development and the spill-over effects of CCIs on the wider economy (2011-2012); • CCIs export and internationalisation support strategies (2012-2013); • Good practices on financial engineering for SMEs in cultural and creative sector (2013-2014). **Priority C: Skills and mobility:** • Mobility support programmes (2011-2012); • Promotion of Creative partnerships (2012-2013); • Artists' residencies (2013-2014). **Priority D: Cultural heritage including mobility of collections:** • Examination of ways and means to simplify the process of lending and borrowing of cultural goods (2011-2012).

Source: Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 and 2011-2014

In the next sections we will describe each OMC working group in turn.

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[8] 'First generation Culture OMC'
[9] 'Second generation OMC'

2.3   First generation Culture OMC

2.3.1   Mobility of collections 2008-2010

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Mobility of Collections	23 Chair (IT and UK)	7	• Long-term loans (BE; BG; DE; ES; HU; MT); • Exchange of experts (CY; EE; ES; LT; MT; PL; PT; RO); • State indemnity and non-insurance (BE; BG; EE; EL; FI; LT; PT; RO); • Immunity from seizure (AT; DE; EL; ES; FI; FR; PL; SE; UK); and • Prevention of theft/illicit traffic (CY; DE; EL. ES; IT; NL; RO; SE).	Final Report[10] and Recommendations to the Cultural Affairs Committee on Improving the Means of Increasing the Mobility of Collections

The 2008-2011 Council Work Plan set out the objectives for the group to consider and make recommendations in such areas as the development of incentives for mobility of collections including long-term loans, eliminating barriers, comparing national laws and exchanging best practices.[11] During the first meeting two chairs – from IT and UK – were selected for the working group. Activities of the working group included gathering information and data, including via surveys and questionnaires at national level. For example, the sub-group on state indemnity sent five separate questionnaires to 30 countries; the prevention of theft sub-group three questionnaires;[12] and the immunity from seizure sub-group received 21 responses to its survey of Member States. Other approaches included developing FAQs, bibliographies and inventories of relevant web resources, and in the case of one sub-group a conference on "Collections Mobility and Economics of Museums"[13]. In particular, activity focussed on identifying the key source documents at national and international levels (legal instruments, guidance and reports) to develop a baseline picture by mapping policy, best practices and legal frameworks across the Member States, and to allow comparisons to be made. Sub-groups worked to agree Action Plans and presented progress reports to the whole OMC group, culminating in a series of findings and recommendations, based on the state-of-play assessments which were produced.

The work of this OMC working group was supported by contributions from various speakers, who were able to provide information on specific aspects of interest: for example from the European Commission's DG Justice, Freedom and Security who attended the sub-group on illicit trafficking in March 2012, and a presentation given by DG EAC on the Leonardo da Vinci mobility programme at the fifth meeting of the OMC working group. A Final Report was produced in in June 2010[14] and contained 40 recommendations in all: 13 on state indemnity; 6 on immunity from seizure; 3 on long term loans; 15 on prevention of theft/illicit trafficking; and 3 on the mobility of museum professionals.

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[10] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/library/EU_OMC_WG_CCI_Final_Report_June_2010.pdf
[11] Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 (2008/C 143/06)
[12] On the interoperability of databases, due diligence and online internet sales.
[13] Warsaw, September 2011, as part of the Polish EU Presidency
[14] Final Report and Recommendations to the Cultural Affairs Committee on improving the means of increasing the mobility of collections. OMC Expert Working Group on the Mobility of Collections, June 2010.

2.3.2 Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) 2008-2010

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries in particular that of SMEs	24 Chair (PT and NL)	10	• Context (NL; DK; GR; FI; LV; NL; PL; UK); • Use (IT; AT; BE-W; DE; IE; IT; RO); • Method (BE-FI; BG; EE; ES; FR; LT; PT; RO); and • Content (CY; CZ; HU; MT; PT; SK).	OMC – Expert Working Group on maximising the potential of Cultural and Creative Industries, in particular that of SMEs: Final Report[15]

The Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010 set out for the group to consider, areas such as the identification of national strategies and producing an inventory of the existing national measures aiming to create an environment conducive to the establishment and development of creative and cultural industries. Other areas were the training of professionals in the culture sector; the impact of creative industries in local and regional development; the impact of European regional policy measures and financial instruments on capacity building and entrepreneurship and finally proposing possible new ways and means to promote cultural and creative industries at the Community level[16]. During the first meeting two chairs, from PT and NL, were elected. The work of the plenary sessions was organised through presentations by working group members and external experts, questionnaires to collect good/bad practices, thematic work through sub-groups and development of the final report. The sub-groups were based on different thematic areas all of which were agreed on during the fourth meeting in October 2008[17]. Each group produced one report, including analysis of the key issues and policy recommendations. These provided the main inputs for the development of the final report.

The work of the group was supported by DG Enterprise which provided a presentation on the development of a new innovation plan for the European Union. Three independent experts[18] provided feedback on the preliminary report. In addition, the Commission provided regular up-dates and contributions, and the Structural Dialogue Platform on Culture and Creative Industries also presented their work to the group. The group produced the final report in June 2010. It included eight broad lines of recommendations and 27 areas of action. The working group also provided inputs for the European Culture Forum in 2009 and in developing the Commission's Green Paper *Unlocking the Potential of Culture and Creative Industries.*

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[15] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy development/doc/library/EU_OMC_WG_CCI_Final_Report_June_2010.pdf
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/library/EU_OMC_WG_CCI_Final_Report_June_2010.pdf
[16] OMC working group (2008), *Annex to the first meeting minutes.*
[17] Open Method of Coordination-Expert Working Group (OMC-EWG) (2010), F*inal Report- OMC- Expert Working Group on Maximising the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries, in Particular that of SMEs.*
[18] Walter Santagata (University of Turin), Lluís Bonet (University of Barcelona) and Giep Hagoort (University of Utrecht)

2.3.3 Culture and Education Synergies, especially arts education 2008-2010

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Culture and Education Synergies, especially arts education	27 Chair (FR)	8 plenary and 3 informal meetings	• Content to give cultural and artistic education (AT; BE; BG; FI; FR; DE; EL; IT; MT; PL; PT; ES; NL); • Civil Society – Role of cultural institutions (NL; BE ; DK ; EE, FI ; FR ; IE ; LU ; SI); and • Training of teachers and other stakeholders in arts education and evaluation (assessment and certification) (UK; BE; FR; CY; CZ; HU; RO; SE).	Working Group on developing synergies with education, especially arts education: Intermediate and Final report[19]

The OMC working group on developing synergies with education, especially arts education was tasked to consider, report and make recommendations on policies aimed at promoting synergies between culture and education and the development of projects in order to implement the key competence "cultural awareness and expression". It was also tasked to exchange best practices on activities and structures at a regional, national and local level and to promote arts and cultural education (formal, non-formal or informal education)[20]. During the first meeting the chair from FR was elected and thematic sub-groups were set up, which formed the basis of the work. After the delivery of the intermediate report, the organisational set up changed and sub-groups were eliminated and replaced by a new structure based on a series of thematic meetings. These informal meetings where organised by the Member States on specific subjects. The first meeting was held in Germany and focused on "Digital practices of young people: perspectives for artistic and cultural education inside and outside school". The second was dedicated to "Teacher and Artistic Training, Competences and Qualifications for Education in Art and Heritage" and took place in the Netherlands. The last thematic meeting took place in Portugal and was dedicated to the modalities of partnerships with the civil society.

The final report was published in June 2010 and is based on the intermediate report revised to include discussions and activities since its completion. Neither the final nor the interim report contain the full discussions held by the group, but presents the recommendations arising from them (a summary of these is provided in Annex Two)[21].

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[19] Intermediate Report, August 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/moc-intermediate-report_en.pdf
Final report, June 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/mocedu_final_report_en.pdf
[20] Work plan for culture 2008-2010, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:143:0009:0016:EN:PDF
[21] Intermediate Report, August 2009, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/moc-intermediate-report_en.pdf
Final report, June 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/mocedu_final_report_en.pdf

2.3.4 Improving the conditions to support the Mobility of Artists and Culture professionals 2008-2010

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Improving the conditions to support the Mobility of Artists and Culture professionals	22 Chair (FI)	9	• Intermediaries (UK; BE; FR; FI; SE); • Programmes and Support Schemes (NL; AT; BE ; CZ ; DE ; ES ; FI ; FR ; IT ; LT ; PT); • Measuring Mobility (FR: MT); and • Content (DE; AT; BE; ES; HU; IE; LU; PL).	Final report to the cultural affairs committee on improving the conditions to support the Mobility of Artists and Culture Professionals[22]

The mandate of the group was to map existing practices in each Member State and suggest solutions at national and community levels regarding the inclusion of mobility in the professional training curricula of artists and culture professionals. The mandate also included ensuring the collection of and access to the relevant information on the conditions for mobility in Europe (tax, social, entry and residence conditions in different Member States) and reinforcing regional, national and Community-level support mechanisms for mobility and ensuring their complementarity in order to make it possible to suggest ways of improving the regulatory conditions and related administrative processes for mobility[23]. The chair of the group from FI was elected during the first meeting. It was suggested early on by the Chair that having three plenary meetings per year would not allow enough progress to be made, and the group therefore agreed to form sub-groups which would focus on agreed priority areas. The subgroups were designed to ensure more in-depth work on the respective thematic areas, so that draft recommendations and proposals for action could be produced for consideration by the Expert Group at its plenary meetings. The importance of participants working closely amongst themselves in between the meetings was also stressed during the set up phase.

The work of the group was assisted by external experts who provided information on specific issues for example, DG TAXUD[24]. The study "Mobility Incentives for Cultural Professionals in Europe" (Ericarts:2008) was presented to the group and the minutes suggest it was positively received. The Expert Group also exchanged views on the report *'Making learning mobility an opportunity for all'* prepared by the High Level Expert Forum on Mobility. The group produced a final report in June 2010; which contained a series of recommendations (see Annex Two) directed at the European Commission, the Member States and the cultural sector[25].

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[22] Final report and recommendations to the cultural affairs committee, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/moc_final_report_en.pdf

[23] Work plan fro culture 2008-2010, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:143:0009:0016:EN:PDF

[24] was a invited to give an update on the forthcoming review of the Directive 2006/112/EC on exemptions from VAT for certain cultural services.

[25] Final report and recommendations to the cultural affairs committee, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/moc_final_report_en.pdf

2.4 Second generation Culture OMC

2.4.1 Priority A: Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture 2011-2012

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
The role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of better access to and wider participation in culture	24 Chair (FR)	6	• Policies • Initiatives by cultural and art institutions[26].	A report on polices and good practices in the public arts and in cultural institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture[27].

The Culture Work Plan 2011-2014 identified six priority areas, four of which addressed by OMC working groups. The priority A focuses on Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture. The Work Plan indicates that the first working group under this priority should focus on '*The role of public arts and cultural institutions in the promotion of better access to and wider participation in culture'.* The participants were to identify policies and good practices of public arts and cultural institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture. The work plan also specifies a focus on the inclusion of disadvantaged groups and groups experiencing poverty and social exclusion. The group was tasked to produce a good practice manual for public arts and cultural institutions[28]. During the first plenary meeting a chair from FR was appointed. The work was organised through plenary meetings, two sub-groups and study visits initiated by Member States.

The work of the group was supported by the presentations by external experts. The contributions from two sub-groups were incorporated in the final report. The key conclusions and recommendations of the report are presented in Annex Two.

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[26] The composition of these groups (by country) was not recorded in the minutes of the meeting

[27] Report on Access to culture, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/201212access-to-culture-omc-report.pdf

[28]Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF

See also Council conclusions of 18 November 2010 on the role of culture in combating poverty and social exclusion (15448/10).

2.4.2 Priority A: Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture 2012-2013

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
The role of public arts and institutions in the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue	25 Chair (SI)	5 planned in total	• Programming (Chair: ES); • Staffing (Chair: BE); • Reaching out new publics (Chair: UK); and • Creating spaces for encounter subgroup(Chair: HU).	Good practice manual for public arts and cultural institutions

The Work Plan identifies that the second working group under Priority A should focus on "*The role of public arts and institutions in the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue".* The work of the group is on-going during the course of the evaluation. The mandate of the group was to identify policies and good practices in creating spaces in public arts and cultural institutions to facilitate exchanges among cultures and between social groups. The Work Plan sets out a particular focus on the importance of creating spaces in public arts and cultural institutions to facilitate exchanges among cultures, in particular by highlighting the intercultural dimension of heritage and by promoting artistic and cultural education through the development of intercultural competencies. The group is expected to produce good practice manual[29]. The chair from SI was elected during the first meeting. The Group organised its work through plenary meetings and four sub-groups. Members can contribute to the work of more then one sub-group. It is expected to produce the final report summer 2013.

2.4.3 Priority B: Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) 2011-2012

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Strategic use of EU support programmes, including Structural Funds, to foster the potential of culture for local and regional development and the spill-over effects of CCIs on the wider economy	24 Chair (EE)	3	• Mapping and creating pre-conditions for developing CCIs (coordinator: LV); • Strengthening CCIs, supporting the development of cultural and creative enterprises (coordinator: FI); and • Spill-over effects, bridging CCIs with the rest of the economy (including innovation, tourism, etc) (coordinator: IE).	Policy Handbook on How to Strategically Use the EU Support Programmes[30]

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[29] Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF

[30] Handbook on the strategic use of the structural funds, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/policy-handbook.pdf

Priority B of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 focuses on cultural and creative industries. The Work Plan indicates that the first working group under this priority should focus on '*Strategic use of EU support programmes, including Structural Funds, to foster the potential of culture for local and regional development and the spill-over effects of CCIs on the wider economy*'. The specific mandate of the working group was twofold: firstly to identify, compare and model good practices in this field for the attention of both managing authorities and cultural sector operators, including in particular CCIs; and secondly to examine the spill-over effects of the CCIs on the wider economy, particularly in terms of innovation, and the potential for making better use of EU support programmes to foster these effects.[31] During the first meeting a chair, from EE, was elected. In addition to the three plenary meetings two informal drafting meetings were organised. The group was expected first to produce a policy handbook and second to reflect on a joint EU-wide awareness raising initiative by the Commission and Member States to promote the integration of culture in regional and local development policies and to support smart specialisation strategies. A thematic approach was adopted and the activities were structured around three sub-groups. Each sub-group identified good practice examples relevant to their thematic area and developed recommendations which later formed the basis of the handbook.

DG EAC supported the work by providing information on policy developments and its key priorities. A representative from DG REGIO presented the 'smart specialisation' strategy to the group members while external experts presented issues relevant to CCIs, including a recent study and project funded by the INTERREG programme. The group also exchanged with representatives of the Structured Dialogue Platform on Culture and Creative Industries. The final outcome of the working group was a Policy Handbook on How to Strategically Use the EU Support Programmes, Including Structural Funds, to Foster the Potential of Culture for Local, Regional and National Development and the Spill-over Effects on the Wider Economy, April 2012. This presented a framework for the development of cultural and creative industries, and suggested ways in which this could be implemented[32].

2.4.4 Priority B: Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) 2012-2013

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
CCI export and internationalisation support strategies	26 Chair (EE, FI)	4 to date	Ad-hoc basis, different groups each meeting.	Good practice manual

The second working group under Priority B focused on '*CCI export and internationalisation support strategies'.* The work of the group was on-going during the course of the evaluation. The specific mandate of the working group is to identify good practice on export and internationalisation support for CCIs and produce a good practice manual.[33] During the first meeting two chairs from EE and FI were selected. The work of the group was organised mainly through plenary meetings. The work of the group was prepared by a mapping study of CCI export and internationalisation support strategies in EU Member States, which was presented and discussed at the first meeting. The Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR) presented the cluster policy and cooperation in relation to CCIs while external experts

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[31] Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 (2010/C 325/01). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF
[32] Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 (2010/C 325/01). http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF
[33] Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF

presented different forms of export support strategies/approaches. Synergies were developed with the European Creative Industries Alliance funded by DG ENTR, with a joint meeting. Two meetings of the group were hosted outside Brussels (Riga, Barcelona) and were associated with other activities of relevance to the work of the group, thus allowing for a greater mix of formal and informal exchanges and a better exposure to national experience of the host country. The final report is expected to be produced in autumn 2013.

2.4.5 Priority C: Skills and mobility 2011-2012

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Mobility support programmes	25 Chair (NL)	5	Ad-hoc basis, different groups each meeting.	Final report "Building a strong framework for artists' mobiliy: Five key principles"

Priority C of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 focuses on skills and mobility. The Work Plan indicates that the first working group under this priority should focus on '*Mobility Support Programmes*'. The mandate of this OMC is defined in the Council Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 as follows: "*Experts will screen mobility support programmes and schemes in order to identify barriers and problems faced in particular by small-scale culture operators and young artists and culture professionals, building on the 2008 "Mobility Matters" study. Experts will also identify good practices to overcome these difficulties*". The output would include screening results and identification of good practices and barriers to mobility. During the first meeting a chair from NL was elected. The work of the group was organised through plenary meetings when three countries made a ten-minute presentation focusing on the obstacles and any solutions found to overcome them. Then these presentations were discussed in three ad-hoc sub-groups and the results of these sub-groups were discussed afterward by the whole working group. Early on in the process, the group focussed on streamlining their work in view of the final deliverable. At the second meeting, it was agreed that the remaining meetings would focus on: identifying models of good practice; draft recommendations to the Member States and to the Commission and finalising the main deliverable. The Mobility Information Services (MIS), adopted by EYCS Council in May 2011, was also discussed at two of the meetings.

A drafting session for the final report was held in Brussels on 26 March 2012, with the participation of experts from France, Lithuania and Sweden, chaired by the Netherlands. A final report (a guide for policy makers) was produced by the group in June 2012 entitled "Building a strong framework for artists' mobility: five key principles" (see Annex Two).

2.4.6   Priority C: Skills and mobility 2012-2013

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Promotion of Creative partnerships	26 Chair (HU)	2 (to date)	n/a	Policy handbook. Reflection on a joint EU-wide initiative by the Commission and by national, regional and local partners in the Member States, to encourage creative partnerships

The second working group under Priority C focused on *'Promotion of Creative partnerships'.* The work of the group was on-going during the course of the evaluation. The mandate is to identify and model the types of successful partnerships and practices, including their positive impacts. The anticipated output of the OMC is a policy handbook and reflection on a joint EU-wide initiative by the Commission and by national, regional and local partners in the Member States, to encourage creative partnerships[34]. The work of the group is organised through plenary meetings. The final report is expected to be produced in the autumn of 2013.

2.4.7   Priority D: Cultural Heritage including mobility of Collections 2011-2012

Title	Number of countries	Number of meetings	Sub-groups	Outputs
Examination of ways and means to simplify the process of lending and borrowing cultural goods	23 Chair (UK and IT)	5	• Indemnity schemes (BE; CZ; FR; LV; NL, PL); • Valuation (CY; DE; ES; LU; NL; RO; UK) ; • Risk assessment (FI; IE; HU; MT; RO; SE); and • Transport (AT; BE; DE; ES; MT).	Toolkit (including good practice guidelines, templates and 'user guides') on state indemnity provision. Good practice manual for national authorities on other relevant issues[35]

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[34] Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF
[35] Toolkit on practical ways to reduce the cost, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/toolkit-mobility-of-collections_en.pdf
Report on practical ways to reduce the cost, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/omc-report-mobility-of-collections_en.pdf

Priority D of the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 focuses on cultural heritage including mobility of collections. The Work Plan indicates that one working group should be established under this priority. The first working group under this priority should focus on *'Examination of ways and means to simplify the process of lending and borrowing'*. The mandate of the group was to identify "…*good practices on all relevant issues in the context of mobility of collections*". This working group was tasked with examining ways and means to simplify the process of lending and borrowing cultural works, and specifically to produce a Toolkit on state indemnity provision and a good practice manual for national authorities on 'other relevant issues'[36]. The two chairs were selected during the first meeting from IT and UK. The group agreed to work towards the targeted outputs of a toolkit and good practice manual, and to structure its activities around four sub-groups. A common template to guide the work of the sub-groups was agreed at the start; comprising sections on description of the main issues; proposed definitions of the issues; the practical steps required to achieve the relevant goal, taking into account the different contexts across Member States; and compilation of statistical and practical information. This included preparing a set of questions to be submitted to the European Expert Network on Culture (EENC) and to update the statistical chapter of the 2010 OMC sub-group. The work of the Group benefitted from inputs from a number of external contributors (from DG TAXUD and ENTR, as well as seven national experts). DG EAC also asked the Group to suggest improvements to the EENC study "Short Analytical Report on the Financial Valuation of Works of Art" presented on 9 November 2011.

All sub-groups fed into the final draft Final Report and Toolkit documents, which were finalised through discussion and agreement on outstanding issues at the final meeting of the OMC Group in June 2012[37]. The Final Report contains 20 key recommendations for the European institutions, Member States, museum professionals of all levels; as well as a range of more detailed proposals under each sub-group theme (see Annex Two)[38].

2.5 Relevance

2.5.1 Objectives

As set out in Table 1.1, above, the intervention logic for the Agenda for Culture provides a set of overall objectives for the OMC process in the field of culture, as follows:

- Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- Promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs; and
- Promotion of culture as a vital element in the EU international relations.

In addition, the specific objectives of the Culture OMC are to:

- Foster exchange of best practice;
- Structure co-operation around the strategic objectives of the Agenda; and
- Generate policy recommendations to feed EU and national policy-making.

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[36] Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF
[37] Toolkit on practical ways to reduce the cost, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/toolkit-mobility-of-collections_en.pdf
[38] Report on practical ways to reduce the cost, http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/omc-report-mobility-of-collections_en.pdf

As the description of implementation above shows, the issues addressed in practice by the OMC are relevant to the three primary objectives of the Agenda for Culture. As far as the objective concerning the role of culture in EU-external relations is concerned, the Work Plan for Culture (2011-2014) identified different instruments and working methods for the implementation of this objective, other than the OMC, which are not covered by this report[39]. The emphasis in the specific objectives on voluntary co-operation, knowledge sharing and peer learning is in line with the characteristics of the field and Member States' role vis-à-vis the Commission and the Council. This is demonstrated by the range of activity generated by the process and satisfactory degree of participation and commitment secured.

The **first generation** of the Culture OMC (2008-2010) was guided by the Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010[40], which defined five priorities, together with a set of proposed activities (including OMC working groups) and principles for running the OMC working groups. The report on the implementation of the Agenda for Culture[6], produced in 2010, highlighted the range of topics tackled by the OMC working groups 2008-2011, while also noting however that *"…the process of agreeing more specific fields proved challenging for the groups and, in some cases, delayed the effective start of their activities"*. The Commission therefore proposed a number of ways to strengthen co-operation, including having a maximum of four or five broad themes, together with more specific and well-defined topics; encouraging more working in small groups (including through peer-learning visits); and closer articulation between the working groups, the Commission and the Council (via Presidencies in particular).

Subsequently, the **second generation** of the Culture OMC was guided by a set of four priorities (A to D) contained in the Work Plan 2011-2014[41], this time accompanied by a much more detailed definition of topics, instruments and working methods, and target outputs with indicative timelines. Within the overall time period, specific topics are allotted shorter windows for investigation (usually two-year periods). As with the first Work Plan, a set of operating principles are set out, including more detail on expected outputs:

"For each objective mentioned in Annex I, the groups will submit a report on the work carried out, containing concrete and useable results. Depending on the objective, these results may take the form of a good practice manual, a policy handbook or recommendations for action. The reports may also recommend the development of any relevant instrument, in any appropriate form, which may be used by the Commission or by the Member States".

One reason for the changes made from first to second generation OMC activities was to promote stronger take-up of OMC results. Crucially, the 2011-2014 Work Plan also includes formal provision for a mid-term review of implementation, *"…with a view to possible adaptations or reorientation in the light of results achieved and policy developments at EU level"*. Information on the Commission's input to this review has been made available to the evaluators[42]: it highlights further preparatory work by DG EAC to ensure the continued relevance of the topics and suggests some modifications in terms of implementing the remaining commitments under the current Work Plan.

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[39] Several activities have taken place in this respect, e.g. an Expert group on Culture and External relations-China was convened and produced a report in 2012; joint meetings of senior officials of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs were organised by different EU Presidencies.
[40] Conclusions of the Council 2008/C 143/06 of 10.06.2008
[41] Conclusions of the Council 2010/C 325/01 of 02.12.2010
[42] In the form of a non-paper from the Commission dated 05.04.2013

Finding 1: The Culture OMC is consistent with the wider set of OMC processes being implemented across a range of EU policy areas. It has a distinct identity and modality reflecting the specific conditions found in the field of culture policy; characterised by a high degree of subsidiarity and a general absence of EU legislation and a diverse and fragmented sector in Europe.

Finding 2: Through the range of activity generated and level of participation and engagement, implementation has demonstrated the relevance of the Culture OMC process to the policy objectives set out in the Agenda for Culture, and to a range of issues of general European interest in the field of culture.

Finding 3: The Work Plans for Culture provide a set of priorities for the OMC working groups, which are relevant to a number of key EU policy objectives. An appropriate set of operating principles is provided, which reflect the political context, time and resources available and policy development needs of the sector. The Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 provides an improved and more integrated guiding framework and better defined objectives, compared with the previous process (2008-2010).

Finding 4: The provision for a mid-term review under the current Work Plan presents a valuable opportunity to assess the continued relevance of the priorities and target activities, and to make any necessary adjustments.

2.5.2   Themes and thematic approaches

An analysis of key policy documents shows the themes adopted for both generations of the Culture OMC to be consistent with the main challenges identified in EU policies and set out in the European Agenda for Culture.

For example, the Council's Work Plan for the period 2005-2007[43] identified the **mobility of museum collections** as an area for development and the EU Agenda for Culture clearly recognises the importance of the mobility of cultural works in the context of promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. The Agenda provides for, inter alia, the specific objective to "*promote the mobility of works of art and other artistic expressions*"; linking the issue explicitly with the mobility of cultural professionals.

The OMC work on the development of **cultural and creative industries** is relevant to the strategic objectives of the EU and the European culture policies. It directly contributes to the specific objective identified in the Council Resolution on the European Agenda for Culture namely: "*fostering a favourable environment for the development of cultural and creative industries…*" Through supporting the development of one of the most dynamic sectors in Europe, the working group contributes to implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy aiming for the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

Promoting the **mobility of artists and culture professionals** is one of the key European culture policy objectives. It is one of the specific objectives of the Agenda for Culture and is seen as one of the ways for fostering cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. It is also of significant importance in light of the right of free movement for all European citizens reaffirmed in the Lisbon Treaty.

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[43] Conclusions of the 2616th Council meeting Education, Youth and Culture, 15-16 November 2004.

Promoting **creativity in education** is an objective of the Agenda for Culture and a priority of the European education and training policies. It recognises that culture plays an important role in supporting creativity, increasing motivation for learning and reducing early school leaving. In this way it also contributes to strategic objective for Europe of becoming a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy.

Increasing **access to culture** contributes to the objective of the Agenda for Culture to foster cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, including in the context of freedom of movement of EU citizens, where access also links strongly to other areas such as mobility of collections, multilingualism, cultural tourism and art education for example.

In terms of implementation, the evidence from the online survey and consultative interviews suggest participants in all of the OMC groups, including both generations of working groups (2008-2010 and 2011 onwards) found the themes and issues addressed to be very relevant to national policy challenges. For example: "*Good selection of themes, it helps to have certain themes on the agenda of consecutive Work Plans, so that fields explored at European level for the first time, can be further elaborated and refined*"[44].

Taking the online survey evidence for example, as the table below shows, around three-quarters of participants (across all OMC groups) found the themes to be relevant to their **national interests**.

Table 2.2 To what extent are the themes covered by the OMC process currently relevant to policy-making at national level in your country?

	To a great extent	To a modest extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Cultural and creative industries	56.4%	25.7%	1.0%	10.9%	5.9%
Culture and education synergies	38.6%	34.7%	3.0%	13.9%	9.9%
Mobility of artists and other culture professionals	28.7%	44.6%	2.0%	14.9%	9.9%
Mobility of collections	34.7%	39.6%	1.0%	15.8%	8.9%
Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and inclusive Europe	31.7%	42.6%	1.0%	13.9%	10.9%
Cultural heritage	44.6%	29.7%	2.0%	13.9%	9.9%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=101

While the broad themes chosen for the OMC attract widespread approval, clearly, when the level of enquiry is at a more detailed level and decisions have to be made about what specific issues should be discussed, then views are more likely to diverge and in particular some subjects are likely to be more technical or specialised than others (e.g. artists' residencies, transport of cultural works). Overall, a pragmatic mix of more or less specialist areas were discussed in OMC working groups and the system of discussing and agreeing specific topics has worked reasonably well; although this preparatory process does require time at the beginning of the OMC cycle: "*…the theme was very wide and it took a lot of time to discuss how to narrow it down*"[45] and "*A clear mandate is necessary, in the first group they spent a lot of time wondering what they needed to do and defining the parameters*"[46].

[44] Member of OMC working group
[45] Member of Priority A OMC working group, 2011
[46] Member of Mobility Support Programmes OMC working group, 2011-2012

Another point to bear in mind is that the more specific a topic is, the more challenging it is to find common ground, not least because of variations in the detail of national contexts (where harmonisation of policies is not on the agenda). This may result in discussions that are very general. The consultative interviews suggested that some participants felt this was the case and this fed through into rather general outputs (while many would also acknowledge the trade-off with the benefit of producing something that 'belongs' to the whole group). On the other hand, for many participants the themes corresponded to specific needs relating to a particular issue in their home country, including where new or stronger policies and legal frameworks were under consideration.

Themes were considered relevant by officials and experts alike. Some examples include the high degree of relevance of state indemnity for cultural works and immunity from seizure regulations in Poland (where reforms to legal frameworks were underway); synergy with education is an important theme in the Czech Republic, but there is a need to re-structure policy responses effectively; in Austria too it is *"…a big issue to foster collaboration between the educational and cultural sectors"*[47]. In Ireland risk assessment for mobility of cultural works was identified as an area for improvement and so the OMC process in that area was, and continues to be, very relevant. The link between state indemnity and valuation of cultural works was of particular relevance to national priorities in Bulgaria.

As shown by the evidence from the online survey (see table below), participants were motivated primarily by a desire to apply the knowledge gained to improving national policy: three-quarters of respondents identifying with the themes as key areas for knowledge transfer between countries.

Table 2.3 What were the key reasons for your Member State to participate in the OMC Group(s)?

	%
Interested in improving national policy-making through exchanges of good practice with other countries	76.3
Theme/s of the working groups were very important for my country	51.3
The OMC process is foreseen in the Work Plan for Culture	30.3
Interested to learn from others	50.0
Interested to share national good practice	59.2
Interested in influencing policy-making at EU level	50.0
Don't know	1.3
Not applicable	1.3
Other, please specify	0.0
Total respondents:	

Source: Ecorys survey

This finding is supported by the evidence from interviews, for example: "*It is a very appropriate process by which to foster good practice and generate policy recommendations for consideration. It facilitates a better understanding of the structures involved and enhances co-operation not least among the experts themselves*"[48].

For some Member States representatives the main benefits was the opportunity to learn from countries with well-developed solutions to common challenges: from the UK on mobility of works and register of works, and the Netherlands on close co-operation between policy and practice for example. The evidence from consultative interviews also suggests that working groups provided a valued opportunity for

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[47] Member of OMC working group
[48] Member of OMC working group

representatives to exchange knowledge with others from different countries, who brought widely varying perspectives, culture and practice and legal frameworks to the table. This resulted in high quality debates and discussions that had significant depth and width: "*Exchange of experience is vitally important to local development, drives efficiencies and promotes better standards for all*"[49]. This evidence is consistent with the specific objectives of the OMC (set out in Section 2.3.1, above), particularly the first objective concerning fostering best practice exchange.

We have seen that participants found the work of the OMC very relevant to their own national policy concerns; but they were also keen to contribute to the **development of EU policies** in the relevant areas: according to the survey, participants found the OMC themes highly relevant in terms of EU level policy: as shown in the table below. Here, there were no discernible variations between specific OMC themes.

Table 2.4 To what extent are the themes covered by the OMC process relevant to policy-making at European level?

	To a great extent	To a modest extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Cultural and creative industries	64.9%	19.6%	0.0%	11.3%	4.1%
Culture and education synergies	40.2%	35.1%	3.1%	12.4%	9.3%
Mobility of artists and other culture professionals	50.5%	28.9%	1.0%	12.4%	7.2%
Mobility of collections	42.3%	35.1%	5.2%	9.3%	8.2%
Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and inclusive Europe	57.7%	19.6%	2.1%	11.3%	9.3%
Cultural heritage	41.2%	34.0%	3.1%	11.3%	10.3%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=97

For many of the participants interviewed, the fact that many of the members, including chairs, had relevant backgrounds and experience in specific areas, was valued and meant that the working groups had a solid foundation to build on. On the whole, participants also valued the clear directions and goals provided by the Commission[50] and considered this a success factor which resulted in structured working methods; although there have been variations between OMC groups.

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[49] Member of OMC working group
[50] As for example evidenced in the minutes of the working group meetings 2011-2014 in particular

Finding 5: Given the wide range of policy issues potentially encompassed by the Culture OMC a thematic approach is sensible, in order to prioritise and focus activity. Overall, the themes and topics covered by both generations of the OMC process have proved equally relevant to policy-making at national and EU level and the working groups are meeting demand for mutual learning opportunities between Member States. The evidence suggests a two-fold need is being met: to share and learn about practices in other countries, and to learn about and participate in the development of EU policies in areas of particular relevance to national interests.

Finding 6: The breadth of the topics and themes addressed by the OMC process (through sub-groups for example) has increased the relevance of the working groups to a wide range of participants. However, this has also meant sometimes struggling to quickly agree on an appropriate balance in terms of technical/non-technical content and on which issues deserve most attention, especially in the working groups for the period 2008-2010.

Finding 7: The changes made under the second generation of OMC working groups, (emphasising the need to agree well-defined, specific topics as early as possible in the process), have provided clearer direction and helped to focus activity better, compared with the first set of OMC working groups.

2.5.3   Design/modality of tools

Here we are interested in the extent to which the specificities of the Culture OMC (voluntary participation and reporting, absence of benchmarks or indicators) represent a useful approach to implementing the OMC in the field of culture. To place this issue in context, the Agenda for Culture acknowledges the rationale for the specific approach to OMC adopted in the culture field: *"It is essential, however, for the special features of the cultural sector to be fully taken into account in the design of an OMC in this area. In a spirit of partnership with Member States, this implies adopting a flexible approach, entailing the setting of general objectives with a light regular reporting system*"[51], and the Council endorsed this approach[52]: *"The OMC will be applied using a flexible approach suited to the cultural field, while fully respecting Member States' competences, including those of their regional and local authorities and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Participation of Member States in the actions and procedures concerned will be voluntary"*.

As described above, we have also seen that successive Work Plans have set out areas of activity, priorities to be addressed and outputs expected; in more detail in the current period (2011-2014) than in the previous one (2008-2010). There is certainly general agreement that programming through Council Work Plans (according to the survey around 88% of participants finding this a relevant feature), chairing by national experts and the provision of the secretariat by the European Commission were the strongest characteristics of the Culture OMC model. However, the survey also suggests that a significant minority of participants are less certain about the lack of benchmarks and targets, with 18% regarding this as not relevant at all (see table below).

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[51] COM(2007) 242 final, p.12
[52] (2007/C 287/01) Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture

Table 2.5 The OMC in the culture field is characterised by a number of important features. To what extent are they relevant?

	To a great extent	To a modest extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Programming through Council Work Plans	51.6%	35.5%	4.3%	6.5%	2.2%
Chairing of groups by national experts	58.1%	31.2%	5.4%	3.2%	2.2%
Secretariat provided by the European Commission	66.7%	22.6%	3.2%	4.3%	3.2%
Voluntary reporting	32.3%	44.1%	9.7%	8.6%	5.4%
No established targets or benchmarks	21.5%	38.7%	18.3%	14.0%	7.5%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=93

Because of the absence of indicators or benchmarks, the OMC in the culture field can be described as relatively 'light touch' compared with those in other policy areas (e.g. education and employment); this can be explained by sensitivities around subsidiarity, and the need to acknowledge variations between Member States in terms of cultural policies. There may be a risk that the Culture OMC model as currently implemented may not be conducive to strong follow-up actions, including dissemination of results. This is highlighted by a number of survey respondents as a concern, while some also relate dissemination to the lack of benchmarks. One respondent makes the following comment for example: "*The lack of clear benchmarks could mean that the implementation process of recommendations can be slow and it is difficult to get the reports out to the right institutions/groups*"[53]. Imposing clearer targets and benchmarks would strengthen the process, but a balance would need to be struck to avoid reduced participation.

The role of the chair emerges as central to the effective functioning of the OMC process. Overall, the majority of feedback on the role of the Chair is very positive, but there remains a risk of over-reliance on an appropriate individual being put in place.

Detailed feedback from interviews with participants in the OMC process focuses on the value of sharing knowledge, involving those with the appropriate expertise and the need to tackle common challenges together with colleagues from other countries: "*…it is considered to offer added value in enabling both experts and policy officials to compare the different policies and practices across the EU Member States*"[54]. The opportunity the process provides to exchange knowledge with fellow officials, experts or practitioners is clearly of key importance and the openness of the platform is also valued: "*The fact that OMC is an open method fosters to a great extent communication between national experts as members of the group feel free to discuss common topics and share new ideas*"[55]. There is also recognition that specific issues need to be the focus of discussion, rather than the general (sometimes intangible) debates that result from very broadly defined fields. Certainly the second generation of OMC represents an attempt to narrow this focus, although some participants found this too restrictive. Achieving the right balance is clearly challenging.

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[53] Member of OMC working group
[54] Member of OMC working group
[55] Member of OMC working group

Finding 8: In terms of the specificities of the Culture OMC process, positive benefits include the high levels of attendance, and the provision of valuable opportunities for participating from different backgrounds to participate in high quality exchanges and mutual learning activities around issues of common interest. Communities of practice, interest and knowledge networks are also developing as a result of the OMC process.

Finding 9: The Culture OMC also exhibits a number of potential weaknesses in terms of outputs that may be too generalised (this has been addressed in the second generation OMC and the benefits are beginning to be felt), over-dependency on the effectiveness of the chair, variations in the quality of participants and weak (but steadily improving) dissemination plans.

2.5.4 European Added Value

The question of European Added Value (EAV) concerns whether the OMC process is providing benefits that would not otherwise be available in similar form (for example through bi-lateral co-operation, conferences, international meetings, joint research initiatives and so on). Effects are likely to include efficiency (economies of scale), increased access to pan-European networks and best practices. Here, the survey results suggest that those closest to the process would find it very difficult to identify or take part in an alternative process that would have the same effects (three-quarters believe this would not be possible or only possible on a smaller scale – see table below). Although it might be argued that information on practices in other countries might be available on the web for example, the evidence of the survey highlights the importance of face-to-face discussions and the opportunity the OMC affords to build personal and institutional networks, which would probably be difficult to build up from a national level alone.

Table 2.6 Would similar results be possible without an OMC in the field of culture?

	%
Yes – to the same scale	3
Yes – to a smaller scale	24
No	52
Don't know	11
Not applicable	1
Average	2.81
Median	3
Total respondents:	**91**

Source: Ecorys survey

The results of the interviews highlight the key strengths of the OMC process: relevance to national interests, sharing best practice, mutual learning, networking and shared ownership of outputs. It is clear that from the participants' point of view exchanges between Member States is considered the most important added value, together with the opportunity for ministry officials, practitioners and experts to mix. A significant proportion of consultees would welcome more time to discuss relevant issues in more depth. The involvement of the Commission is seen by many as important in terms of visibility and adding weight to any outputs: "*EU backing is important to get the results better known and provide greater credibility*".

The evidence from in-depth research on a small number of countries provides a valuable insight into motivating factors in the light of national contexts:

In the current programme period (2011-2014) **Austria** participates in all OMC working groups. Participation in the OMCs is seen to be of utmost importance for enhancing national cultural policies as well as transferring know and best practise ideas to the relevant sector.

For **Estonia**, involvement in OMC groups is seen as a priority, although some themes are seen as more important than others, with levels of interest and expectations varying by working group and topic. For example, cultural and creative industries has been a priority area, with the OMC group having been chaired by an under-secretary in the Estonian Ministry of Culture for the past two years. A key motivating factor in participation has been to share the knowledge built up in Estonia in recent times, as well as learning practical information from others. Estonia has a strong track record of collaboration with other countries, especially those in the Baltic and Nordic regions, and the Ministry sees it as important for their experts to have exposure to the international dimensions of key cultural issues and experience of discussing them at international level, as well as feeding knowledge back to the Ministry and disseminating it within the sector.

Prior to the introduction of the OMC, **Sweden** had argued that the principle of subsidiarity was essential in the field of culture. Nonetheless the potential and significance of European cooperation was recognised and when introduced in 2008 the OMC was welcomed positively. Further cooperation in the field of culture was considered necessary as it is increasingly integrated with other policy areas. Two important conditions are insisted upon however: the importance of adapting the process to the special needs of the field and of focussing on issues with clear added value. The importance of voluntary participation was also highlighted, together with the need to avoid additional administrative costs. The work of the OMCs should focus on relevant fields such as coordination between different political fields and the compilation of more comparable data.

Finding 10: The European added value of the Culture OMC lies primarily in providing opportunities for mutual learning on issues of common interest, which would not otherwise be available to participants. It allows knowledge to be made available at the national level more effectively than would be the case through other channels, and helps to link a wider cohort of governmental representatives to the EU policy-making level.

2.6 Effectiveness

2.6.1 Participation

Participation in the OMC is voluntary. On average, across all the OMC groups, from 22 to 24 Member States out of the 27 appointed members. Attendance at most OMC meetings varied from 21 to 23, with a general tendency to settle at 17 to 19 for the last meeting of the cycle. Overall, the survey results indicate satisfaction with the geographical representation expertise of participants (see table below).

Table 2.7 To what extent is the OMC process satisfactory in terms of…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Geographical representation	41.4%	47.1%	8.6%	1.4%	1.4%
Expertise of participants	37.1%	52.9%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=70

In particular, the mix of civil servants, experts and practitioners is a largely positive feature: "*The mixture of experts and Ministry professionals and the practical ambition to produce useful statistics, policies and tools has been a strength in the two groups I have participated in*", adding to the quality of the groups' work: "*OMCs are extremely useful because they combine policy-making and practical exchanges*"[56].

However a range of concerns were expressed during detailed consultations, in terms of variations in the degree of engagement on the part of some country members (reflecting inevitable variations in experience, resources and competences), and the lack of seniority of attendees. This is also linked to the issue of follow-up and dissemination, since the extent of national action may depend on commitment to the process at a relatively high level in national structures.

For the **Cultural and Creative Industries** working group it was reported that about half of the members contributed to the meetings actively and provided significant contributions in developing the outputs. Members from the larger countries tended to be less active in this OMC group. It was also pointed out that participants came from diverse backgrounds and positions. Therefore, in some cases the themes were to some extent less relevant for some members of the working group. A significant investment of time was required in the beginning to 'understand each other' and to establish ways of working that were relevant to everyone. It was suggested that the provision to the Member States of more detail about the themes to be discussed in the OMC working group would be useful to inform decisions on the appropriate expert to nominate.

For the **Mobility of Artists and Cultural Professionals** working group, although the weight of contributions inevitably varied between countries (some Member States with no tradition of public funding for artist mobility were less able to engage), participants valued the inclusive nature of the OMC model. At the second generation working group on this topic 25 MS were represented throughout the group's existence. The importance of ensuring that experts had strong links with national governments, so that key messages and information could be fed back home, was emphasised; together with the added value of drawing on contributors from different backgrounds (experts, civil servants, policy specialists and practitioners) and setting up a dialogue between them. The OMC group appears to have achieved a balanced composition in this respect.

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[56] Member of OMC working group

For the **Culture and Education Synergies** working group the number of people who found the geographical balance and expertise unsatisfactory amounted to 18%. Whilst the mixed professional backgrounds were in general seen as a strength (and a way to gain a broader perspectives), some believed that the process would benefit from a higher level of ministry representation. For example it was suggested that the Commission should exert more influence in regards to selecting members of the group, both in terms of expertise and number of participants.

Several members of the working group concerning **better access to and wider participation in culture** also voiced concerns about the lack of engagement on the part of some countries and their members, again partly stemming from the group's heterogeneity (variations in levels of experience and working methods), but also potentially limiting scope to find common ground. However this heterogeneity was also acknowledged as a strength by other interviewees, who highlighted the value of mixing ministry officials with those from other backgrounds.

An issue that featured frequently in consultations concerns language (for discussion, but also in terms of the extent to which information and outputs are translated). With respect to participation, although interpretation facilities had been provided in the first generation OMC working groups, take-up was reportedly low and in any case this would not solve the problem for some participants, especially for countries with less commonly spoken languages (e.g. Bulgaria)[57]. Views on this are split since some consultees believe that interpreters make it *"…more difficult to put your point across"*.

In-depth research on a small number of Member States highlights the different approaches taken according to national contexts:

In the current programme period (2011-2014) **Austria** participates in all OMC working groups. Participation in the OMCs is seen to be of utmost importance for enhancing national cultural policies in Austria. The selection of national experts is prepared centrally in the division 'EU-cultural policy' (EU-Kulturpolitik) at the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture (Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur). Experts are chosen according to their expertise and are primarily actors in the cultural sector or experts from the Ministry, where appropriate. The Ministry nominates internal representatives for the OMCs only when specific expertise is needed. The process of expert selection is seen as very positive by all those involved. Having practitioners in the culture field attend the OMCs is said to provide a positive and stimulating impetus in the OMCs, as they are less likely to be 'bound by instructions' and can discuss openly. Experts based in the cultural sector are also more likely to feed the outputs of the OMCs back to the national cultural sector. External experts have a contractual relationship with the Ministry and receive remuneration, which is seen as a way to professionalise the working relationship between the national experts and the Ministry.

Most participants in OMC working groups from **Estonia** have been from the Ministry of Culture, at a range of levels from under-secretary to specialists and advisors in specific policy and practice areas. In addition, the Estonian Permanent Representation to the EU, the national examinations and qualifications centre and the Art Museum of Estonia have been represented. The Ministry hosts a meeting when the call for nominated experts is launched (approximately once per year), which brings together the experts who have been involved in a previous year so they can discuss their experiences and expectations regarding the coming year's activities. They then decide collectively who to nominate for the next series of working groups. As Estonia is a comparatively small country, it is relatively easy to identify the relevant people and selections are made by core Ministry staff on an individual / personal basis, with no

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[57] Since only the most widespread languages were catered for (e.g. French, German, Spanish etc.)

requirement for open calls for experts. For some groups some difficulties have reportedly been experienced in finding the most appropriate participants, for example in broader areas like creative partnerships, where it is more difficult to define expertise precisely. In these cases 'observers' might be sent who are able to represent Estonia and report back to the Ministry.

In **Spain,** competences on culture are shared between the State and the Regions ("Autonomous Communities"); so both entities take part in the OMC WGs. The Ministry usually appoints a Regional representative to accompany the Ministry official to the WG meetings, to represent all 17 Autonomous Communities' interests, bring subject expertise and articulate regional level concerns. The current Spanish regional representative for the OMC WG relating to Cultural and Creative Industries is a member of the Catalan Regional Government's delegation in Brussels and was selected because of subject expertise and location in Brussels. She accompanies the Ministry delegate to the WG meetings, but the right to speak and vote always lies within the Ministry's delegate. She exchanges information with the Spanish representative in the Council of Ministers' meetings in order to reach the different regions both to collect and to disseminate relevant information.

During the first generation OMC, 2008-2010, all representatives from **Sweden** were appointed from within the Ministry of Culture. Since then however, the Ministry of Culture has appointed participants from a number of national authorities to represent Sweden, depending on the theme of the working group. It is then up to each authority to assign a member of staff to the specific mandate. Current national authorities involved include the Swedish Arts Council (Statens Kulturråd), the Swedish Arts Grants Committee (Konstnärsnamnden) and the National Museum (Nationalmuseum). The exception is the WG on creative partnerships, where there is still a representative from the Ministry. There are no specific rules on who can be appointed - the nomination depends solely on the theme, and NGOs are therefore also free to express an interest.

Finding 11: Most Member States nominated members to the various OMC working groups. Rates of participation in the meetings were satisfactory overall. The mixture of officials, practitioners and external experts has strengthened the quality of the activity carried out.

Finding 12: Some members are more active than others, reflecting variations in the state of policy development between countries, varying expertise and competences, as well as resources. Some members attend in order to share knowledge; others to listen and learn. Language is sometimes an obstacle.

Finding 13: One of the most important factors to consider in terms of the profile of participants concerns their connectivity to key decision-makers in their home country (e.g. in Ministries).

2.6.2   Outputs and results

The range of activities undertaken was appropriate (as described in Section 2.0, above), in general comprising reports on best practice in Member States, some new research (i.e. via surveys) and recommendations[58]. The use of sub-groups to work on specific topics and the drawing on external

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[58] See Annex Two for a list of recommendations from the OMC working groups

expertise to inform discussion proved particularly effective. However, the number of recommendations is sometimes relatively large and unwieldy.

Participants consider the quality of outputs to be reasonable (two-thirds of survey respondents), rather than high (one third). Feedback from interviews reinforces the prevailing, pragmatic view that the outputs reflect the process, tools available and the largely voluntary basis for participation. In this sense it may be said they are a compromise. Participants themselves certainly value exchange of knowledge as equally important: *"There were quality outputs, but the outputs were not just the papers and the reports, but it is about the ideas and the exchanges of good practice that has been important, it is the process which is important"*.

The usefulness of the outputs was also rated highly by those involved; again, especially in terms of sharing good practice (see table below).

Table 2.8 To what extent do you find the outputs useful?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
To showcase good practice from your country	22.2%	66.7%	8.9%	1.1%	1.1%
To learn about good practice	56.7%	41.1%	1.1%	1.1%	0.0%
To inform national policy-making	41.1%	52.2%	5.6%	1.1%	0.0%
To contribute to policy-making at EU level	36.7%	51.1%	8.9%	3.3%	0.0%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=90

A significant proportion of the time available was used to gather background information and collecting robust research evidence (via surveys etc.) proved challenging in the absence of extra resources, especially in the first generation Culture OMC. This may reduce the time available for discussing and articulating a set of well-evidenced principles to inform better policy making (in the sense that it is unlikely that an in-depth, systematic evidence base can be assembled and exploited in the time available)[59], and a resulting tendency to produce very extensive sets of recommendations.

Clearly, there are significant differences between the outputs produced via the first and second generation OMC working groups, as follows:

- All four first generation OMC groups produced similar documents, comprising mainly recommendations accompanied by policy material and research findings that were already available. These were general in nature, largely lacked original research material and provided little in the way of concrete information for specific target groups;

- Second generation reports have a sharper thematic focus (derived from improved focus of the Work Plans and shorter reporting timeframe), a clearer target audience and are also more practically focussed. For example, under Priority A two Good Practice Manuals were produced for public arts and cultural institutions[60], under Priority B reports were produced on the specific issues of making strategic use of EU support programmes (for cultural and creative industries) and on expert and internationalisation strategies, and Priorities C and D Working Groups resulted in, *inter alia*, a Policy Handbook for creative partnerships and Good Practice Manual for national authorities.

[59] The survey indicates that about a third of participants would like more time to draft outputs
[60] One on access and participation in 2011-2012 and one on cultural diversity and inter-cultural dialogue in 2012-1013

Changes made in the second generation OMC have resulted in improvements in the quality of OMC outputs, especially through the shift away from recommendations: *"The second document is more of a real benchmarking exercise and as far as I know people find it really interesting and useful. It gives an overview of what's going on"*[61]. There is also evidence (from the survey and interviews) that although progress has been made, there remains further potential to strengthen the usefulness of OMC outputs: *"… it is not enough to have discussions and recommendations among civil servants. It is important to go further and start implementing the recommendations. There is only so much you can do in terms of exchanging good practices".*

One potential solution here is to follow the example of OMCs in other fields (e.g. education, employment) and make available more research resources via framework consultancy contracts. This would not necessarily involve longer or more frequent OMC working group meetings, but implies that work commences from a more advanced baseline. There may also be scope for the Commission to provide packages of existing reports, data and relevant syntheses to working groups from the outset.

The issue of **dissemination of OMC outputs** is recognised as central to their success, by the Commission, but also by the CAC and OMC participants themselves. The Commission made all OMC outputs available on the Europa (DG EAC) website and raised awareness to 12,500 stakeholders through the DG EAC newsletter. Policy handbooks and good practice manuals were also sent to the Structured Dialogue platforms and the Culture Programme contact points. Policy recommendations produced by the working groups were also publicised at Commision conferences, including for example the "European Audiences 2020 and beyond" Conference held in October 2012.

The evidence at national level on this issue is mixed: successful examples were identified for some countries, but overall there is scope for improvement. Improvements in outputs generated by the second generation OMC working groups should increase take-up. As the tables below illustrate, outputs have been made available through a variety of channels and to a range of target groups; but almost half of survey respondents didn't not know to whom the outputs were disseminated, suggesting a lack of clarity of ownership of the dissemination process. This is also reflected in the results of the consultative interviews, for example: "*Follow-through is really important – it's not a case of sitting back and waiting for something to happen*"[62].

Table 2.9 To whom were the outputs disseminated among the intended target groups?

	For the 2008-2010 period	For the 2011-2014 period	N/A
Cultural Affairs Committee	63.8%	73.9%	8.7%
Structured Dialogue Platforms	43.1%	56.9%	29.4%
Other European networks	45.3%	60.4%	22.6%
Decision-makers at national/regional level	58.9%	76.7%	4.1%
Culture organisations at national/regional level	52.9%	65.7%	12.9%
Other networks	36.6%	48.8%	36.6%
Don't know	57.1%	47.6%	33.3%
Other, please specify	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%

Source: Ecorys survey

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[61] Member of OMC working group
[62] Member of OMC working group

Table 2.10 How were the outputs of the OMC working group disseminated in your country?

	Websites	Newsletters	Conferences	Meetings	Training sessions	Don't know	None of the above
To colleagues in the same Ministry	36.7%	18.9%	15.6%	67.8%	5.6%	14.40%	4.40%
To decision makers at national/regional level	36.7%	17.8%	17.8%	38.9%	0.0%	20.00%	13.30%
To other Ministries	13.3%	10.0%	8.9%	25.6%	1.1%	43.30%	20.00%
To cultural stakeholders	40.0%	23.3%	18.9%	41.1%	8.9%	18.90%	10.00%
To a wider public	34.4%	14.4%	13.3%	11.1%	2.2%	26.70%	27.80%
Other, please specify	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	42.90%	57.10%

Source: Ecorys survey

The survey evidence also suggests that outputs are discussed in participants' organisations, predominantly at operational level (62%), but also at strategic and ministerial levels (47% and 43%, respectively). Dissemination plans, introduced at the initiative of the European commission for second generation OMC working groups, are starting to encourage a more systematic approach. The survey results indicate that formal processes for disseminating OMC outputs are in place in most countries (43% of respondents indicating this applies to within the Ministry, 25% to dissemination of information amongst cultural stakeholders and 14% for informing the general public). Most dissemination activity occurs at national level, with some evidence of regionally-based activity (12%). In terms of the effectiveness of dissemination at EU level, participants appear divided – although two-thirds are satisfied with its effectiveness, a third are not or do not know.

Although it does not provide an exhaustive account, the interviews identified a range of positive outcomes in terms of the dissemination of OMC outputs:

- Priority A: The ministry in Austria is very active to promote the results of the OMC groups via a series of public workshops on the work of the OMC for example. Participants from the groups come and talk about the work and the results. This brings together all the representatives from all the different OMC groups to give presentations of the last working periods.

- Priority D: Reports were translated into Polish and a manual for students was produced. The outputs were circulated widely and reportedly well received. The Minister was aware as were Polish museums.

- Outputs were discussed at a meeting organised by the national Dutch office for international cooperation in the cultural sector; and exchanged between national organisations.

It is difficult to gauge the extent of dissemination, but it is clear that OMC participants themselves fully recognise the importance of spreading the outputs to the appropriate range of target groups; whilst also acknowledging the challenges. In turn, the exact nature of these challenges is determined largely by national contexts and structures.

Participants acknowledge the need to move beyond knowledge exchange within the confined of the OMC working groups: *"…exchanging of good practice is not enough. It is important to move much further. It is important to develop common policies and allocate resources for their implementation*"[63]. Often however, the participants themselves are not necessarily in a position (nor do they have the time, resources or influence) to disseminate outputs effectively on their own, but rather require systematic support from ministries, national cultural organisations and networks and others, especially in the larger Member States. Although the CAC is a primary target for OMC outputs, and has a role in disseminating results to the national level, the evidence nonetheless suggests there is potential for the CAC to be more fully engaged in dissemination efforts. There may also be potential to facilitate discussion on OMC outputs with the European Parliament.

Language is a concern for a significant number of participants. OMC outputs are not routinely produced in more than a few languages, and where the Commission and Member States have arranged translations (for example under the Mobility of Collections working group and the translation of the Mobility of Artists report into Swedish), there is a clear, positive impact in terms of boosting awareness and take-up.

Efforts are being made by the Commission and OMC groups to address dissemination more systematically. For example, analysis of the dissemination plans for the outputs of the second mobility of collections working group[64] (the Toolkit finalised at the end of 2012)[65] indicates that in the majority of Member States a mixture of distribution to relevant institutions and organisations (e.g. via newsletters and emails), placing of the material on a website or websites, and events, conferences and presentations will be used. Six countries will translate the Toolkit themselves, six consider it unnecessary, and 12 are unable to commit to such a step at this stage. In the latter case, this is likely to hamper dissemination significantly.

Participants have suggested a range of improvements including more formal, structured approaches from ministries with clearer communication channels, greater media co-operation and campaigns, training sessions, stronger links to national networks (e.g. museums), and more opportunities to present and discuss OMC outputs (e.g. at conferences and seminars). There is a widespread view that dissemination would be boosted by translating outputs into a larger number of languages.

It is instructive to consider the issue of dissemination in a small number of national contexts, to highlight the different approaches taken and to identify potential lessons to be learned and future improvements.

[63] Member of OMC working group
[64] Priority D: Examination of ways and means to simplify the process of lending and borrowing of cultural goods
[65] OMC group's replies on translation and dissemination of the toolkit on mobility of collections, January 2012

In **Austria** a key feature is a structured and inclusive approach to the dissemination of the OMC WGs' work at national level. The Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture organises a series of workshops, in partnership with cultural organisations in Austria. These are held four times per year, are open to the public and attract a diverse audience of around 80 people each time (artists, social partners, cultural experts, directors of cultural organisations, representatives of the Ministry etc. The work in the OMC is presented by OMC representatives, domestic and foreign best practices in the cultural sector are showcased and experts are invited to use the event as a platform for discussion and networking. The workshops are funded by the Ministry and cooperation with cultural partner organisations is seen as essential to boost the size of the audience at the events. The workshops are also used to reflect on the OMC at the end of each programme year and to facilitate knowledge transfer between outgoing and incoming experts. In October 2012, for example, the workshop on 'Sharing European Experience – EU working groups' culture – results and perspectives' was held. In general, the workshops are seen as an innovative and extremely useful tool to disseminate the results of the OMC's work, at the national and regional level. In addition, national experts hold regular meetings with Ministry representatives and are required to document the outcomes of OMC working groups in written form. Several experts interviewed reported they were in 'constant exchange' with the Ministry on matters relevant to the OMC. Bilateral meetings revolve around the work in the WGs, noteworthy best practices in other countries and serve as a platform to develop ideas for further dissemination. OMC representatives also disseminate their work directly through the communication tools of their own organisations, e.g. newsletter, websites and conferences. On the official website of the Culture Ministry the whole OMC process and on-going events in this context are documented and linked with the relevant EU website and can be followed by the public.

Dissemination is likely to be a less complex issue for smaller Member States like **Estonia,** since it is easier to ensure that information flows to the right people. OMC working groups are discussed in the context of the weekly Ministerial meetings on EU-related issues. When there has been OMC activity, the (internal) experts give an overview on what was discussed, all major issues and questions pass through these coordination meetings so that follow-up or dissemination actions can be decided upon. Participating experts then use their own networks to disseminate information. This is implemented on a more flexible basis, depending on the relevance of the issue and content, and can take a range of forms (meetings, papers etc), although it is most likely to focus on practical issues such as specific measures or funding sources (as in the case of the OMC group on using the Structural Funds to support cultural and creative industries).

In **Spain**, the Culture Contact Point within the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport has put in place a communication platform, based on social networks, where all the main information related to culture from the EU is published. Although the CCP Office has not published the general conclusion of each working group so far, some information and content related to this issue - such as a survey to obtain the different views and needs of CCI's organisations or basic information about OMC WGs, has been posted on the CCP website. In this sense the information referred to is promoted not only through common channels such as social networks, but also through the CCP website. On the other hand, and after receiving feedback from OMC WGs, the CCP office is currently evaluating how to promote this information in a more systematic way. As regards the communication platform, it is mostly external and addressed to Spanish cultural organisations. Internally, at Ministry level, there are two formal contact points, at sub-Director General level, at the level of the Secretary of State for Culture, and another at the central services of the Ministry, whose mission is, among others, the distribution of the European Union information. Moreover, there are flexible mechanisms. Normally, the Spanish Permanent Representation to the EU disseminates the information directly to the relevant ministerial units via email, filtered on a

thematic basis, usually in the shape of reports covering the main points and results from the WGs. However communication about the OMC between different departments inside the Ministry could be improved: the Spanish Permanent Representation is working on a warning system to identify the relevant information amongst the vast amount of inputs received daily. Together with the ministerial units directly in charge it is also developing a mechanism to foster the receptiveness of a number of departments or agencies.

Communication of OMC outputs at a regional level follows a different pattern, which may vary between different WGs. For example, in the case of the Cultural and Creative Industries WG, between four and five meetings are held annually and although the regions may also take part to these meetings, it is the national delegate who is responsible for sending the relevant information to the Ministry in Spain. Contact with the rest of the regions is made through the Basque Region, which can be considered as the non-official Spanish regional representative for culture and education in Brussels. Although there are no established procedures, this regional representative collects the information from the regional participants in the different WGs and disseminates it among the Spanish regional delegations in Brussels, who are in turn responsible for disseminating the information among the Regions themselves. Dissemination approaches and outcomes can vary substantially depending on each regional context, since the regional participants in the WGs cannot always rely on structured communication channels with the cultural representatives of each Region in Spain.

In terms of dissemination of OMC results in **Sweden** the responsibility falls mainly on the representatives, who report back to the Ministry. Twice each term they are all invited to a briefing at an EU reference group held at the Ministry. WG representatives also have on-going informal contact with the CAC representative and disseminate the results through their regular channels of communication, such as with cultural stakeholders at regional, national and international level and to the wider public. The level of information that reaches different levels of society or sectors is to a certain extent dependant on the subject. The Swedish Arts Council is publishing all final reports and toolkits on its website. In November 2012 The Swedish Arts Grants Committee published a Swedish translation of the Report on Building a strong framework for artist's mobility: five key principles, first published in June 2012. Recently WG members have started to organise their own meetings in order to discuss the work and the methods used by each group.

Finding 14: The outputs of the first generation OMC were not necessarily uniformly high in quality. They represented a pragmatic response to the boundary conditions of the process itself; and many participants regard taking part in the process as of equal importance. The outputs represent a shared product, and distilling one common output from a diversity of Member State participants is a valuable achievement; which demonstrates substantial commitment on the part of many individual participants.

Finding 15: The outputs from the second generation OMC show a marked improvement, as a result of more clearly defined subject areas and target outputs, and a re-orientation away from making extensive recommendations towards more practical material (guides, handbooks, tools etc.).

Finding 16: There remains potential for further improvements in outputs, although a lack of time and research capacity means a fully developed evidence-based approach is not yet possible and this runs the risk of weakening the outputs developed.

Finding 17: Significant efforts have been made to disseminate outputs at national level, via a range of channels, but this has been largely unstructured and a number of factors are limiting progress here, including the lack of connectivity between OMC country participants and national ministries, the low profile and lack of influence of some country participants, and issues around translation.

Finding 18: Each country has to work within the constraints of its own national structures and systems: clearly smaller countries have less of a challenge in this respect and in Member States with strong regional structures (e.g. Spain) the OMC must interact with complex administrative structures. The approach followed in Austria suggests a range of success factors including a centralised unit at the Ministry, which is responsible for both expert selection and follow-up activities; selection of national experts according to expertise with a strong focus on active members of the cultural sector; the organisation of quarterly seminars on the EU-level OMC work, conducted in cooperation with cultural organisation; and a 'constant exchange' between national experts and the responsible unit at the Ministry.

2.6.3   Impacts/benefits

In terms of the benefits of the OMC process, the online survey evidence suggests these extend across a broad range, in particular strengthening links and sharing good practice (see table below). This is consistent with the other evidence including the findings presented above (i.e. that the main outcomes revolve around knowledge exchanges and mutual learning). The benefit least likely to be identified is increased prominence of the culture sector.

Table 2.11 To what extent do you agree that OMC working groups have benefited your country through…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Strengthened links with other Member States	38.6%	48.6%	10.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Strengthened links with the Commission	28.6%	51.4%	14.3%	2.9%	2.9%
Allowed to share good practice developed in your country	42.9%	52.9%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
Informed decision-making at national/regional level	24.3%	54.3%	17.1%	2.9%	1.4%
Allowed to introduce good practice from elsewhere in your country	25.7%	51.4%	18.6%	0.0%	4.3%
Increased prominence of culture sector	18.6%	44.3%	28.6%	7.1%	1.4%
Other, please specify	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%	70.0%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=70

Unsurprisingly, personal experience, learning and networking feature strongly in participants views on the OMC. Here the survey results again suggest that while knowledge exchange and network development are strong features of OMC, mainstreaming (links with other policy fields) and impacts on working practices are less of a focus (see table below). Interview evidence also suggests OMC members continue to network with colleagues from the working groups and there are examples of follow-on collaborations, for example close contacts maintained between Bulgaria, Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia following on from the Mobility of Collections OMC, where the intention is to do more work comparing national procedures in terms of museum studies.

Table 2.12 To what extent do you agree that OMC working groups benefited you personally through…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Developed new networks in the field of culture	51.4%	42.9%	4.3%	0.0%	1.4%
Developed new networks in other policy fields	17.1%	45.7%	34.3%	1.4%	1.4%
Increased my knowledge of the issues that other Member States face	61.4%	38.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased my experience and understanding of the Commission and its work	52.9%	42.9%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Provided me with a knowledge that I can use in my home country	50.0%	48.6%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased my knowledge of good practice projects and/or working practices developed elsewhere	61.4%	38.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Influenced changes in my working practice	27.1%	41.4%	31.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased personal profile	28.6%	50.0%	15.7%	2.9%	2.9%
Other, please specify	0.0%	0.0%	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=70

In terms of wider benefits, again the focus is on experiences, debate and exchange of knowledge within the OMC process itself, rather than any far-reaching effects on key national policy issues and improved policy making at national and EU levels (see table below).

Table 2.13 To what extent do you agree that the OMC process has facilitated…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Fruitful cooperation among the Member States	38.5%	53.8%	3.3%	3.3%	1.1%
Structured debate on key policy priorities at EU level	36.3%	49.5%	8.8%	4.4%	1.1%
Structured debate on key policy priorities at national level	12.1%	56.0%	25.3%	4.4%	2.2%
Exchange of good practice	63.7%	33.0%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Improved policy-making at EU level	19.8%	51.6%	17.6%	9.9%	1.1%
Improved policy-making at national level	8.8%	65.9%	19.8%	3.3%	2.2%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=91

In terms of influencing decision-making at national level, the survey evidence suggests moderate and uneven effects (for example 56% of respondents indicated some influence and 22% no influence). Participants acknowledge the challenge here: "*Best practice examples are good but not always transferable or relevant to other Member States*". However a range of examples were identified, although it is difficult to gauge the extent of such impacts overall:

- Priority C, Skills and Mobility: It was reported that in Germany, Ministers took the OMC's output as a basis for improving information on mobility and a new expert group was set up. A portal on mobility was also established in Germany and there will be a permanent information point for the issue in Finland.

- Mobility of Collections working group: The Bulgarian Ministry of Culture suggested taking account of the outputs of the OMC process in national legislation and some changes have already been

implemented; improvements have been made in practices in borrowing and lending within a participating organisation, encouraging exhibitions on a larger scale, allowing more loans of cultural goods and increasing budgets for this purpose. Also in Bulgaria an international conference on mobility of collections was organised, prompted by the OMC and was considered very useful. The final reports proved valuable where the legal framework has not in the past allowed sufficient flexibility, e.g. to make the provision of state indemnity possible. The outputs enabled them to suggest changes to the law in line with best practice that emerged from the OMC, giving the representative the possibility to influence the national government to change.

- In Italy, the OMC triggered a "*...very helpful internal reflection process on cultural policy, e.g. with relation to access to culture".* Here the EU has been like a "*lighthouse*".

- Sweden and Austria were reported as having a feedback mechanism for disseminating learning and outputs of the OMC and being well organised in this respect.

- The OMC encouraged the acceleration of the process in Bulgaria in terms of changes to state indemnity regulations. Giving the reports to the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Bulgaria helped them realise changing the rules would result in lower insurance costs. Previously the Ministry of Finance had refused to provide the money cover indemnities. Currently, state indemnity is provided via a Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Culture has to bear the cost. Also a letter of indemnity is issued. The last indemnity provided was for €100,000.

The results of in-depth research on a small number of case-study countries provide more detailed evidence of benefits and impacts at the national level:

Overall, the interviewees in **Austria** agreed that the OMC is an important tool to facilitate knowledge and information exchange at European level and has led to greater networking between European cultural organisations in particular. However, as the OMC is a relatively new instrument in the field of culture, its impact on national practices has not yet been formally evaluated. According to some interviewees, best practice examples of other countries do have some influence on national policy making: the initiative "free entry to federal museums" was named as an example by a Ministry representative. One expert highlighted a fruitful bilateral exchange with Finnish OMC representatives outside of the OMC activities, since both countries had conducted a national study on the use of EU Structural Funds in cultural and creative industries. A further important effect of the OMCs is regarded as bringing about a greater focus on interdisciplinary cooperation and cultural mainstreaming in government ministries. For example a Ministry representative stated that the OMC has strengthened cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Education, the Arts and Culture and the Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth. Moreover, it is felt that the frame of reference for policy making has shifted towards a 'European mindset': The concept of making use of best practice examples has become more popular in recent years and is now widely used in the cultural field. Making use of other countries' experiences to inspire or change national practices and making use of a set of useful tools developed in the OMCs is seen as the main positive effects of participation in the OMC.

Arguably the Working Group on cultural and creative industries has been of most direct relevance to **Estonia**, and coincides with national strategy development in this area. Although Estonia was already working with international partners, useful information has been gathered as a result of participation in the OMC group, mainly in terms of practical examples such as different funding sources and concrete measures applied in other countries. Nevertheless, supporting and 'incubating' CCIs (including through the use of Structural Funds) has been a policy priority for some time and given its success in this area Estonia has a significant contribute to make to discussions and generation of outputs. The Mobility of Collections group provided some important contributions when preparing the new Museum Act in Estonia. The final report of the working group was explicitly mentioned in the explanatory memorandum of the new legal base. In addition, the data collected by the group was used for its impact assessment. Feedback from experts on artist residencies was also very positive, with the group providing useful information on legislation and regulations affecting mobility, sources of data on institutions and specialists, as well as the experiences of individual countries. In the case of culture-education synergies, this area had not been explored in detail in Estonia, so there are benefits in learning about programmes, initiatives and practice in other countries

In **Spain**, there is evidence of change in the way the Ministry interacts with the DG EAC and other countries as a result of the OMC. This change is not structured, but the WGs have the virtue of being fora for the exchange of both good (and bad) practices. At an internal level (both national and regional) no systemic changes have taken place, but concrete changes can be observed. Where the OMC WG outputs are good practices (e.g. collected in a policy handbook), political will is the key factor to ensuring transferability. Although the perception on the utility and capitalisation of the results of the OMC WG strongly varies according to each interviewee, there is a shared view that this information is at least consulted, although its effects could be much stronger if a more structured dissemination system was in place. The most dynamic sectors and territories with a higher density of creative industries have experienced a higher cultural impact, but in general this change is not homogeneous and depends strongly on a variety of factors (political will, economic context, cultural activity, cultural industries' stability, and so on). Concrete examples of the impact of OMC WGs on national policy making are:

- *OMC expert group "Synergies with education, especially arts education":* As a result of the reflection on these matters and inspired by this study, some innovations are being proposed in the theoretical programs that will be established in the selection exams for teachers of Music and Dance - creativity, heritage and interdisciplinary work were introduced as subjects to be covered in the test. In addition, content from the WG was included in the revised Professional and Higher Artistic Education curricula, especially subjects related to synergies. The Ministry is currently in the process of developing Decrees which will regulate Higher Artistic Education in the European Space of Higher Education. The WG member has also transferred the lessons learnt to her colleagues working in the same unit in the Ministry, contributing to a cultural change and ensuring a multiplier effect; and has disseminated the results in meetings and events on subjects related to the ones covered by the WG.

- Information was sent by the Basque representative in Brussels on good practices to support the candidacy of San Sebastián to *European Capital of Culture*.

- A current example is within the *OMC WG on CCI exports and internationalization support strategies*, the last meeting of which took place in Barcelona in June 2013. Spain, together with the Nordic countries, is working to achieve a common understanding among Member States participating in the WG on the need to create a common European sector, considering this as an essential element of competitiveness and added value. This includes working on ways to support creative cultural organisations to "help themselves", for example through the Financing Facility Mechanism. This is

possible because of the consistency between the current EU goal on cultural and creative industry and the national vision in Spain concerning the need for innovation in all sectors as a key factor for improving competitiveness in the current economic and financial situation. In the case of this particular WG, the objective of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport is to disseminate the outputs both at an internal and external level. Dissemination at an internal level would be done inside the own Ministry, the rest of Ministries involved and regional and local administrations. The external level would cover sectoral associations, the creative and cultural industries themselves and learning institutions. The outputs of the OMC WG on CCI exports and internationalization support strategies are intended to be disseminated proactively, with the aim of producing a direct impact on CCIs.

Finding 19: The evidence of benefits and impacts mainly concerns mutual learning, best practice exchange and the building of knowledge networks.

Finding 20: There is some evidence of activity and outputs feeding through into impacts on national policy and a proportion of these results appear directly attributable to the OMC to some extent. Overall however it is difficult to gauge the extent of the impact.

Finding 21: There is potential to achieve greater impacts, through stronger connectivity and dissemination channels between OMC participants and key decision-makers at national level. The use of dissemination plans has been a useful development and should be developed further. Improvements in the quality of outputs (including a more thorough, evidence-based approach) should also encourage higher take-up.

2.6.4 Synergies

OMC working groups and Structured Dialogue tools were implemented as separate initiatives. Here, we are firstly interested in the extent of linkages and interactions between the two tools; and secondly in any mainstreaming effects - where the relevance and value of cultural policies and themes to other policy fields is recognised, taken into account and acted upon.

The stakeholder consultations with representatives from the OMC working groups indicate that there was limited **interaction** between the two. This was especially the case during the implementation of the first Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. The Platforms' representatives were invited to take part in the OMC working group meetings during the second phase, defined by the Work Plan 2011-2014. This resulted in a higher degree of interaction between the two, although civil society organisations expressed the need for further cooperation between the working groups and the Commission. The need for further cooperation was less evident from the OMC working group representatives.

Comparing the survey results from the different OMC groups, in most cases **themes relevant to other policy areas** were explored (76%-92% felt that some or most of the discussions met this criteria, except for the mobility of collections group where this figure was lower, at 64%). Experts from outside took part in the deliberations of OMC groups (see Section 2.0, above) and the survey evidence suggests this input was helpful, although not extensive (see table below). In addition, some OMC working groups encouraged the participation of two national members from different fields. For example, the culture and education synergies working group encouraged participation of two national members from the Ministry of education and Ministry of culture.

Table 2.14 How the working group/s explored areas relevant to other policy fields (such as education, cohesion policy/ regional policy, social affairs, entrepreneurship/ competitiveness)?

	N.	%
1 Most of the themes discussed were related to other policy fields (1)	8	11.4
2 Some of the themes discussed were related to other policy fields (2)	39	55.7
3 Experts from other policy fields presented during the meetings (3)	13	18.6
4 Don't know (4)	4	5.7
5 Not applicable (5)	4	5.7
6 Other, please specify (6)	2	2.9
Average	2.47	
Median	2	
Total respondents:	70	

Source: Ecorys survey

The evidence from consultations shows widespread recognition of the need to mainstream culture policy and practice: "*Culture can add value to other issues*"[66]; but there is also uncertainty and lack of a common understanding of the term 'mainstreaming' and although mutual learning is seen as the main route to mainstreaming, it is likely that apart from a few common synergies, different countries have diverging perspectives on the issue. This, together with a lack of interaction between OMC groups (highlighted by a number of interviewees), has probably limited progress.

At EU level, efforts have been made to forge links, including with DG ENTR, EMPL and REGIO, and results have been achieved in competitiveness and regional policy: smart specialisation and CCIs for example (the OMC working group invited DG REGIO to participate and present about possible support for culture from the EU structural funds). DG EAC has been engaging with DG REGIO about the results of the OMC and also facilitated workshops at DG REGIO "Open Days". The conclusions of the OMC working group on access to culture were also used to inform the debate at a conference on audience development organised by the Commission in October 2012. A number of consultees believe more could be achieved, highlighting the apparent limitations imposed by Commission 'silos' and lack of inter-service collaboration, for example: "…*it is a problem that other DGs think of culture only to be an issue for DG EAC. So there is still a long was to go when it comes to mainstreaming*"[67].

Finding 22: Interaction between the OMC working groups and the Structured Dialogue process has been limited and there are potential benefits from closer integration (for example bringing a wider range of expertise to bear on common themes). The transversal aspect of culture policy has been addressed to some extent within the working groups.

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[66] Member of OMC working group
[67] Member of OMC working group

2.7   Efficiency

2.7.1   Management

In line with usual OMC practice, apart from the meetings themselves and more recent efforts to bring a more systematic approach to bear on dissemination of outputs, the structures and processes required at national level to apply and implement the OMC lie primarily with the Member States. There is potential to strengthen the Commission's role further in terms of working with Member States to strengthen the profile of OMC participants, provide more research support and perhaps focus discussions more by chairing meetings.

2.7.2   Process and implementation

The evidence from the online survey indicates that implementation of OMC has been satisfactory in terms of planning and organisation (see table below).

Table 2.15 How well was the work of the OMC working group/s organised?

	Very well organised	Well organised	Not well organised	Don't know	N/A
Planning of the meetings	27.1%	58.6%	12.9%	0.0%	1.4%
Organisation of meetings	38.6%	51.4%	5.7%	2.9%	1.4%
Frequency of the meetings	8.6%	72.9%	8.6%	5.7%	4.3%
Distribution of the information for the meetings	24.3%	62.9%	11.4%	0.0%	1.4%

Source: Ecorys survey

This finding is supported by the material from interviews – overall, the majority are satisfied, for both first and second generation OMC working groups.

The survey evidence suggests participants in both generations of OMC believe sufficient time was available to discuss and exchange knowledge on best practice (83% satisfied), but participants would have liked more time to draft final outputs (33% were not satisfied with this aspect). Where specific feedback is available on the impact of the changes made for the OMC working groups 2011-14 (from the online survey), participants strongly welcome the more precise mandate and definition of expected outputs, but have reservations about the shorter timescale allowed (see table below)[68].

Table 2.16 The 2011-2014 Work Plan for Culture introduced changes in the operation of the OMC working groups. To what extent have these changes improved the functioning of the groups?

	Great improvement	Modest improvement	No difference	Adverse effect	Don't know
Shorter duration	5.7%	20.0%	7.1%	21.4%	38.6%
Specific mandates (sub-themes)	27.1%	27.1%	4.3%	1.4%	32.9%
Precise definition of expected outputs	28.6%	25.7%	4.3%	1.4%	32.9%

Source: Ecorys survey

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[68] Assuming the "don't knows" have no knowledge of the first generation OMC with which to make a comparison

There was little enthusiasm for the shorter duration of the process (21% citing an adverse effect). In fact there are three issues to consider concerning time: firstly, the overall duration of the process, secondly the frequency of meetings and thirdly the time available during meetings. The evidence from interviews reinforces the desire amongst participants for more time, especially for personal interaction, working in small groups and activity in between formal meetings. Another positive factor with the informal meetings concerned the smaller number of participants. The consultation results identified potential added value from holding informal, smaller and more in-depth meetings, and organising meetings in Member States, for example:.

"Last year we held a meeting in Vienna and the Commission had the possibility to help with funding. I think it's very helpful to have smaller meetings and some in-depth exchange. And I think those smaller meetings have proved very beneficial both for the group as such and for the subject"[69].

This appears to be partly a question of productivity – making the best use of the time available, where the first and last meetings are used for preparation and finalising respectively, leaving only three intermediate meetings for working. Feedback from interviews focuses on maintain and enhancing the greater focus on a more analytical and targeted approach, including the need for more preparation in advance of meetings - for example prior discussions on topics, generation of background information (including on the work of other relevant groups and initiatives), and more advanced scheduling (the dates have been announced six weeks in advance, which is not considered sufficient). This suggests the need to provide more research tools (in order to produce a more solid evidence base), providing more support for the work of sub-groups, thus allowing more time for discussions at working meetings: *"Sometimes not enough tools or information/data was available to the group, in terms of compiling the evidence required to move forward. Surveys etc. were used but these were often "unscientific" in the results generated (e.g. very uneven country coverage), and could therefore not be relied upon to build a robust evidence base"*[70].

The survey also suggests enthusiasm for using study visits as part of the OMC (71% in favour).

2.7.3   Support

The support provided by the European Commission is rated highly by most participants (54% useful and 41% very useful) and this positive view is confirmed by the consultation evidence. The challenge of mobilising or making available the type of research capacity and support needed to improve the quality and utility of outputs has already been highlighted. Here, there is potential for the Commission to play a more active role (e.g. by compiling and providing existing reports, carrying out more in-house supporting data analysis or procuring external research services to be placed at the disposal of the working groups).

[69] Member of OMC working group
[70] Member of OMC working group

Finding 23: The OMC process has been organised and managed efficiently. The support provided by the Commission and the working conditions of the groups have been very positive features and the characteristics of the process have been satisfactory overall.

Finding 24: The adaptations made for the second generation OMC are viewed positively by participants in terms of applying a more specific mandate defining intended outputs more precisely; but a lack of time for actively working and interacting remains a concern for some.

Finding 25: There is a strong preference for working in small groups (rather than in plenary sessions) more advanced preparation (in order not to sacrifice initial meetings to gearing up) and for activity between formal meetings and in different Member States. More use of study visits would also be welcomed, as another potential way to enhance interaction and engagement, and lead to improved results.

2.8 Sustainability

2.8.1 Structures

The findings set out above indicate that the structure of the Culture OMC has facilitated valuable knowledge exchange and mutual leaning. Importantly, the process has in most cases enabled Member State participants to produce outputs that combine their collective wisdom and have achieved trans-national ownership. Most OMC participants would like the working group in which they were involved to continue (70% of survey respondents). This focused mostly on continuing the current format (58% favouring this), but a significant minority (29%) suggested other formats.

2.8.2 Results

Encouragingly, the survey indicates that some 59% of participants continue to use OMC outputs to some extent and 23% to a large extent. This is evidenced by quotes about the usefulness of the OMC outputs such as:

- *I recommend them to students of museology.*
- *Yes I have used the Policy Handbook to raise awareness among policy makers and the CCI sector of EU policy and funding opportunities to develop the sector here in Ireland. I have used the material to write articles for publications and press on the importance of the sector and to advocate for the sector in the wider EU context, A tangible output like this gives a very solid and credible foundation to promote the work of the OMC group and EU.*
- *We try to deploy some of the ideas of the OMC groups in the Ministerial policies.*
- *I use both the reports and the toolkits frequently and I often recommend them to other professionals.*
- *The final report is useful as a reference.*
- *I am involved in preparation of contents from the field of culture, science and education for the next programming period of Cohesion policy, so the policy handbook and the access to different platforms are very useful for my field of work and interest.*
- *In the year or so that I have been responsible for the CCI dossier I have not yet used them: but I suspect they will become increasingly useful as we move into the national implementation phase (of e.g. the Creative Europe programme).*
- *I am not the target group for the toolkit. But I am sure it has to be updated after 3-5 years. Background information should preferably be updated every year or every second year. A question is whether the CoE's culturewatch system could be used for this.*
- *We are continuously discussing most of the topics covered in the report, in particular the use of risk assessments and indemnity and non-insurance.*
- *The outputs are quite useful for consultation when required and they are still applicable to large extent.*
- *Still working on the results of our OMC group, but take into consideration the outputs of the OMC groups.*
- *I'm using results on OMC Access to culture at national level for my daily work. I'm also involved in the organisation of the Ministerial conference of the Council of Europe that will take place in April in Moscow and will be on access, participation and culture governance.*
- *I can refer to some examples and best practice cases in my new work area, which is innovations in public libraries services in developing and transition countries.*
- *We have translated the text.*
- *As national Collections Manager, I make sure that outputs are implemented.*
- *We hope to share the 2010-2012 report among Irish National Cultural Institutions which includes arts and culture as a way to share ideas from Member States. I hope to do this through the Council for National Cultural Institutions Education Community and Outreach Group as well as keep our Irish representative in Brussels - Ministry for Foreign Affairs, updated on each meeting that takes place*
- *When we need information of specific best practices, for example funding methods, I am able to use the best practises that have been collected and of course the contacts to different Member States.*

The overwhelming majority also see value in exchanging information among Member States on the follow-up of the output, after the OMC working group has ceased (43% to some and 47% to a large extent). However it is also widely acknowledged that best practice exchange is not enough in itself and we have also seen that the dissemination of outputs is hampered by a number of factors including a lack of formal, systematic channels, availability of reports in some languages and weak linkages between OMC participants and national decision-makers. Here, to a large extent, it is up to Member States to act. This is happening in some instances: an example is the information centres to assist artist mobility set up in Belgium and Spain. Professional networks established through interactions at OMC meetings do continue in many cases, although there is no formal mechanism or support to nurture or develop these, so that platforms for future collaborations are relatively fragile.

Finding 26: The OMC has evolved through two generations (2008-2010 and 2011-2014) and through this evolution a number of key improvements have been implemented to increase focus and clarity. This has in turn led to an improvement in the quality of outputs, which should increase the relevance of the process and encourage wider take-up of results at national level.

Finding 27: The OMC is sustainable in its current format. Further, incremental improvements could be made in a number of areas, while keeping the fundamental structure and process intact. For example there is potential to make further improvements to address weaknesses in certain, inter-linked areas (profile of participants, a more evidence-based approach to developing outputs and strengthening dissemination).

3.0 Structured Dialogue

3.1 Overview

Structured Dialogue with civil society aims to provide a framework for exchanges on policy development, which can provide input into different phases of the decision-making process as well as support the development of representative interlocutors and cross-sectoral cooperation in the field of culture[71]. The first component comprises the three Structured Dialogue Platforms:

- Platform on Access to Culture (ACP);
- Platform on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI); and
- Platform for Intercultural Europe (PIE).

The second principal component was the two European Culture Forums, organised by the Commission in 2009 and 2011[72], which were attended by policymakers and civil society representatives, including cultural organisations at national and European levels. In the following sections we will describe each component in turn.

3.2 Description

3.2.1 Platform for Intercultural Europe

The Platform for Intercultural Europe (PIE) was established in 2006 by Culture Action Europe and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), with the support of the Network of European Foundations (NEF). The Platform was set up as an informal civic initiative that accompanied the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008. The network has been an established association since 2008 and now has 57 members drawn from across Europe (mainly organisations, but also some individuals) who pay to join. The Platform has an elected steering group of ten members and a secretariat in Brussels with two employees (1.8 FTE). The Platform is currently funded through a multiannual grant from the European Commission, the ECF and to a small extent from membership fees.

An important milestone for the Platform was the manifesto produced in 2008, which is known as the Rainbow Paper (Intercultural Dialogue: From Practice to Policy and Back)[73], a policy paper dealing with the needs arising from cultural diversity that are not covered by "white" or "green" papers. The Rainbow Paper sets out the Platform's, which concern contributing to change in Europe at four levels:

- **Attitudinal** – leading to a greater appreciation of diversity and the complexity of identities;
- **Social** – working towards democratic inclusion and greater equity;
- **Structural** - building capacities for change within organisations and constituencies in view of diversity; and
- **Policy changes** – working for change at all levels, with the EU as the key communication point; enhancing standards and frameworks to tackle exclusion, inequalities and breaches of human rights related to cultural diversity.

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[71] European Commission (2007), Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF
[72] A first European Culture Forum had been organised in a different context by the Portuguese Presidency, in 2007, to discuss the Commission's Communication on the European Agenda for Culture.
[73] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/rainbowpaper_en.pdf

The paper also provided five recommendations on intercultural dialogue (see Annex Two).

The Platform undertakes a range of activities in order to fulfil the aims and ambitions laid down in the Rainbow Paper. A summary of these activities are provided below.

Intercultural Practice Exchanges

The first Practice Exchange was held in Malmö, Sweden in June 2009, with the aim of making the work of the Platform more practical in terms of implementation. The rationale was to engage with current and potential participants in the Platform and build on the ambitions of the Rainbow Paper, particularly around capacity-building in organisations. The Practice Exchanges enable participants from civil society organisations to "*exchange experiences, practice and methods on intercultural strategies, policies and possibilities*"[74]. The format is based on the presentation of case studies or practice examples, which are then discussed. So far, six Practice Exchanges have been held (as described in the table below).

Table 3.1 Practice Exchanges

Practice Exchanges		
1st	**Malmö, Sweden - June 2009**	Practice Exchange on Intercultural Capacity-building
2nd	**Vienna, Austria – November 2009**	Practice Exchange on Intercultural Capacity-building
3rd	**Rome, Italy – May 2010**	Exchange on Intercultural Capacity-building: Novel cooperation with Italian trade union confederation CGIL on Intercultural Dialogue in the work place
4th	**London, UK – December 2010**	Exchange on Intercultural Capacity-building: Interculturalism - Art and Policy
5th	**Ljubljana, Slovenia December 2011**	Intercultural Capacity-building: Small European Countries Prepare for Globalisation - The Challenge of Diversity and Engagement
6th	**Belfast, UK November 2012**	Intercultural Capacity-building: Navigating the journey from conflict to interculturalism - The role of the arts in Northern Ireland

Annual European PIE Forums

The Platform for Intercultural Europe has held four Annual European Forums between 2009 and 2012 (see table below). These were an opportunity for practitioners and policy makers to come together to discuss particular issues, and each forum had a specific theme. The events, which were sponsored by DG EAC of the European Commission, were held in Brussels over two days and were open to members and non-members. They were also combined with the Platform's General Members Assembly.

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[74] Platform for Intercultural Europe: Activity report 2009

Table 3.2 European Platform Forums

European Forums	
June 2009	1st European Forum on "The Role of the Arts in Intercultural Dialogue: A Perspective from and on the Arts"
June 2010	2nd European Forum - Capacity-building for Intercultural Dialogue
May 2011	3rd European Forum - Programme Interculture: Enabling and Nourishing Dialogue
June 2012	4th European Forum - Participation and Citizenship: Can Cultural Institutions in Europe lead the way? Should they?

Communications

The platform produces a Newsbulletin[75] four times per year. These bulletins contain news on the Platform's activities and provide details of opportunities for participation and to feedback on particular issues. In 2009 the Platform commissioned an "Inventory of Resources on Intercultural Dialogue" as a first step in establishing a comprehensive 'hub of resources'. This on-line resource collection is referred to as the "Panorama on Intercultural Dialogue" (http://panorama.intercultural-europe.org/) and is structured to reflect the Rainbow Paper's approach to intercultural dialogue[76].

Lobbying and discussion papers

The Platform has also published a number of discussion papers, including one on "Intercultural Dialogue and full, free and equal participation" and another on "the Intercultural opening of cultural institutions in Europe." A representative from the Platform also contributes to the European Integration Forum twice a year.

3.2.2   Platform on Access to Culture

This Platform on Access to Culture (ACP) was established following a call for expressions of interest published by the Commission in June 2008. It brings together over 40[77] European network organisations with the aim of strengthening the voice of the cultural sector at the policy-making level[78]. On the daily basis Platform is managed by a secretariat set up at the European House for Culture[79]. More specifically, it aims to:

- Position Access to Culture in a human/cultural rights perspective;
- Place Access to Culture upstream in cultural policy-making (with a strong call to also mainstream culture in other policy fields);
- Formulate clear priority areas for action to develop the conditions of creation, education and participation across Europe.

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[75] http://www.intercultural-europe.org/site/newsbulletins
[76] Annual Report.
[77] A full list of membership organisations can be found on the website of the European House for Culture http://www.houseforculture.eu/accesstoculture/12/access/
[78] Website of the Platform for Access to Culture at: http://www.access-to-culture.eu/accesstoculture/13/create/
[79] Civil Society Platform on Access to Culture - "Policy Guidelines", page 3

Three working groups were set up to cover: Audience Participation; Creativity and Creation; and Education and Learning. Since 2008 these working groups have evolved to comprise: Audience Participation / Citizenship; Arts, Human Rights and Social Justice; and Education and Learning. The first advocates the added value of audience participation, not only in the cultural sector but in society as a whole, especially in terms of civic participation and citizenship. The working group on Creativity and Creation concerns advocating for the best conditions for artistic creation for access for everyone to the creative process. It also explored innovation and creativity in the arts sector. This working group evolved into a new working group on Arts, Human Rights and Social Justice. Finally, the working group on Education and Learning focuses on synergies between education, learning, culture and the role of cultural participation in educational settings.

The initial work of the Platform resulted in the preparation of policy guidelines published on 9 June 2009 aimed at providing inputs for the European Culture Forum in 2009. The recommendations presented were directed towards the European Commission, Member States, local and regional authorities and cultural institutions (see Annex Two). Best practices based on the work of the three groups were also included.

Besides the policy guidelines, the working groups have produced written outputs[80] such as:

- The Cultural Component of Citizenship: An Inventory of Challenges;

- Access to Culture in the digital era: A Citizen's Right - draft compendium of best practice examples;

- A desire for a conversation, motivations and strategies of artists engaged in projects in business, science and technology workplaces;

- Obstacles to artists' creativity in the EU and realistic solutions: A Pre-study;

- Education and access to digital culture: The current situation and future directions for European culture;

- Cultural participation in education and lifelong learning: a catalyst for personal advancement, community development, social change and economic growth;

- We are more! The overlooked potential of learning through cultural engagement; and

- Untraditional Creative Partnerships – Seven Wonders of Arts and Culture in Education.

Other activities have included workshops, collection of case studies, presentation and participation at meetings of the OMC working groups and the European Culture Forum.

When the first phase (2008-2010) came to an end the Platform underwent a period of re-organisation. In 2011 the board and chairmanship was abolished in favour of an advisory group and spokesperson for the Platform. The current structure therefore consists of the following elements: spokesperson; secretariat; working group leaders; advisory group and plenary. The plenary defines the work plan and actions for the following year and assesses the execution of the work plan and adequacy of the management of the Platform. The advisory group is tasked with mediating and advising the spokesperson, working groups and secretariat on overall strategy. The spokesperson chairs the plenary and functions as the 'face' of the Platform, including representing it at meetings.

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[80] The documents are available for download from the website of the European House for Culture
http://www.houseforculture.eu/accesstoculture/13/create/

3.2.3   Platform on Cultural and Creative Industries

The Platform on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) was established in 2008, following an open call for expression of interest initiated by the European Commission. Its aim was to highlight the fundamental role of cultural and creative industries in Europe and unlock their full potential through policy recommendations and public advocacy[81]. Around 40 civil society organisations expressed interest in being part of the Platform.

The Platform organises its work through plenary meetings involving all the members, which are organised once a year. During the plenary meetings Platform members discuss the yearly work programme, communication activities, policy recommendations and management. The plenary also elects board members who are responsible for the implementation of the work programme. The board consists of seven member organisations and includes a President. The President is elected for a fixed duration and is responsible for chairing the meetings and representing the Platform at external meetings. Administrative and organisational support is provided by the Secretariat[82]. The work of the CCI was organised through five thematic working groups, coordinated by board members:

* **Working group 1:** Regulatory Environment;

* **Working group 2:** Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);

* **Working groups 3 and 4:** Exchange and Export in a Globalised world; and

* **Working group 5:** interface between artists and the cultural industries.

Contributions from the working groups formed the basis for the development of the Platform's recommendations published in September 2009 and which aimed to contribute to the development of the Commission's Green Paper on *Unlocking the Potential of Culture and Creative Industries*. The recommendations were provided in eight key areas and are presented in Annex Two.

In 2011 the activities of the Platform were re-organised through the following thematic workshops:

* **Workshop 1:** How to enhance the support of the EU Structural Funds to the CCIs;

* **Workshop 2:** Mobility and circulation of artists and works;

* **Workshop 3:** Education, skills and professional training;

* **Workshop 4:** Digital distribution and promotion;

* **Workshop 5:** Encouraging Investment in Cultural and Creative Content.

Each workshop resulted in the development of number of recommendations that were published in 2011 and presented during the European Culture Forum in 2011.

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[81] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/icc-platform-info.pdf
[82] This is based on the information provided by the Platform

3.2.4   European Culture Forums

The first European Culture Forum (ECF) was organised in 2007 by the Portuguese Presidency in order to endorse the aim of the Agenda for Culture to further develop dialogue with the culture sector. It brought together 400 participants representing cultural organisations and decision makers[83]. Following the success of the first Forum, the following two were organised by the Commission in 2009 and 2011, and the 2013 Forum is also under preparation by the Commission.

The focus of the second ECF that took place on 29-30 September 2009 in Brussels was to explore issues that were of direct relevance to the objectives of the Agenda, namely culture diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation and culture as a vital role in external relations[84]. The outcomes of the Forum resulted in three concluding reports mirroring the key themes presented above. Approximately 800 persons participated in this Forum.

The third ECF took place on 20-21 October 2011 in Brussels. 25 high-level speakers debated on digitalisation, skills for culture, regional investment in culture, and culture in EU's external relations and democratic processes.[85] The last event to date brought together around 900 participants representing civil society organisations, experts, decision-makers, cultural organisations representing public, private and non-governmental sectors and others.

The next Forum will take place on 4/5/6 November 2013 in Brussels and aims to attract around 1,200 participants. It will focus on three main themes, including measuring the value of culture, funding culture in digital era and audience development which are relevant both to European culture policies and Creative Europe programme.

3.3   Relevance

3.3.1   Design/modality of tools

The **Platforms** were conceived to fulfil three main roles:

- Strengthening advocacy capacity vis-à-vis EU policy;

- Encouraging trans-sectoral working and better structuring of the culture sector at EU level; and

- Providing a framework for dialogue between the sector and the Commission.

Overall, the concept of setting up Platforms to address the three objectives above is widely welcomed by sector stakeholders and participants. The survey shows that the two main reasons for joining the Platforms were contributing to policy development and reinforcing the voice of the sector at EU level (see Table 3.3 below). This was also supported by interviews with Platform members: "…*it [the platform] gives us the opportunity to come together and work for something", "we wanted to ensure that there was debate at an EU level"* and *"we understood the process to be dialogue with the Commission and focused on the policy agenda of the EU institutions".* In line with the Platform concept and objectives, exchange of good practice was not seen as a significant motivation. This is consistent with the stated objectives of the Platforms.

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[83] http://www.cultureactioneurope.org/lang-en/advocate/eu-agenda-for-culture
[84] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/glance/european-culture-forum-2009_en.htm
[85] http://ec.europa.eu/culture/events/forum-2011_en.htm

Table 3.3 What were the three main reasons for your organisation to get involved in the Structured Dialogue Platforms?

Answer Option	No.	%
Interested in exchanges with other organisations	39	46.4
Interested in the themes selected	33	39.3
Interested in exchanges of good practice	21	25.0
Interested in exchanges with the Commission	42	50.0
Interested in reinforcing the voice of the cultural sector at EU level	47	56.0
Interested in influencing development of a political Agenda for Culture in Europe	50	59.5
Don't know	0	0.0
Other, please specify	4	4.8

Source: Ecorys survey

The Platform model has facilitated the building of valuable, new communities of interest: bringing various parts of the sector together, especially at the beginning, when this kind of collaboration and opportunity was new. As one of the Platform members mentioned: "*There was no cooperation before the platform between the sector organisations.*" This is especially true for the cooperation between commercial sector organisations and non-commercial sector which was possible within CCI platform: "*it was very interesting to hear different organisations and stakeholders that traditionally we did not work with*"[86]. Moreover, civil society representatives emphasised that Platforms brought some significant benefits in terms of strengthening the voice of the culture sector and advocacy capacity at EU level. The interviews with civil society representatives emphasised that engaging in dialogue with the EU institutions as well as Member States remains relevant.

However, as time went on some negative effects related to the design of the Platforms started to appear, as evidenced by the stakeholder consultations. Example quotes include:

- *The structured dialogue process has demanded an enormous effort (time, research, etc) for the European networks. Unless these efforts are also awarded financially, most of the European networks will find it difficult to engage with the same dedication and time as in the first years of structured dialogue (2008-2010);*

- *The platform needs to move towards a more democratic structure, attract more new members and establish links with local and national grass root initiatives, that have an interest in exchanging experience and joint policy influencing.*

- *More involvement, interest and clear goals from the Commission would have made the work more focussed and meaningful.*

- *The process of a structured dialogue is important to have, maybe the form can be different and redundancy can be uplifted.*

The interviewees emphasised that all three Platforms developed very different structures for the implementation and focus of their activities resulting in lack of transparency of their activities. There were widely varying expectations among civil society organisations and the process seemed to become less 'structured' during the last few years of the implementation process. The interviews showed that all stakeholders had varying expectations from the process. As one interviewee put it: "*The biggest difficulty was that everyone had different expectations. Towards each other as well*". Some interviewees questioned the need to 'duplicate' the work of existing organisations, others see a tension between

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[86] Platform member

administration and content and a risk of unnecessary institutionalization and rigidity, while others highlighted missed opportunities for closer articulation between the Platforms and the OMC working groups. Civil society representatives taking part in the study workshop emphasised that the need to engage in dialogue on European culture policy issues remains relevant for the culture sector, but that there is also a need to review how this is implemented in future (further detail concerning the design and implementation of the Platforms is presented in the efficiency section below).

The **Culture Forums** are large-scale events held every two years to bring the cultural sector together to exchange with experts, practitioners and policy makers in the field. According to the survey data there is a large overlap in terms of participants between the Forum and the Platforms: out of 94 respondents who reported to be members of at least one Platform, 80 indicated that they had participated in the ECF in 2009 and/or 2011. The Forums will of course have a wider group of participants than is the case for the Platforms, including a large number of organisations working at national level. In general the ECFs appear well regarded by a range of stakeholders, especially for the opportunity they provide for meeting, networking and discussing. Overall, the activity is consistent with the Structured Dialogue objectives concerning increasing sectoral advocacy capacity in EU policy debates and encouraging cross-sectoral awareness and collaboration. The survey results show that the most important reasons to take part in the ECF were interest in exchanges with other organisations in the culture field and exchanges with the Commission.

Finding 28: The Platforms were relevant tools for strengthening advocacy capacity, promoting and facilitating trans-sectoral working among the cultural organisations, and fostering dialogue between civil society and the Commission. This was especially the case during the early stages of the Structured Dialogue process, although a number of negative effects started to develop in the latter stages (different approaches to the implementation structures, tension between administration and content, varying expectations among the stakeholders regarding outcomes and results), largely as a result of unnecessary structural rigidity. At the outset the initiative was strongly welcomed by civil society organisations as an opportunity to contribute to the development of European culture policies and reinforce the voice of civil society in the decision making process. The need to continue dialogue between civil society and EU institutions remains relevant, but the way this is implemented in practice needs to be reviewed.

Finding 29: The European Culture Forums are relevant tools for achieving the objectives set for Structured Dialogue, in particular in terms of exchanges of good practice, encouraging cross-sectoral awareness and increasing collaboration. They bring a number of benefits, including widening engagement in and awareness of European culture policies, as well as openness to all interested organisations and individuals who wish to take part.

3.3.2 Themes and thematic approaches

As far as the **Platforms** are concerned, civil society organisations agree that the themes addressed are relevant and represent key pillars of culture policy at EU level (see table of survey results below), a finding strongly supported by the feedback from civil society interviews. Most participants represent organisations already working on the relevant policy issues. Relevance to member organisations and to national-level issues was comparatively lower, which is consistent with the focus in the objectives of Structured Dialogue on the EU level.

Table 3.4 Relevance of themes of the Platforms (i.e. intercultural dialogue, access to culture, cultural and creative industries):

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Themes explored by the Platform/s are relevant to your work at European level	58.3%	35.7%	3.6%	1.2%	1.2%
Themes explored by the Platform/s are relevant to your work – or the work of your members – at national/local level	44.0%	39.3%	10.7%	2.4%	3.6%
Themes explored by the Platform/s are relevant to policy priorities at European level	60.7%	29.8%	4.8%	2.4%	2.4%
Themes explored by the Platforms are relevant to policy priorities at national/regional level	34.5%	47.6%	8.3%	6.0%	3.6%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=84

On the survey evidence, promoting access to culture attracts a stronger response than the other two Platforms (70% regarding the theme relevant to a large extent, compared with around 50% for the other two Platforms). The results also indicate that participants were generally satisfied with the way specific topics for discussion were selected (in order to facilitate dialogue among culture organisations, and with the Commission). About two-thirds of respondents were involved in selecting topics to be discussed.

At the time when the Platforms were set up, it was also a new process, which created a significant level of interest in the sector. For example, European cultural organisations welcomed the idea of establishing a Platform on CCIs, because it allowed exchanges between cultural organisations representing diverse sectors (including publically funded and commercial components) and provided a mechanism for interaction with the Commission. It was suggested that individual sector bodies had been trying to push CCIs higher up the policy agenda for some time, so the opportunity to influence the development of a political Agenda for Culture in Europe was very welcome. Participants in the PIE felt its work was important in terms of continuing to foster the aims of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue which took place in 2008. A number of key participants in the ACP work represent culture organisations (Cultural Action Europe, EFA[87] etc.), where policy analysis and lobbying are already a significant part of their normal activities. However, where this is not the case it was noted that individuals may struggle to find the time to commit to active involvement in the Platform.

Some culture organisations, especially those not involved in the work of the Platforms, mentioned that the themes selected were very broad and highlighted that the Platforms should work on a set of more specific issues, including those that cultural organisations face when working internationally. A lack of flexibility in terms of the themes covered by Structural Dialogue was also emphasised by stakeholders as an area that should be reviewed by both the European Commission and civil society organisations themselves. For example, during the focus group with civil society representatives, held as part of this study, it was strongly suggested that linking the Council Work Plan for Culture and the themes for Structured Dialogue tools closer together would not only bring EU institutions, OMC and Structured Dialogue tools closer together through work on the common themes, but would also provide an appropriate timeframe for exploring certain topics. In addition, civil society representatives emphasised the need to discuss with the Commission which themes should be covered by Structured Dialogue in the future.

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[87] European Festivals Association http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/festivals/

Turning to the **Culture Forums,** the online survey results suggest the themes covered were highly relevant to the work of the participating organisations[88]. There is a stronger focus on EU rather than national issues (54% of respondents rated the themes relevant to this level to a large extent, compared with 17%), which is consistent with the evidence on motivations for participating; and the rationale for this component of the Structured Dialogue process. Interacting and engaging with other organisations, and with the European Commission, are strong motivating factors for participating, including with a view to influencing the EU's political agenda and reinforcing the voice of the cultural sector. Exchange of good practice does not appear to be a primary focus (29% according to the survey), suggesting that personal contacts and networking aspects take precedence over more detailed elements concerning practice and implementation. In terms of factors that may be presenting obstacles to participating in the Forums, the main message from the survey results is that cost and capacity play a role here (in the survey 30% and 32%, respectively, cited these as reasons for not participating), rather than any concerns about the relevance of the themes or doubts about the usefulness of the event.

Finding 30: The themes covered by the Structured Dialogue tools are relevant to civil society organisations, especially for their work at European level. However, there is a need to establish a clearly defined timeframe for exploring specific themes and to introduce greater flexibility in terms of addressing themes consistent with the changing needs of the culture sector and the EU policy development process.

Finding 31: There is a need to link the themes covered by the Structured Dialogue process more explicitly to the themes and priorities identified in the Council Work Plans for Culture that govern the OMC process.

3.3.3 European Added Value

A majority of survey respondents (62%) indicated that similar results would not been possible without the support of the European Commission in the **Platforms**, while 24% thought it would have been possible (17% at a smaller scale). Some 14% were unsure on this point. This evidence may indicate added value, although it is difficult to be conclusive on this point, since there is no widespread agreement on what the results of the process are, nor in some cases where the target audience lies. The results of the interviews with civil society organisations also highlight concerns that existing EU level bodies could have achieved similar effects individually. Added value in terms of promoting transversal and trans-sectoral interaction is more visible.

European Cultural Forums did not exist without the support of the Commission and have strong European Added Value. They provide new opportunities for exchanges among the culture sector and with the Commission. The ECF deliver it in a number of ways, including promoting a European dimension, sharing good practice, facilitating trans-national networks and linking sub-sectoral interests together. Without organising the ECF at a European level, similar results would not have been achieved.

In addition to the evidence from the online survey, to assess the European Added Value we compared the objectives and functions of Structured Dialogue tools in the field of culture to other initiatives at EU level that engage with civil society organisations. The results are as follows:

Strengthening advocacy capacity of cultural organisations at EU level: The European Culture Programme also supports the capacity building of European cultural organisations - such support focuses on the

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[88] Some 57% of survey respondents had taken part in the 2011 Forum and 34% in the event in 2009.

capacity of networks to operate internationally, sharing of good practice and professionalising the sector rather then specifically focusing on increasing advocacy capacity. Structured Dialogue Platforms and ECFs are therefore unique in supporting the advocacy capacity of cultural organisations at EU level through involvement in the European culture policy debate.

Support for trans-sectoral cooperation among cultural organisations: Similarly, there are no other European level programmes or initiatives supporting trans-sectoral cooperation among European cultural organisations. Although the current Culture and Media programme, as well as the future Creative Europe programme, aim to facilitate cross-sectoral working in the field of culture, this is not one of the focal points of other EU actions. Both Platforms and Forums support trans-sectoral cooperation through bringing together representatives from wide range of sectors, thus facilitating cooperation among European cultural organisations. They are therefore complementary to other EU initiatives.

Provide a framework for exchanging of views between the EU institutions and civil society representatives: There are several initiatives and tools in place here, especially in the framework of legislative proposals and key policy initiatives. The Commission has an obligation to consult with citizens and representative associations according to the article 11 of the Treaty on the EU[89]. To address this, the minimum standards for stakeholder consultations were adopted in 2002[90]. More recently activities have been strengthened through the better and smarter regulation initiative that sets out the framework for consultations required as part of impact assessments and evaluations. Such consultations take place through individual interviews, online surveys, events, workshops and conferences. For example, online consultation and a stakeholder meeting were organised while preparing the proposal for the Creative Europe programme. Green and White Papers are also regularly used for consulting stakeholders on policies and legislative proposals.

In addition, a two-tier consultation with social dialogue partners is established in articles 153-155 of the Treaty[91]. The Treaty establishes that social partners should be consulted first on the general direction of the proposed initiative, and secondly on the more detailed content of all initiatives that affect social partners. Social dialogue is organised through sectoral social dialogue committees, bringing together European organisations representing employers and workers in a specific field in order to provide views on issues related to employment relations. For example, social dialogue committees have been set up in the audiovisual and live performance sectors.

There is a need to ensure that structured dialogue tools complement the existing stakeholder consultations taking place as part of the impact assessments, better and smarter regulation initiatives, social dialogue initiatives. There is a need to ensure that the role of the Structured Dialogue tools is clearly defined in order to avoid potential duplication between different consultation mechanisms available. Moreover, the research indicates that it was not sufficiently clear for the civil society organisations, or for the European institutions, what the role of the Platforms is within the context of the consultations taking place as part of the impact assessment process. This may result in lower European Added Value.

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[89] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0013:0046:en:PDF
[90] COM(2002) 704 "Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue - General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission".
[91] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the European Union. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0013:0046:en:PDF

Finding 32: The Structured Dialogue tools offer European Added Value and similar results would not be achieved without involvement of the Commission. The European Added Value is strongest in facilitating trans-sectoral cooperation, networking and exchanges among the culture sector representatives.

Finding 33: The European added value in terms of dialogue with the Commission is predicated on providing results that represent an improvement on pre-existing mechanisms.The Structured Dialogue tools provide a framework for the exchange of views between civil society organisations and the Commission, but it is not clear how the Platforms in particular fit with other consultation strands established by the EU institutions. There is therefore a need to ensure that both Platforms and Forums complement stakeholder consultations taking place as part of the impact assessment process, better and smarter regulation initiatives and social dialogue initiatives.

3.4   Effectiveness

3.4.1   Participation

Structured Dialogue Platforms

EU networks form the bulk of organisations participating in the Platforms, and although most are based in Brussels or in the larger Member States, the geographical coverage of their activities is extensive. Participants are generally satisfied with the degree of representativeness in terms of countries, but less so in terms of different cultural sectors (20-24% dissatisfied according to the survey results in the case of the PIE and ACP). The figures presented below provide a detailed overview of geographical, sector and type of organisations coverage for the report.

Figure 3.1   Countries where members of the Platforms are based
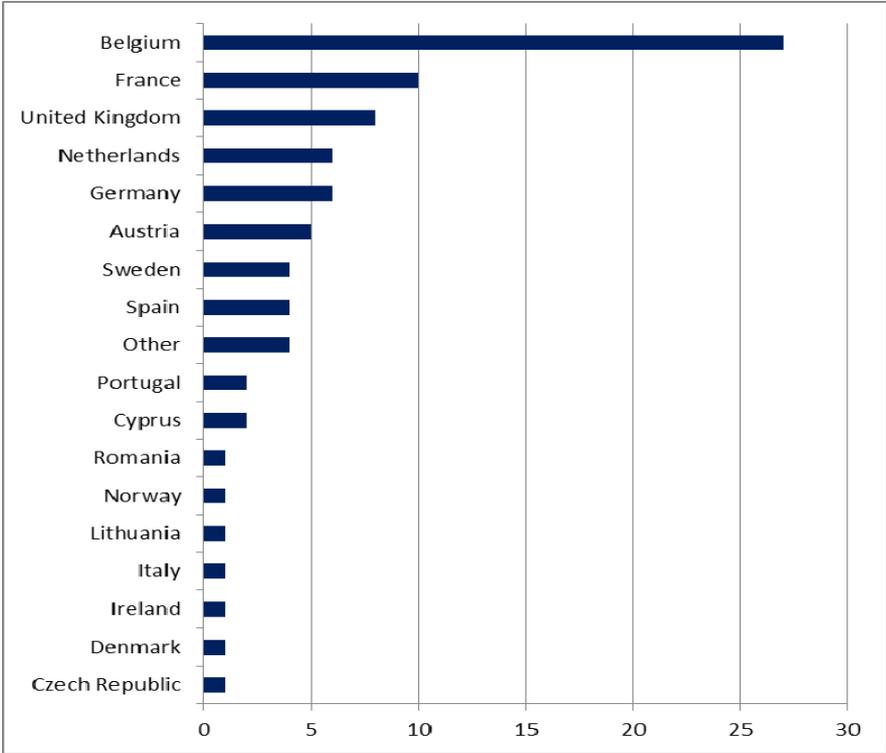
Source: Ecorys survey

Although most of the civil society organisations that are members of the Structure Dialogue Platforms are based in Belgium or other larger/northern European countries (France, UK, Germany and Netherlands), the geographical coverage of the network and organisations involved is much wider and covers all the EU Member States, as well as countries outside the EU. A detailed overview of country coverage of the networks and associations involved is presented in the figure below.

Figure 3.2   Geographical coverage of networks involved
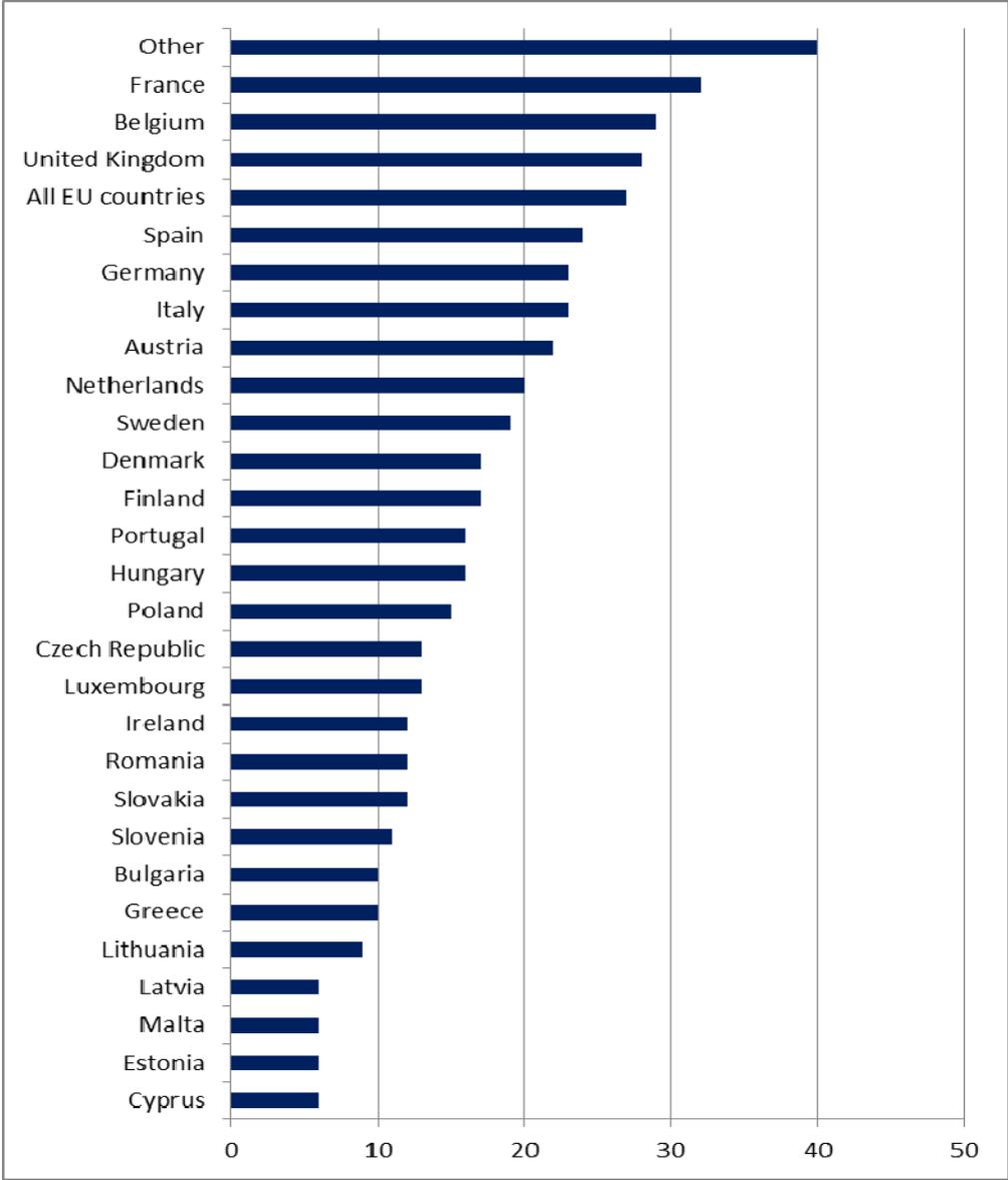
Source: Ecorys survey

A large majority of the network organisations involved have members in all the EU Member States. However, larger western European countries like France, UK, Spain and Germany are represented the most, even when considering geographical coverage of the networks involved. Belgium is also reported to be well represented and this is likely to be because many European networks are based in Brussels. Countries such as Cyprus, Estonia, Malta and Latvia are the least represented in the Platforms. The other countries mentioned in the survey included European non-EU countries, EU neighbourhood countries including Mediterranean, Eastern neighbouring countries. Some respondents indicated they have members in wide geographical areas and included members from all the continents.

Feedback from the consultations with ACP members also suggests geographical coverage is satisfactory and has improved over time, especially in terms of opening up to organisations beyond those that are Brussels-based. However there are also concerns that activity relies on a relatively small number of (high visibility) participants, that the results achieved at national level have been disappointing. A similar feeling was identified during the consultations with CCI Platform, which also highlighted that Board members play a key role in day-to-day work while other members tend to be engaged to a smaller extent. The extent of engagement of and linkages with national members is somewhat smaller and strongly depends on each individual network.

The data from the online survey indicates that cultural policy, performing arts, music, festivals and visual arts are the most represented in the Platforms (see the figure below). Among the least represented sectors are radio, architecture and youth organisations. The latter is not directly related to the arts fields and therefore it is not directly comparable with the other sectors. Among those who mentioned other sectors areas such as human rights, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion were mentioned most often followed by advertisement, copy rights and translations. The former reflects the themes and issues covered by PIE and ACP. While the latter is likely to be linked to the fact that CCI Platform brings together arts organisations with more commercially oriented sectors.

Figure 3.3   Culture sector representation
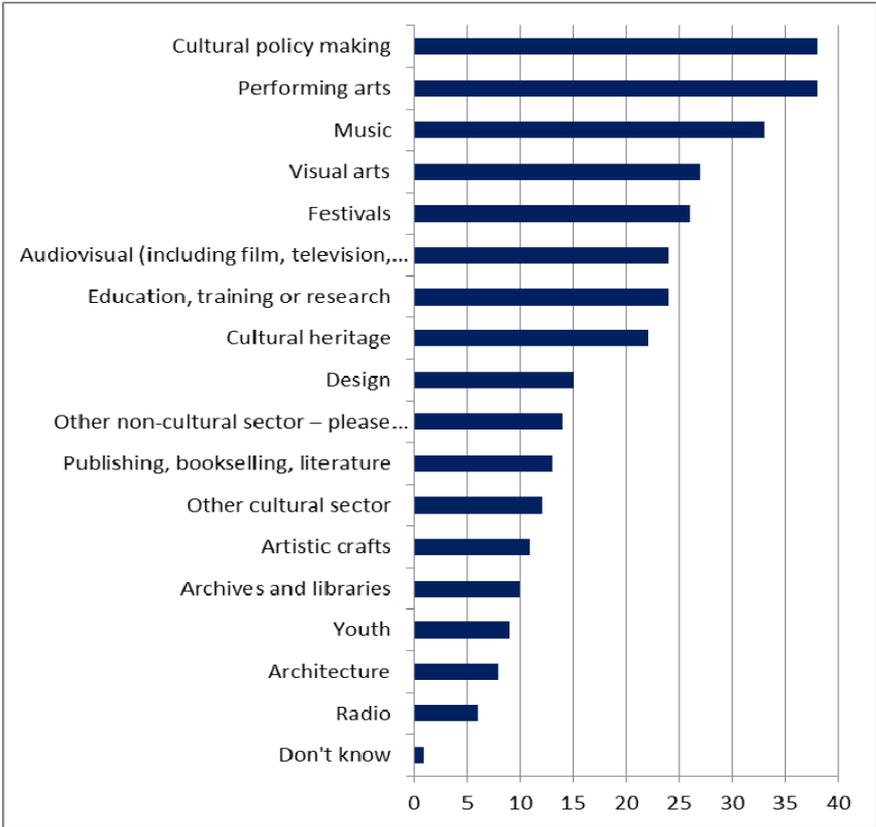
Source: Ecorys survey

The survey shows also that European and international networks as well as non-for-profit cultural organisations are mostly represented in the Platforms (see the figure below). This is in line to the original expectations from the Commission to engage representative interlocutors in the European policy dialogue with civil society organisations in the field of culture.

Figure 3.4 Type of organisations
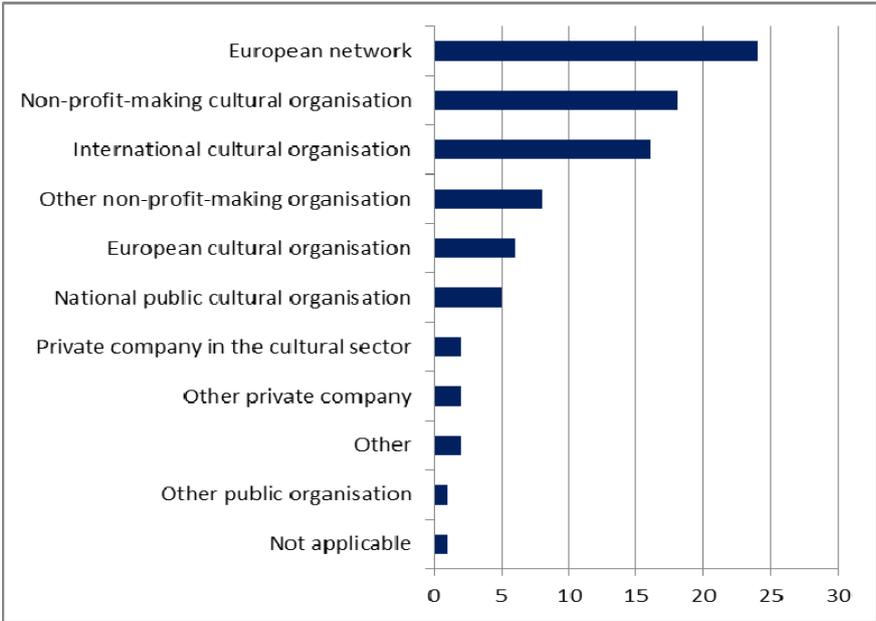
Source: Ecorys survey

Further analysis of participation data shows that there are some differences among the Platforms when considering the types of organisations. The ACP and CCI Platforms bring together around 40 European and international networks each. The PIE membership has 15 European organisations in addition to 39 organisations active at national level and four private persons. Moreover, the PIE has very strong institutional structure with member organisations paying membership fees while ACP and CCI are functioning as more informal/non-institutional networks, without membership fees.

European Culture Forums

The majority of the survey respondents taking part in the ECF in 2009 and/or 2011 were based in Belgium, France, UK and the Netherlands. This shows that, in common with the Platforms, a majority of ECF participants tend to come from larger western European countries, while smaller Eastern and Southern Member States tend to be less well represented (as illustrated by the figure below).

Figure 3.5 Geographical representation of participants in ECFs
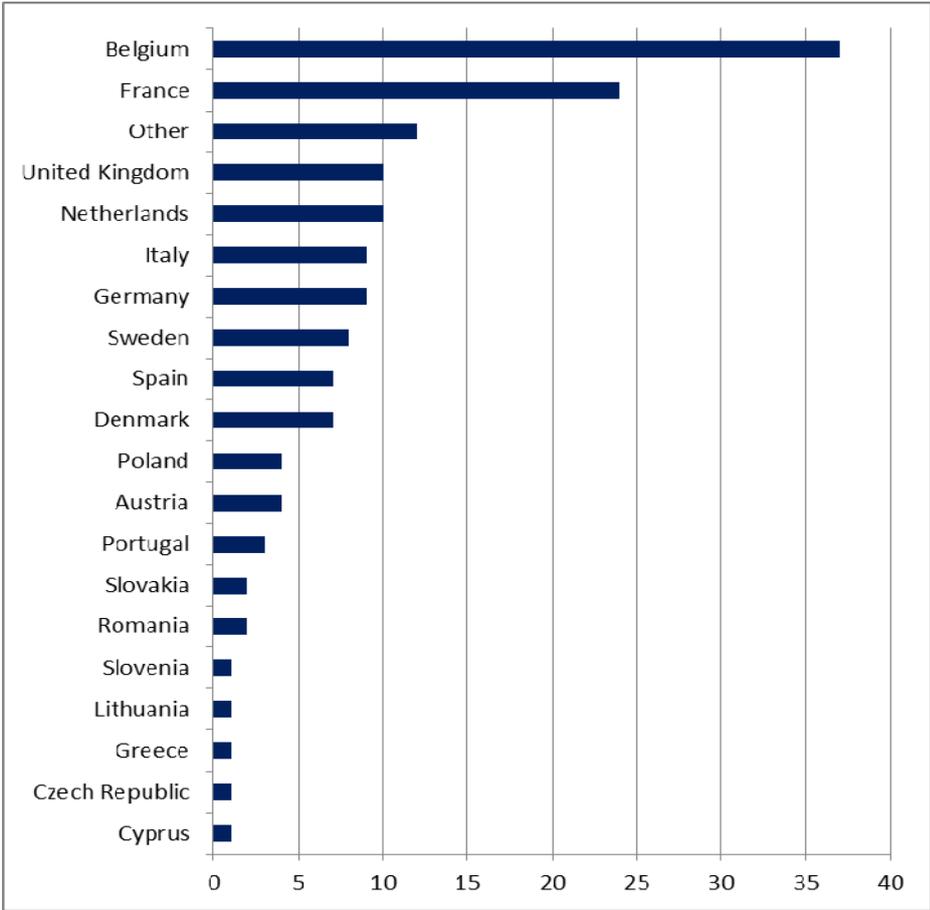
Source: Ecorys survey

According to the online survey (see the figure below), the sectors that are most represented in the ECFs are culture policy, music, performing arts and visual arts. The radio, youth, archives and libraries are the least represented. The representation of sectors is very similar when compared with the Platforms. This is likely to be due to the fact that there is an overlap of the participation between the Platforms and the Forums. It is also likely that those organisations that are engaged in the European culture policy and took part in both initiatives tended to respond to the survey more actively and therefore the results should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 3.6 Sector representation in ECF 2009 and 2011
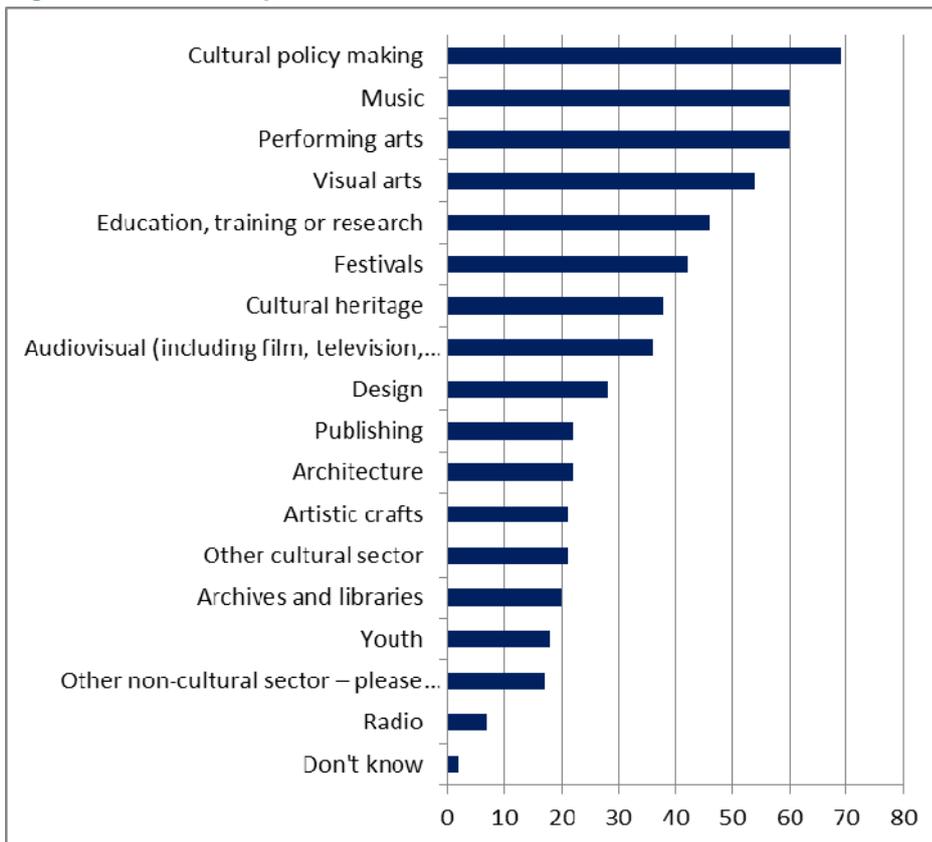
Source: Ecorys survey

In terms of the types of organisation, non-for-profit cultural organisations, European and international networks were represented most frequently (see the figure below). In contrast to the Platforms, national public cultural organisations also constituted a large share of the participants. Individuals and private sector organisations were the least well represented.

Figure 3.7 Type of organisations represented in ECF 2009 and 2011
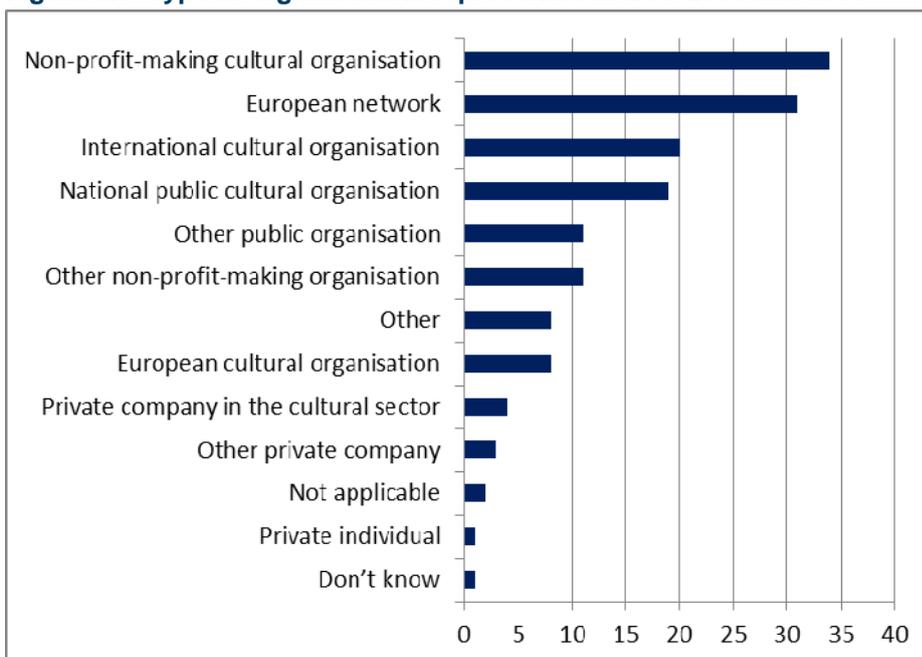
Source: Ecorys survey

Finding 34: Overall, participation is satisfactory in terms of geography, sector coverage and types of participants. However, smaller Member States and some sub-sectors (radio, architecture, youth and artistic crafts) appear to be comparatively under-represented.

Finding 35: National cultural organisations are well represented in the Forums and Platform for Intercultural Europe, but are not directly involved in the work of the other two Platforms. There is a need to harmonise the approach for membership of the platforms with the same approach applicable to all of them to ensure equal opportunities for national organisational organisations to contribute to the dialogue process.

3.4.2   Outputs and results

The outputs produced by the **Platforms** include policy papers and recommendations, discussion papers, workshops, good practice exchanges and events. An overview of the outputs produced is presented in the table below. There was a large variations in terms of the approaches taken by each Platform and the activities and outputs they produced.

Table 3.5 Platforms outputs

Platform for Intercultural Europe	Platform on Access to Culture	Platform on Culture and Creative Industries
• Rainbow Paper; • Practice exchanges; • Annual forums[92]; • Newsbulletins; • On-line resource database (Panorama); • Thematic discussion papers.	• Policy guidelines; • Thematic papers produced by working groups.	• Policy recommendations published in 2009 and 2011; • Thematic workshops; • Position documents on Commission legislative proposals.

Almost half (42%) of survey respondents for all three Platforms rate the quality of the outputs produced as high quality and 49% report it to be of reasonable quality. Interviews with civil society organisations involved in the Platforms confirmed the survey findings. A member of the PIE emphasised that: *"The platform has produced good outputs so they have gained trust and respect".* The Rainbow Paper, which the PIE produced in 2008, was repeatedly mentioned as a significant and useful output by stakeholders. As another interviewee commented *"…it did not necessarily have an important impact on policy, but it was a milestone."* Feedback from stakeholders suggested that the annual practice exchange organised by the PIE were also particularly unique and very well received. The CCI Platform members interviewed emphasised the importance of developing a common position among the 40 organisations involved from diverse backgrounds including the commercial and non-commercial sectors. ACP participants are also generally positive about the quality of the outputs produced, (57% regarding them as reasonable and 38% as high quality), although the consultation evidence suggests there are reservations amongst some participants on this point.

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[92] The Annual Forums aim to bring together member, non-member organisations and decision makers to discuss specific topics. They are organised by the PIE and are different initiative from the European Culture Forums subject to the evaluation.

The survey suggests a high proportion of participants used the Platforms' outputs: 60% to some and 21% to a large extent. Moreover, the interviews with ACP participants highlighted that organisations at national level picked up the discussions and there was sharing of knowledge with other organisations (including conferences where topics discussed in the ACP). The experience of taking part in the Platform events has proved very useful to many participants, in terms of bringing the sector together. The interviews with ACP members suggest the process of producing formal outputs (mostly policy papers) was also valuable, although some participants were less certain whether these were widely read.

Participants in all three Platforms reported that some of their recommendations were reflected in the European culture policy documents. For example, one interviewee emphasised that: *"…the first set of recommendation produced in 2009 influenced development of the green paper".* Members of all three Platforms provided anecdotal evidence on how their outputs have been used in decision making processes. However, the study focus group provided evidence of concerns that, after the initial phase of their work, there was a lack of clarity and insufficient exchanges with the Commission in terms of expected outputs and how they were expected to contribute to the decision making process.

Participants in all three Platforms, especially those in ACP and CCI, expressed a concern regarding the extent to which they were reaching a wider audience, including other DGs, EU institutions and OMC groups and were having any effect on the wider sector and at national/regional level. For these Platforms a lack of visibility is clearly an issue. The PIE Platform is better placed in this respect, but here too participants see value in increasing media coverage to widen its audience.

The Platforms reported that outputs had been disseminated among civil society organisations through newsletters, email exchanges and events. For example, the survey results show that PIE outputs were disseminated by participating organisations in a range of different ways, including via e-mailing to members (53% did this), via newsletters (46%) and at events (40%). Similarly, ACP outputs were disseminated via newsletters (62%), web or email (52%) and via presentations at events (50%). Other methods included websites and social media. In addition, the Commission published the outputs on the DG EAC website and distributed information about the Platforms through their own newsletters. Nevertheless, the interviews with the Platform members emphasised that there is a need to further improve the visibility of the outputs that they produce. Importantly, interviewees not directloy involved in the Platforms emphasised a lack of communication with those European networks that are not part of the Platforms as well as among the organisations at national level.

Survey respondents were asked how best to improve dissemination activities and many responses suggested the involvement of press and media to a greater extent would be beneficial, in order to generate more interest in the Platforms' work and to widen the audience. Some ACP members also highlighted that clearer targets for outputs and dissemination are called for, as well as more resources to support research.

There were some synergies between the Structured Dialogue tools (Platforms and ECFs); as mentioned above, there is a high level of overlap in terms of the participating organisations in both the Forums and Platforms. The Platforms, their work and outputs were presented during the Forums. Nevertheless, the stakeholder interviews and survey results indicated the need to increase synergies between two structured dialogue tools, and a higher degree of interactions would potentially increase mutual benefits further. This could for example take place through contributions from the Platforms to the content of the Forums, higher visibility of the Platforms during the event (this idea was strongly welcomed by Platform members) and increasing networking opportunities. Although it is important to ensure that Forums remain of relevance to a wide range of stakeholders, there is potential to further integrate the Platforms and the

Culture Forums without unbalancing the format of the open event. This would help to raise awareness of the Platforms and make stronger links with other components of policy-making (including the OMC).

The work of the Platforms and OMC working groups largely took place in parallel, especially during the early phases. However, some synergies were developed between the two during the last few years. Interviews with Platform representatives show that the level of cooperation between the two varied significantly depending on the relevance of the thematic areas covered and depending on how the two were run. Although there was an OMC addressing the issues related to cultural and creative industries, which was of direct relevance to the CCI platform, there was no OMC working group dealing directly with the issue of intercultural dialogue for example.

Exchanges and cooperation between the Platforms and OMC groups improved during the implementation of the second Work Plan 2011-2014: Platform representatives were invited to take part in the OMC working group meetings for example. As a representative from the CCI platform put it: *"During the second phase we had good links with OMC. We were invited to all the meetings."* PIE members saw the establishment of the OMC working group on intercultural dialogue as an important objective which was already expressed in the Rainbow Paper. The Platform took up an active role in the work of the OMC group through providing inputs, disseminating information about the work of the OMC working group and participating in the work of one of the sub-groups. ACP members also participated in the relevant OMC group meetings and presented their outputs. However, the extent of the participation and its impact was less clear to some of the members.

In terms of achieving their objectives, the survey results show a high degree of confidence on the part of participants that the three key aims of the Structured Dialogue as a whole have been fulfilled (see table below).

Table 3.6 Overall, has the Structured Dialogue process (Civil Society Thematic Platforms / European Culture Forums) achieved its objectives, namely to…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Strengthen the advocacy capacity of the cultural sector in policy debate at European level	37.0%	54.3%	4.9%	2.5%	1.2%
Provide the Commission with a framework for the regular exchange of views and structured dialogue with Civil Society	43.2%	49.4%	1.2%	4.9%	1.2%
Encourage the various components of the cultural sector to work in a more trans-sectoral way and to better structure and	38.3%	45.7%	6.2%	8.6%	1.2%

Source: Ecorys survey, n=81

The online survey shows that the Structured Dialogue objectives were achieved to a large or to some extent. The evidence gathered through interviews and the focus group support these findings to some extent. The work of the Platforms had some positive effects in terms of bringing the sector together. As mentioned above, the CCI platform brought together organisations representing the commercial and non-commercial sectors, which had never worked together before. It opened up new avenues for exchanging views among the culture sector and the Commission, through Forums and Platforms that did not exist before. It also resulted in some positive effects in terms of increasing the advocacy capacity of the organisations involved.

Nevertheless, during the second phase of the Structured Dialogue process some negative effects started to appear, especially in relation to dissemination of the outputs and visibility of the platforms, the need for a closer alignment to the Work Plan for Culture and the OMC themes, and the need for closer, systematic interaction between the sector and the Commission. As mentioned in the review of the Structured Dialogue process undertaken by the Commission in 2010: *"A closer articulation of civil society dialogue with the work of the Commission, OMC groups and Member States in Council would give a clearer picture of when and where to input recommendations".*[93] Interviews with the Commission also indicated that it is important to be clearer what is expected from the Structured Dialogue, how they complement the existing consultation mechanisms, and how the Structured Dialogue should be implemented in future.

Finding 36: Participants in the Structured Dialogue Platforms were generally satisfied with the quality of the outputs produced, but expressed a concern on the extent to which these responded to the needs of the Commission or were used to inform policy process. There is a need to strengthen the evidence base for the outputs and increase exchanges between the Commission and civil society on expected outputs, which is likely to increase quality and effectiveness.

Finding 37: Both the Commission and the platforms themselves disseminated the outputs produced through their existing channels of communications. However, the visibility and communication of the outputs produced were less satisfactory than was expected by the stakeholders. The need for the platforms to find the ways of communicating the outputs among civil society organisations not directly involved as well as to disseminate the information among the national members has been identified.

Finding 38: Interaction between the OMC and Structured Dialogue Platforms has been limited especially during the implementation of the first Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. It has improved significantly during the second phase, however, there is a potential for improving the cooperation further through mirroring the themes, closer realignment of the work of the platforms to the Council Work Plans.

Finding 39: The objectives set out for Structured Dialogue process have been achieved in relation to bringing the sector closer together, increasing the capacity to undertake advocacy work at EU level, opening up new opportunities for exchanges between civil society and the Commission.

Finding 40: The benefits have reduced after the first phase of the process, especially in terms of dialogue between the Commission and civil society, where the lack of a common understanding in terms of how to implement such a dialogue in practice limited its effectiveness. This does not imply that other forms of customary dialogue continued; just not necessarily via the Platform structures.

3.4.3   Impacts/benefits

The online survey evidence highlights a range of benefits that the **Platforms** have delivered for the culture sector in general, in particular in terms of reinforcing the voice of the sector; facilitating debate between cultural organisations and increasing capacity to engage with the Commission (see the figure below). Participants appear comparatively less certain of impacts in terms of influencing the development of the Agenda for Culture and most components at national/regional level.

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[93] European Commission (2010), *An Implementation of the European Agenda for Culture.* SEC (2010) 904. Available at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0390:FIN:EN:PDF

Figure 3.8 To what extent do you agree that Structured Dialogue Platforms have benefited the culture sector in general?
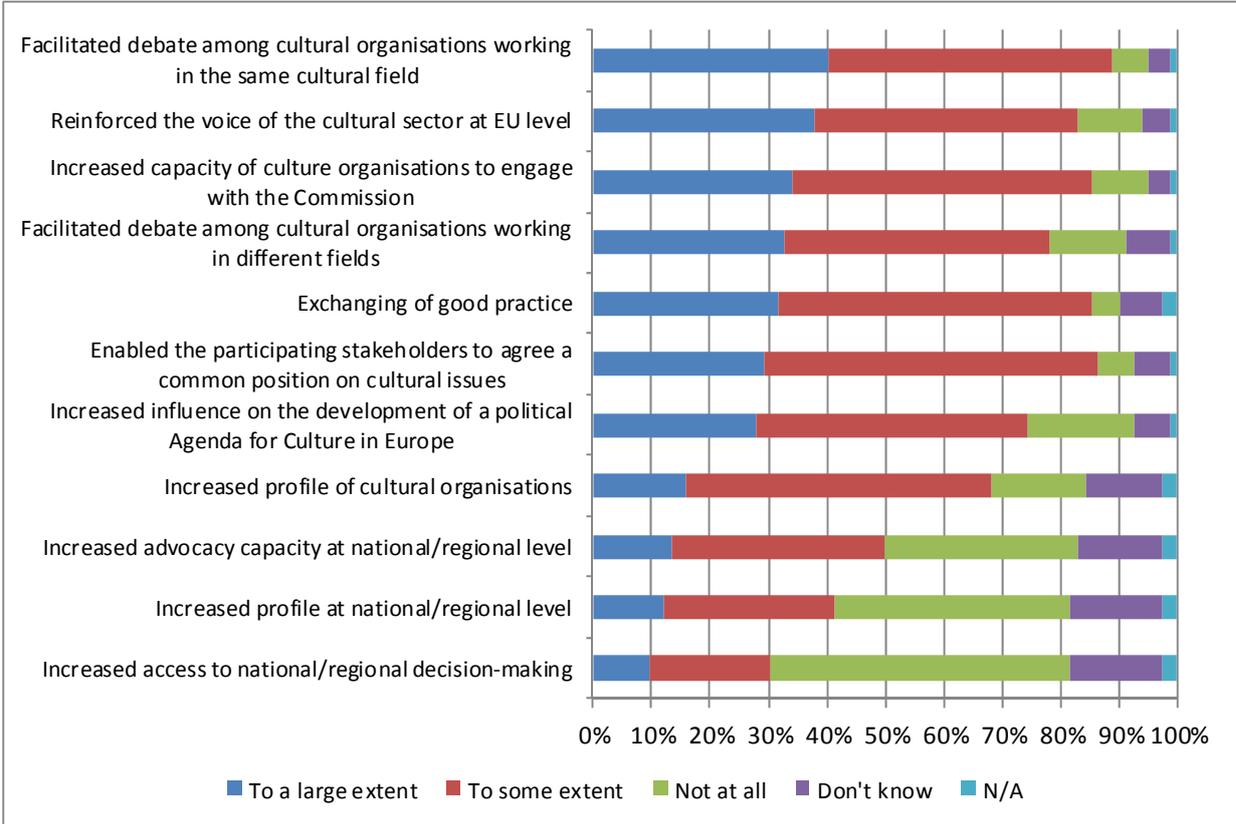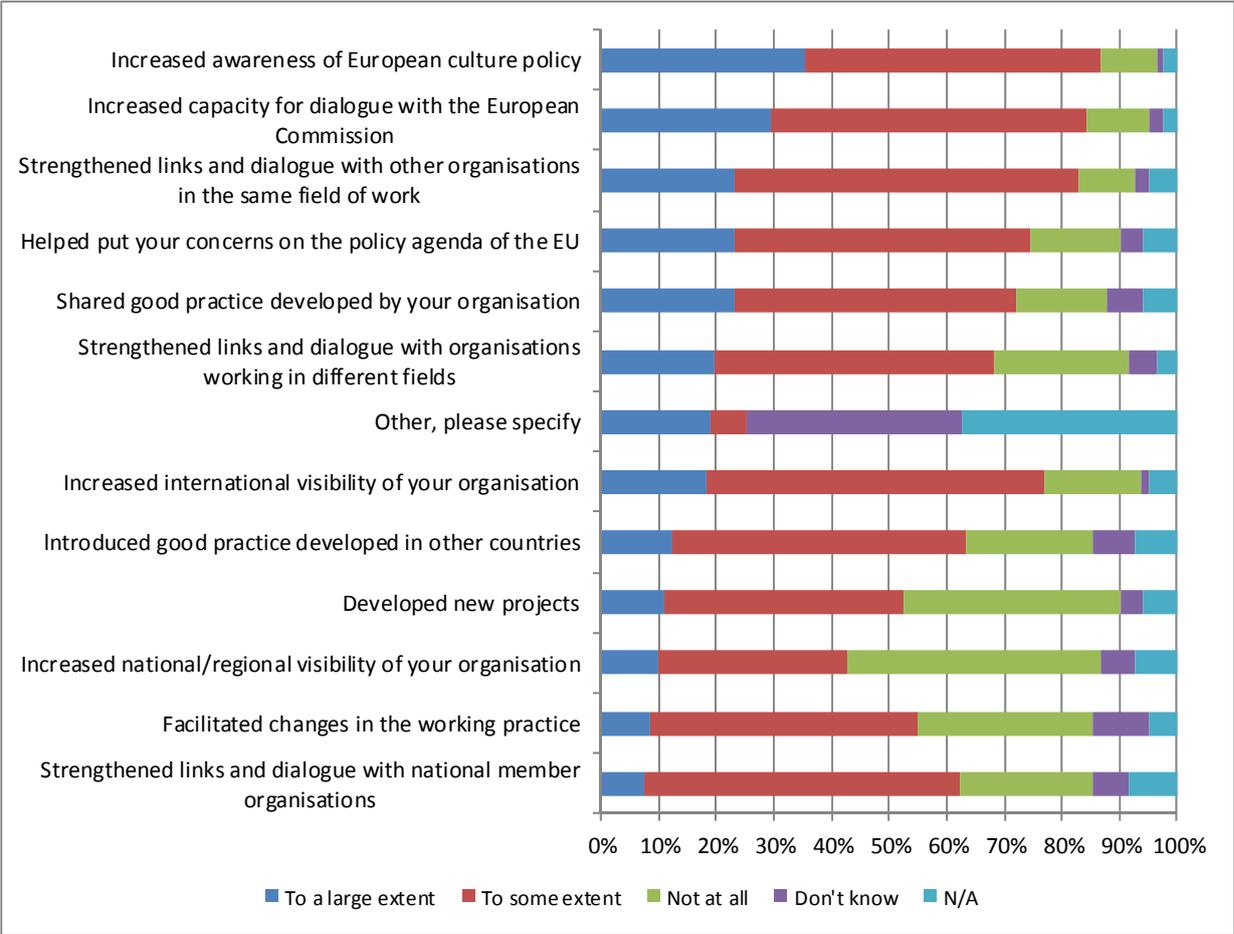

Source: Ecorys survey, n=82

The stakeholder interviews reaffirmed the view that the impact of the work of the Platforms at national level appears to be limited. This is partly linked to the lack of availability of information about the platforms: *"There is a lack of information about the platforms and their work in my country"*, *"there is lack of information online about the platforms"*[94]. The evidence suggests the themes selected were very broadly defined and it was difficult to relate to the work of the cultural organisations at national level: *"Themes selected for the platforms are very general"*[95]. PIE appears to have more interaction with organisations at national level, since some of these are Platform members. In addition, some of PIE's activity is organised in different Member States, which is very well perceived by those involved in the work. Organisations not directly involved also reported greater awareness of the work of this Platform compared with the other Platforms. Involving the culture sector in the Member States requires time and resources. However, further efforts in this area has the potential to deliver important benefits in terms of bringing the perspectives of national organisations to bear, strengthening the evidence base and widening representation in the Structured Dialogue process.

In terms of benefits for participating organisations themselves, the survey results provide a mixed picture (see figure below). While many are convinced that the Platforms have strengthened links and dialogue with other organisations in the same field of work, increased awareness of European culture policy and increased capacity for dialogue with the European Commission, benefits in terms of increased national/regional visibility, developing new projects and changing working practices are limited.

[94] Platform member
[95] Platform member

Figure 3.9 To what extent do you agree that the Structured Dialogue Platforms benefited your organisation in terms of…?

Source: Ecorys survey, n=82

Personal benefits to individual participants are rated highly according to the survey evidence (see figure below), although the effect on working practice is once again relatively weak.

Figure 3.10 To what extent do you agree that Structured Dialogue Platform/s benefited you personally?
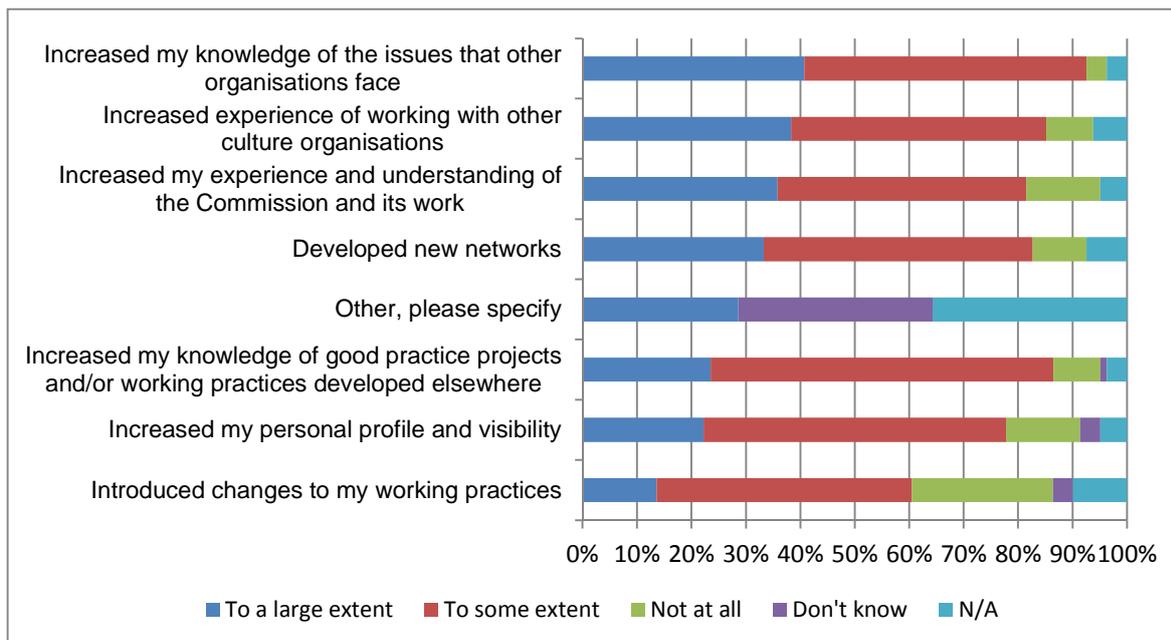
Source: Ecorys survey, n=81

The interview material highlights the benefits of exchanging ideas, discussing and producing policy papers and building stable communities of interest. This has given participants greater knowledge and capacity to understand EU culture policy and engage with the issues. There is also a sense that now that this construction phase is complete, a refreshed mandate and direction is required, to make further use of the capacity and expertise in some way. This might be through activity (as the PIE has done for example) or engaging more closely with OMC groups.

The intervention logic identified a number of final outcomes that the Structured Dialogue were expected to achieve. These are now reviewed in the light of the evidence collected:

- *New and improved networking, co-operation and dialogue between cultural stakeholders at Member State and EU level;* The survey and interviews show that the Platforms contributed to improving networking and cooperation at EU level. This is especially relevant for cooperation among organisations working in the same cultural fields. However, cooperation with different sector representatives has also increased. Networking and cooperation at national level appears to have had the least impact;
- *Higher profile of culture and for cultural stakeholders;* the contribution of the Platforms to increasing the profile of the culture sector was less evident. Just over 10% of survey respondents agreed with this statement to a large extent for example.
- *Greater advocacy capacity for the sector at EU/Member State levels;* the survey results show positive results in terms of increasing advocacy capacity at EU level. However, the results are less positive in terms of increasing advocacy capacity at national level.

The online survey evidence highlights the positive contribution of the European **Culture Forums**, their relevance and the opportunities they afford for networking and discussion. The vast majority found them useful (38% to a large extent) and well organised. In terms of what the Forums have achieved, stakeholders identify increased knowledge of EU policies amongst the sector and facilitating debate among sector organisations most strongly (both rated by 63% as achieved to a large extent). The online survey also indicates positive feedback across a wide range of other achievements, including facilitating

debate with the Commission and exchanging good practice. According to the survey data, engagement with wider policy areas through the Forums has been satisfactory rather than extensive (64% agreeing this was the case to some extent). The interview results also suggest there is scope to connect the Forums more to the work of the Structured Dialogue Platforms and OMC, and to strengthen their role in linking with other DGs.

Overall, the main benefits of the Culture Forums perceived by participants focus on increasing the sector's knowledge of EU policies, and facilitating debate amongst cultural organisations (see table below). The role of the Forums in terms of facilitating debate with national decision-makers is limited and other aspects including cross-sectoral interaction are less strong.

Table 3.7 To what extent do you agree that the European Culture Forums have…?

	To a large extent	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	N/A
Increased the sector's knowledge of relevant EU policies	34.9%	56.2%	3.4%	5.5%	0.0%
Facilitated debate with the Commission	29.5%	56.2%	8.9%	5.5%	0.0%
Facilitated debate among cultural organisations working in the same cultural field	34.9%	50.7%	6.8%	7.5%	0.0%
Facilitated debate among cultural organisations working in different fields	28.1%	44.5%	13.7%	13.0%	0.7%
Facilitated debate with decision-makers at national level	4.1%	32.2%	49.3%	14.4%	0.0%
Provided the cultural sector with a channel for expressing its views	21.2%	58.9%	12.3%	7.5%	0.0%
Exchanged good practice	25.3%	62.3%	3.4%	8.9%	0.0%
Increased the profile of cultural organisations	17.8%	57.5%	11.6%	13.0%	0.0%

Source: Ecorys survey, =136

Participating organisations have been influenced by the Forums, particularly in terms of an increased awareness of European culture policy and increased dialogue with other cultural organisations (see table below). Again, cross-sectoral debate, channelling views and debate with national decision makers are not seen as primary benefits of the Forums. The results also suggest capacity to engage with the European Commission is increased. Influences in terms of dialogue with other sectors appear limited.

Table 3.8 Was your organisation influenced by the European Culture Forum?

Answer Options	N.	%
Yes – increased awareness of European culture policy	70	48.3
Yes – increased capacity to engage with the European Commission	46	31.7
Yes – increased dialogue with other organisations in the culture sector	63	43.5
Yes – increased dialogue with the organisations in other sectors	19	13.1
No	25	17.2
Don't know	11	7.6
Total respondents:	145	

Source: Ecorys survey

Table 3.9 To what extent do you find the European Culture Forum useful?

Answer Options	N.	%
1 To a large extent	56	38.6
2 Some extent	83	57.2
3 Not at all	3	2.1
4 Don't know	3	2.1
Total respondents:	145	

Source: Ecorys survey

In terms of how the Forums might be improved in future, the consultation evidence reinforces the value attached by stakeholders to meeting, networking and discussing. Bringing people together works well, but feedback also suggests stakeholders would like to see even more opportunities for debate, in smaller groups and in a more dynamic and interactive setting (master classes, workshops, thematic break-out groups etc.) This reflects a desire for less 'traditional' information dissemination. Some examples of the suggestions received via the online survey are presented below:

- *Organise speed-date-like opportunities to foster connections and exchanges among the participants*

- *There should be more debates between policy makers and cultural organisations*

- *More interaction - There are so many projects that will be valuable to get to know. More break out groups with thematic areas or concrete challenges could increase the exchange among the participants*

- *The European Culture Forums should leave more space to the civil society to engage a dialogue with policy-makers at EU level and at national level*

Finding 41: Participation in the Platforms has resulted in improved cooperation among organisations in the field of culture and strengthened the advocacy capacity at European level, especially through increased awareness of European culture policies, increased capacity for dialogue with the Commission and reinforcing the voice of the culture sector in the EU.

Finding 42: The impact of the work of the Platforms at national level is comparatively low. There was a lack of opportunity for national members to feed into the work of the Platforms and there is low visibility of their outputs at national level. The PIE is an exception, because national organisations are members of the Platforms. Further effort to put in place measures to ensure that national members and non-member organisations have more opportunities to contribute to the work of the Platforms would bring benefits. This could be achieved through a variety of ways including targeted research projects, opportunities to provide feedback to the outputs, participation in workshops and other events.

Finding 43: European Culture Forums influenced increased awareness of European culture policies and the cooperation among the sector organisations. However, ECF are perceived to be less effective in fostering cross-sectoral cooperation and channelling the views and debates at national level. The opportunities for networking, exchanges and debate (rather than plenary sessions and 'one-to-many' speeches) was emphasised by large number of survey respondents as an area for improvement.

3.4.4   Mainstreaming

For the **Platforms**, the online survey indicates that some (61%) or most (28%) of the themes explored were relevant to other policy areas (such as education, cohesion policy/regional policy, social affairs, entrepreneurship/competitiveness). This finding is consistent across all three Platforms, but the evidence overall suggests the PIE is more strongly transversal than the others (because of the nature of the underlying theme). Mainstreaming in the CCI Platform was partly addressed through the wide profile of the organisations involved, which traditionally work in the fields that are not only directly related to culture.

PIE discussions in particular included themes that were relevant to other policy themes such as education and social issues, and there was a high level of awareness of the transversal nature of this theme, including its relevance to other DGs besides DG EAC. The focus that the ACP brings on key policy issues at EU level is very much welcomed and supported by participants, based on the perceived need for dialogue between sector representatives and policy makers (in particular the European Commission). Participants here also emphasised the transversal potential, and the need to keep topics under review and respond flexibly to changing priorities. The themes chosen for the work of the CCI Platform, as well as more specific topics discussed during the work, were largely relevant to the work of the organisations involved in particular at European level. However, the work was considered less relevant at national level. The large majority of survey respondents agreed on the relevance of the development of cultural and creative industries for their organisation. They agreed to a lesser extent that the themes covered by other two platforms were relevant to their organisation.

Some 25% of online survey respondents indicated that experts from other policy fields presented during meetings, but on the whole the views on mainstreaming gathered through in-depth consultations are rather mixed: lack of understanding what is expected in terms of mainstreaming, some identified the lack of influence on policy-makers required to implement change, lack of progress in terms of inter-DG collaboration and linking with other international bodies[96]. Relationships with other DGs appear better developed in the CCI Platform than in the others.

The online survey results suggest that the **Culture Forums** did cover other policy fields to some extent (62% of respondents agreed), but 18% were of the view that this was not the case at all and 14% didn't know. This may reflect different interpretations of the term mainstreaming – other evidence indicates the Forums play a role in bringing organisations from different policy perspectives together, albeit generally within the culture field.

Finding 44: Mainstreaming is taken into account by all the Platforms, although the issue is approached in very different ways by each of them. Evidence of mainstreaming includes the inclusion of external experts and some successful efforts by DG EAC to forge links with other DGs.

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[96] Although there is evidence of collaboration on initiatives related to cohesion policy, cities, regional development, smart specialisation strategies and innovation for example.

3.5   Efficiency

3.5.1   Management

Responsibility for the management and organisations arrangements lie within the culture sector, with the Commission playing a monitoring role rather then providing management direction for the **Platforms**. On the one hand, civil society organisations appreciate having independence and freedom to organise their work. On the other hand, the research identified a strong interest on the part of members in gaining more detailed guidance on the organisational arrangements of the Platforms. Partly due to the lack of guidance on the organisational arrangements and the different pathways that Platforms followed, the management and organisational structures established by each of them are very different. PIE was set up first with strongly institutionalised organisational framework, while the other two Platforms are organised as groupings of existing networks without separate legal entity. This creates unequal conditions in terms of funding possibilities that are tailored to some platforms but cause significant challenges to others, implementation and impact. It is difficult to develop generalised conclusions on which management approaches proved to be more efficient. However, participants in the focus group emphasised a strong need to increase consistency between the different Platforms.

3.5.2   Process and implementation

In terms of the way the three **Platforms** were set up, there are significant differences: the PIE emerged from the existing rainbow coalition, just before the European Year for Intercultural Dialogue 2008, while the other two were set up following the publication of a call for expressions of interest by the Commission. Furthermore, the PIE was constituted as a legal entity (to maintain separation from Culture Action Europe, which also receives an EU grant) while the ACP receives EU funding but has no legal form and the CCI Platform does not receive EU funding[97]. As such, PIE has a strong institutional setting and internal objectives and the CCI platform's lack of funding confers a number of advantages in the eyes of its stakeholders, including a high degree of independence.

Participants in all Platforms were satisfied with the way the day-to-day work has been organised; some 70% rated them well or very well organised according to the survey evidence. It is difficult to generalise about how efficient organisational processes were and the consultations do not necessarily illuminate the issues further, while it is also clear that each Platform was organised very differently. Again, it is not possible to make any judgements on whether one approach was better than another, but this can result in a lack of transparency and different entry criteria or conditions for participation.

Concerns are raised by participants that there was too much emphasis on administration and not enough on activities and concrete outputs. Again, this may reflect the earlier point about the evolution of the Platforms over time – initially there was a great deal of work to do to produce the mandated outputs, but as time progressed it became less clear to some participants what they should be focussing on next. As one interviewee reported: "…*in the first stage the mandate was very clear to us. It was to deliver this input. In the second one it was not a clear mandate".* For the ACP specifically, this uncertainty may have been partly responsible for problems with governance and structures experienced in the middle part of the platform's life (the board resigned in 2011). Most members now seem satisfied with the structure that is now in place (advisory group and working groups).

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[97] It was possible to run platform without funding from the EU because most of the organisations involved were representing private sector and they are less dependent on subsidies.

There is also a desire across all Platforms to consider how best to establish or engage with similar structures at national and regional level, where the role of the debate at European level includes bringing together the debate taking place locally, nationally and regionally. The participants in the focus group reported that the lack of exchanges with the Commission and guidance in terms of organisational arrangements, expected outputs, feedback on how these are expected to be used and dissemination of information about the outputs were key areas for improvement. However, the European Commission expected that the Platforms would take the initiative in developing their own priorities and scope of action, based on the needs of the sector. Given this divergence of perspectives, there is widespread agreement among all those involved on the need to review how the structured dialogue process is implemented. Some of the suggested approaches include introducing higher degree of flexibility in terms of choosing the themes, linking them to the Work Plans for culture, defined timescales for exploring certain themes, developing more flexible approach to participation where there is no selection process in place except some basic criteria of eligibility.

The majority of participants (84%) regard the **Culture Forums** as well or very well organised according to the online survey. Bringing people together works well, but feedback also suggests stakeholders would like to see even more opportunities for debate, in smaller groups and in a more dynamic and interactive setting (master classes, workshops, thematic break-out groups etc.) However for 'open' initiatives of this kind the challenge is to strike the right balance between widening participation and facilitating smaller, more specialist discussions.

3.5.3   Support

There is evidence that in the early stages of the **Platforms** the Commission provided more direction (and target outputs) than has been the case in more recent years; and a number of participants felt that this was more efficient than the Platforms largely having to assume a large measure of 'self-regulation'. The second phase of the platforms work appeared to be less structured in terms of the expected outcomes, ways on how these should be achieved and scope for exchanges on how these could be improved. The consultation evidence especially highlights the desire for more support from the Commission in facilitating contacts with different DGs, Council bodies, European Parliament and OMC groups.

The interviews with both representatives of the Commission as well as civil society organisations emphasised that the funding structures available were not tailored to the needs of the Platforms. The funding available through the Culture Programme was provided from the action line supporting networks. However, as two of the three Platforms were set up as informal groupings of the existing networks, without establishing a legal entity, it was difficult for Platforms to develop organisational modalities allowing them to apply for funding. As one of the focus group members put it: "P*latforms should be funded for what they are".*

Culture Forums provide a valuable opportunity for a wider cross-section of the culture sector to engage with EU policy than is the cases for Platforms and to build informal trans-national networks. There is a strong case for the continuation of the support provided.

Finding 45: Each Platform developed its own management structures and organisational arrangements leading to very different approaches. This created tensions in some cases, lack of transparency and inconsistencies. For example, PIE developed an institutionalised approach with a very different membership structure from the other two Platforms with strong features of a European network organisation; while ACP and CCI Platforms were set up to bring together existing networks in a looser way.

Finding 46: The funding available to support the work of the Platforms was taken up by two out of three platforms. However, it was more suitable for PIE that it was established as a separate legal entity, while the eligibility rules were much less suitable for the ACP, which does not have a separate legal entity in place and operates on a more informal basis.

Finding 47: There is a demand for stronger involvement and leadership by the Commission in dialogue with civil society, not only to clarify the management and implementation arrangements, but in terms of defining the content of the consultation for the future work of the Platforms.

Finding 48: Stakeholders are generally satisfied with the organisation of the ECF by the Commission. These events provide a valuable contribution in terms of engaging a wide range of cultural and civil society organisations in EU policy work and there is a strong case for continuation of the support provided.

3.6 Sustainability

3.6.1 Structures

According to the online survey evidence, there is a wide range of positions on the future sustainability of the **Platforms:** about a quarter of participants do not believe they could continue without Commission support, whereas a third take the view that some activities could carry on, and another quarter are unsure. As to whether there is a need to continue working, two-thirds agree this is the case, but a quarter are unsure. The key to addressing these issues lies in identifying the primary elements of a 'structured dialogue' process, before exploring how these might be delivered, not necessarily as part of the same overarching structure.

The responses provided to the survey indicate that civil society representatives see a need for continuing policy dialogue with the European Commission. However, there is a strong agreement that the way it is organised needs to change. Civil society representatives emphasised the need to have further discussions with the Commission on how the dialogue should be taking place. Among the issues identified during the consultations were the need for a stronger involvement of the Commission in the dialogue process, increasing the flexibility of the themes covered, and addressing the differences in implementation structures.

There is a strong case to continue the **Culture Forums** in more or less their current form: feedback is very positive and although some changes to the format may be beneficial, this element of Structured Dialogue continues to meet key sector needs.

Finding 49: The extent to which Platforms depend on financial support for the Commission depends on the set up of the Platform, the sectors and the scope of activities. For example, the CCI already operates without the funding from the Commission, however, further dissemination and research activities would not be possible without financial support. The other two Platforms depend more strongly on the financial support from the Commission.

Finding 50: There is a need for continuing the dialogue between civil society and the European Commission but the way it is organised should change.

Finding 51: The ECF should continue as an initiative organised and funded by the Commission, largely following the current format with some more consideration given for providing more opportunities for debate and interactions among the participants.

4.0 Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Conclusions: Open Method of Coordination

4.1.1 Relevance

- Through the range of activity generated and level of participation and engagement, implementation has demonstrated the relevance of the Culture OMC process to the **policy objectives** set out in the Agenda for Culture.

- The **Work Plans for Culture** provide a set of priorities for the OMC working groups, which are relevant to a number of key EU policy objectives. An appropriate set of operating principles is provided, which reflect the political context, time and resources available and policy development needs of the sector. The Work Plan (WP) for Culture 2011-2014 provides an improved and more integrated guiding framework and better defined objectives, compared with the previous process (2008-2010). The provision for a mid-term review under the current Work Plan presents a valuable opportunity to assess the continued relevance of the priorities and target activities, and to make any necessary adjustments.

- The Culture OMC is consistent with the **wider set of OMC processes** being implemented across a range of EU policy areas. It has a distinct identity and modality appropriate to the specific conditions found in the field of culture policy, characterised by a high degree of subsidiarity, general absence of EU legislation and a diverse and fragmented sector in Europe.

- The **specificities** of the culture OMC process bring a number of positive benefits, including high levels of attendance, and providing valuable opportunities for individuals from different backgrounds to participate in high quality exchanges and mutual learning activities around issues of common interest. Communities and interest and knowledge networks are also developing as a result.

- The **Culture OMC** also brings potential weaknesses in terms of outputs that are too generalised, over-dependency on the effectiveness of the chair, variations in the level of expertise of participants, weak (although improving) dissemination approaches and lack of effective mobilisation of research capacity for building a solid evidence-based approach.

- However, the changes made under the **second generation of OMC working groups,** (emphasising the need to agree well-defined, specific topics as early as possible in the process, and to define precisely the expected outputs), have provided clearer direction and helped to focus activity better, compared with the first set of OMC working groups.

- Overall, the **themes and topics** covered by both generations of the OMC process have proved equally relevant to policy-making at national and EU level and the working groups are meeting demand for mutual learning opportunities between Member States. The breadth of the topics and themes addressed by the OMC process (through sub-groups for example) has increased the relevance of the working groups to a wide range of participants. The evidence suggests a two-fold need is being met: to share and learn about practices in other countries, and to learn about and participate in the development of EU policies in areas of particular relevance to national interests. However, this has also meant sometimes struggling to quickly agree on an appropriate balance in terms of technical/non-technical content and on which issues deserve most attention, especially in the working groups for the period 2008-2010.

- The **European Added Value** of the Culture OMC lies primarily in providing opportunities for mutual learning on issues of common interest, which would not otherwise be available to participants. This allows knowledge to be made available at national level more effectively than would be the case through other routes (which should help decision-making), and links a wider cohort of governmental representatives to the EU policy-making level.

4.1.2   Effectiveness

- **Participation** in meetings was satisfactory overall. The mixture of officials, practitioners and external experts strengthened the quality of the activity carried out. Some members are more active than others, reflecting variations in the state of policy development between countries, varying expertise and competences, and resources. Some attend in order to share knowledge; others to listen and learn. Language is sometimes an obstacle. One of the most important factors to consider in terms of the profile of participants concerns individuals' connectivity to key decision-makers in their home country (e.g. in Ministries).

- The **outputs** of the second generation OMC show a marked improvement compared with those of the first generation OMC, as a result of more clearly defined subject areas and target outputs, and a re-orientation towards more practical material (guides, handbooks, tools etc.). There remains potential for further improvements in outputs, although a lack of time and research capacity means an evidence-based approach is not yet possible (whereas this could enhance the quality of the outputs developed).

- Under the initiative of the European Commission, significant efforts have been made to **disseminate** outputs at national level, via a range of channels, but this has been largely unstructured and a number of factors are limiting progress here, including the lack of connectivity between OMC country participants and national ministries, the low profile and lack of influence of some country participants, and issues around translation. Each country has to work within the constraints of its own national structures and systems.

- **Benefits and impacts** mainly concern mutual learning, best practice exchange and the building of knowledge networks, rather than any far-reaching effects on national policies. Although it is difficult to gauge the extent of the impact overall, some activity and outputs have fed through into impacts on national policy, and a proportion of these results appear directly attributable to the OMC.

- There is potential to achieve greater impacts, through stronger **connectivity and dissemination channels** between OMC participants and key decision-makers at national level. The use of dissemination plans of the outputs has been a useful development and should be developed further. Improvements in the quality of outputs (including a more thorough, evidence-based approach) should also encourage higher take-up.

- **Interaction** between the OMC working groups and the Structured Dialogue process has been limited and there are potential benefits from closer integration (for example it could bring a wider range of expertise to bear on common themes). The transversal aspect of culture policy has been addressed, but again to a rather limited extent within the working groups. The participation of external experts and efforts to engage with other DGs were useful components of the work of the OMC.

4.1.3   Efficiency

- The **organisation and management** of the OMC process has been efficient - support from the Commission and the working conditions are considered very positive. Characteristics of the process have been satisfactory overall.

- The **process adaptations** made for the second generation OMC have had a broadly positive effect in terms of applying a more specific mandate and defining intended outputs more precisely; but there is a risk that time pressure might negatively affect output quality in future.

- There is a strong preference among participants for **working interactively**, in small groups, and more advanced preparation and more activity between formal meetings would help participants to increase quality and improve productivity. More use of study visits would also potentially enhance interaction and engagement, and lead to improved results.

4.1.4 Sustainability

- The OMC has evolved through two generations (2008-2010 and 2011-2014) and as a result a number of **key improvements** have been implemented to increase focus and clarity. This has included an improvement in the quality of outputs, which should encourage wider take-up of results at national level.

- The OMC is **sustainable** in its current format. Further, incremental improvements could be made in a number of areas, while keeping the fundamental structure and process intact. For example there is potential to make further improvements to address weaknesses in certain, inter-linked areas (profile of participants, a more evidence-based approach to developing outputs and strengthening dissemination).

4.2 Conclusions: Structured Dialogue

4.2.1 Relevance

- At the time it was established the Platform model represented a **relevant mechanism** with the potential to address sectoral needs including strengthening advocacy capacity, encouraging trans-sectoral working among the cultural organisations and fostering dialogue between civil society and the Commission. Civil society organisations strongly welcomed the opportunities provided, and were committed to implementation.

- There is still a **need to continue dialogue** between civil society and the Commission, to support cross-sectoral working, structuring of civil society so that local, regional, national concerns feed into the dialogue process through representative interlocutors, bridging the gap between the EU institutions and the culture sector.

- The European **Culture Forums** are relevant tools for achieving the objectives set for Structured Dialogue especially in terms of exchanges of good practice, encouraging cross-sectoral awareness and increasing collaboration. They bring a number of benefits, including widening engagement in and awareness of European culture policies. Their openness to all organisations and individuals is a positive feature.

- The **themes** covered by Structured Dialogue tools were relevant to civil society organisations especially for their work at European level but the relevance decreased for cultural organisations active within the Member States. However, the themes covered by Structured Dialogue were not explicitly linked to the themes and priorities identified in the Council Work Plan for Culture and do not mirror the themes covered by OMC groups.

- The **European Added Value** of the Structured Dialogue tools is strongest in facilitating trans-sectoral cooperation, networking and exchanges among the culture sector representatives. Without the funding

provided by the Commission it is unlikely that similar results could have been achieved by civil society organisations themselves. This is especially the case for the European Culture Forums, which are organised entirely by the European Commission.

- At the time it was set up, there was a need to complement other, more formal **consultation mechanisms**, especially those in the framework of legislative proposals and key policy documents. However, the potential added value of the Platforms in terms of consultation between civil society organisations and the European Commission was not exploited fully, at least in part because of the lack of a common understanding about ownership of the process and how it should work in practice.

4.2.2   Effectiveness

- Overall, **participation** was satisfactory in terms of geography, sector coverage and types of participants. However, smaller Member States and some sub-sectors (radio, architecture, youth and artistic crafts) appear to be comparatively under-represented. National cultural organisations are well represented in the Forums and Platform for Intercultural Europe but are not directly involved in the work of the other Platforms. Increasing engagement between the Platforms and national cultural organisations would bring a number of benefits in terms of wider engagement, stronger evidence base and increased links to the culture sector at national and local level.

- The quality of the **outputs** produced was satisfactory overall, but there is limited evidence on the extent to which these responded to the needs of the Commission, were used to inform policy process or reached a wide audience. The outputs would have benefitted from being underpinned by a stronger evidence base reflecting the concerns and views of wider cultural sector as well as organisations working at national level. In addition, more exchanges between the Commission and civil society on how the outputs would be used could help define and target them better.

- **Interaction** between the OMC and Structured Dialogue Platforms was limited, especially during the implementation of the first Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010. It improved significantly during the second phase, through increased participation of Platform representatives in the OMC groups. However, exchanges would benefit from alignment of the thematic areas covered by the two instruments, within the overall framework of the Council Work Plan.

- The **objectives** set for the Structured Dialogue process have been achieved in relation to bringing the sector closer together, increasing the capacity to undertake advocacy work at EU level, and opening up new opportunities for exchanges between civil society and the Commission. The Platforms brought together organisations that had never worked together before.

- The **benefits** of the process started to reduce after the first phase of the process, especially in relation to the dialogue with the Commission. This was the result of a number of factors including the need for clearer ownership of the process, limited visibility of the work of the Platforms among those not directly involved, member organisations and wider audiences. The work of the Platforms would have benefited from better alignment with the Council Work Plan for Culture and the OMC groups. This would have ensured that the outputs produced by the Platforms were disseminated more widely among the Member State representatives and would have increased the complementarity of the two initiatives.

- **The impact** of the work of the Platforms at national level is comparatively low, beyond capacity-building and network effects. There was a lack of opportunity for national members to feed into the work of the Platforms and there is a low visibility of their outputs at national level. The PIE is the exception here since its membership includes national organisations, unlike the other two Platforms.

- **European Culture Forums** have played a valuable role in increased awareness of European culture policies and in improving cooperation among sector organisations. The opportunities for networking, exchanges and debate was emphasised by large number of survey respondents as an area for improvement of the forums.

4.2.3 Efficiency

- **Mainstreaming** of culture has been addressed by all three Platforms, and the interpretation and approach was very different for each one. Thematic areas covered were often very transversal, e.g. the Platform for Intercultural Europe (PIE) discussed such issues as education and social inclusion. The nature of the membership of the Platforms ensured that the transversal nature of the culture policy was addressed. The participation of external experts and efforts to engage with other Directorates-General of the European Commission were a key part of the work of the Platforms.

- Each Platform developed its own **management structures** and organisational arrangements leading to very different approaches. This sometimes created tensions, lack of transparency and inconsistencies. For example, PIE developed an institutionalised approach with very different membership structure from the other platforms bringing together European networks, national organisations and private individuals. While the Platform on Access to Culture (ACP) and the Platform on Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI) were set up to bring together existing networks in a less institutionalised way.

- Stakeholders are generally satisfied with the **organisation of the European Culture Forum (ECF)** by the Commission. These events provide a valuable contribution in terms of engaging a wide range of cultural and civil society organisations in EU policy work and there is a strong case for continuation of the support provided.

4.2.4 Sustainability

- The extent to which **Platforms** depend on the financial support for the Commission depends on the set up of the Platform, the sectors and the scope of activities. For example, the CCI already operate without dedicated funding, with a strong potential for sustainability. It is likely that some advocacy work for all three Platforms could continue without further funding. However, dissemination, research, project activities, involvement of the organisations from wider range of Member States would not be possible without financial support.

- The **European Culture Forums** could not exist without the support from the EU. They make a valuable contribution to the implementation of the Agenda for Culture and should continue as an initiative organised and funded by the Commission, largely following the current format.

4.3 Recommendations

4.3.1 Culture OMC

1. Consider producing more detailed guidance to describe the key competences, profile and participants for OMC working groups, to be shared with Member States to encourage them to nominate members with sufficient knowledge and influence to enhance the visibility and quality of the groups.

2. Continue and reinforce the focus on concrete outputs in the OMC working groups, while also considering the provision of more research capacity and support to working groups to assist them to produce stronger outputs, more efficiently (either through research support from within the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) or via a service contract with external providers).

3. Also consider extending the duration of the working group cycle, for example to include one or two additional meetings.

4. Retain and further develop the use of dissemination plans for OMC outputs and in collaboration with Member States consider how more resources can be made available to translate more outputs in order to improve dissemination.

5. Consider ways in which a wider range of locations and formats for meetings might be introduced for the OMC working groups, while maintaining an appropriate balance between formal and informal activity (such as study visits).

4.3.2 Structured Dialogue

6. Dialogue between civil society and the Commission should continue, but the way the Platforms are organised in this respect post-2013 needs to be revised. It is important to build on what has been achieved so far especially in terms of increasing the advocacy capacity of the sector, cross-sectoral cooperation and developing the framework for exchanges between civil society and the Commission. However, it is important to address the issues that started to appear during the last few years, such as the need to clarify the ownership of the process, increase visibility of the Platforms among those not directly involved,

7. Realigning the work of the Platforms to the Council Work Plan is likely to offer a number of benefits such as increasing dialogue between OMC working groups, civil society and the Commission; introduce the flexibility of adjusting the themes on the basis of the needs; introduce the possibility for mid-term review of the implementation process and allowing a stock-take mid-way through the implementation of the Work Plans.

8. The ownership of the dialogue process needs to be clarified. On the one hand, civil society organisations should take the lead in terms of developing common positions, identifying common issues that are agreed among wide range of stakeholders. On the other hand, the Commission should play a larger role in setting out the framework for implementation of the dialogue process. Rigidity and unnecessary institutionalisation of structures should be avoided and greater flexibility and adaptability introduced where possible.

9. Participation in the dialogue process needs to be built on flexible participation, where all the organisations interested to contribute have an opportunity to take part, according to circumstances (capacity, resources, theme etc.), not just members of a platform. Participation

should also be as transparent as possible and the criteria harmonised among thematic areas, where national level organisations also have opportunities to contribute.

10. The involvement of national level organisations should be considered as a necessary condition for European civil society to engage in the dialogue process. This could take place through a variety of forms such as providing opportunities for member organisations to contribute to the outputs produced, undertaking tailored consultations on specific issues, or through surveys, events and/or projects.

11. Funding for civil society organisations needs to focus on specific initiatives and projects with minimal support for administrative functions. This could take place for example through providing funding for research projects, events and workshops that have potential to feed into the policy process.

12. European Culture Forums should continue to be organised by the Commission in order to build on the success of the events to bring wide range of the organisations together, exchange of good practice and increasing awareness of EU culture policy. Future forums should increase the opportunities for discussions, debates, networking and interaction among participants. This means potentially shifting the balance from plenary sessions and lectures to the provision of more interactive formats.