

## **Operational study**

*Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals  
in Creative Europe countries*

## **Executive summary**



**i-Portunus**

Supporting Creative Mobility

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*Disclaimer:*

*The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author (On the Move).*

*With projects like i-Portunus the European Commission will be conducting trials on how to best facilitate cross-border mobility for artists and culture professionals. This type of cultural mobility support scheme will become a permanent Action under the Creative Europe programme for 2021-2027.*

## **Introduction**

This operational study has been conducted by On the Move between February and March 2019, at the request of the Consortium of organisations that manages, on behalf of the European Commission, the pilot phase of a new European cultural mobility scheme. The aim of the study is to provide an analysis of the context and meaning of cultural mobility in Europe today, the needs in the sector and the strengths and weaknesses of existing cultural mobility schemes, as well as to define the most operational framework to implement first the pilot scheme and in the short/mid-term an EU mobility scheme for artists and culture professionals. To this end, it has involved a review of existing literature (policy documents, reports, statistical data, mobility funding guides, etc.), an analysis of two online surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019 (with 697 and 2,115 completed answers respectively), an analysis of over 2,000 mobility funding schemes and 1,400 international calls, and a set of interviews with key players in the sector.

The pilot mobility scheme emerges in the context of the New European Agenda for Culture published by the European Commission in May 2018, which commits to encouraging the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors and removing obstacles to it. A call for tender was launched soon after, with the aim of preparing the ground for a mobility scheme in creative and cultural sectors that should be in place in the post 2020 Creative Europe programme. The Consortium led by the Goethe-Institut was awarded the resulting contract and will be in charge of the pilot phase from December 2018 till February 2020, including the testing of the mobility scheme and the production of policy recommendations. This operational study is part of the initial phase of the project.

A set of challenges have affected the elaboration of the operational study, including the limited time available (40 days), the lack of data in several relevant areas including for the proposed business model, and the fact that the first call of the new pilot scheme will be launched at the same time as the results of the study are delivered. The research team, however, has kept in mind that the findings of the study should also inform the post-2020 Creative Europe programme and that this operational study should be considered as a work in progress and be continued to be fed throughout the pilot test of the mobility scheme and by a complementary study with experts on EU regulations and legal basis.

## **Cultural mobility in the European context**

Over the last 15 years, the international mobility of artists and culture professionals has gained a significant, if variable, position in the EU's agendas on cultural affairs, as a result, on one hand, of the demands of professionals and representative organisations and, on the other, the relevance of the issue to EU policy priorities in culture and other areas. This

has been reflected in several policy documents (e.g. the 2007 and 2018 European Agendas for Culture, and the successive Council Work Plans, among others) and recommendations and reports produced by professional networks and other stakeholders. Over the years, there has been a progressive understanding that mobility is not exceptional, but something ordinary in the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals, and that measures in this area are necessary in order to strengthen sustainable cultural ecosystems.

The study collects evidence regarding the **impact of cultural mobility programmes** at several levels:

- a) For **artists and culture professionals**, impacts can be identified in professional development, economic development, enhanced opportunities for reflection, exploration and risk, increased visibility of artists' work, and self-esteem.
- b) For **cultural organisations**, impacts include organisation learning and capacity-building, stronger cross-border networking, etc.
- c) For **citizens**, impacts include a more diverse cultural offer, education, stimulation of curiosity, community engagement, the development of more complex forms of citizenship, etc.
- d) For **public and private organisations funding and facilitating mobility**, impacts include contributing to the economic dimension of the cultural and creative sectors, putting cities and countries on the map, gaining prestige, supporting urban regeneration and social change, etc.

Evidence also points to a range of relevant **obstacles to cultural mobility**, including the following:

- a) **Legal and administrative aspects**, in areas such as visas, social security regulations, taxation, and intellectual property.
- b) **Information**, including the limited availability and accessibility of information on cultural mobility, which, despite recent improvements, often fails to respond to cultural professionals' increasingly complex questions.
- c) **Financing**, including budget cuts, fragmented mobility schemes and, more broadly, the lack of strategic approaches by the relevant authorities, including the EU.
- d) **An atypical work force**, since the mobility patterns in the cultural sector are often unpredictable and may, in some cases, involve very frequent travel (above the average in other sectors); other specific aspects include the intangible nature of the goals and results of cultural mobility.
- e) **Geographic imbalances** in areas such as access to information and funding, as well as the tendency for mobility practices to be asymmetric and reinforce existing imbalances across Europe.

Examination of cultural mobility today is inescapable from the identification of a set of **factors of change** which shape how mobility occurs. They can be grouped as follows:

- a) **Cultural factors**, including increasing cross-disciplinary collaborations and ‘creative partnerships’ with other sectors, as well as the increasing mainstreaming of mobility in the regular work of organisations.
- b) **Economic factors**, including the increasing recognition of the economic dimension of the cultural and creative sectors, but also the fragmentation and instability of the labour market, which means cultural mobility may sometimes be an inevitable escape route.
- c) **Social factors**, including an increasing international orientation of younger generations, but also factors which, like rising nationalism and xenophobia, run counter to mobility.
- d) **Technological factors**, which facilitate virtual networking, transform organisational models, and require new professional skills.
- e) **Environmental factors**, including increasing awareness of the environmental impacts of mobility and the resulting need to be self-critical about one’s practices.
- f) **Ethical and value-based factors**, including recognition of the social and economic imbalances where mobility operates.

Drawing on the definition of cultural mobility proposed by the *Mobility Matters* study in 2008 and the aforementioned observations, the operational study suggests that a **revised definition** could be phrased as follows: ‘Mobility is a central component of the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals. Involving a temporary cross-border movement, often for educational, capacity-building, networking, or working purposes, it may have tangible or intangible outputs in the short term, and/or be part of a long-term professional development process. Mobility is a conscious process, and those involved in it, whether by directly engaging in it or by supporting it, should take into consideration its cultural, social, political, environmental, ethical and economic implications’.

### **Potential beneficiaries and current needs**

Approximately **8.7 million people** had a cultural employment in the EU in 2017, amounting to **3.8% of total employment**. The figure was 6.7% higher than in 2012. Cultural employment is characterised by above-average percentages of self-employment and of professionals with a higher education degree. The proportion of women is the same as in the overall labour market, although differences can be observed in specific sectors and countries.

The analysis conducted for this study confirms that cultural mobility is an integrated, essential element in the cultural value chain, with increasing emphasis placed on its capacity-building and lifelong learning components. When assessing existing needs and resources available, the surveys and interviews brought to light some needs specific to individual sectors, as well as the following **common aspects**:

- a) **Need for a flexible support scheme for individuals and collectives**, responding to the high number of freelancers and the mixed-employment status of many professionals, as well as to the fact that in some sectors (e.g. music, performing arts) cultural practices are primarily collective.
- b) **Need for support schemes compatible with professional practice**, including the provision of short-term opportunities (compatible with the precarity of much of the sector, which means many professionals are unable to travel for several consecutive days).
- c) **Need for support for all creative and cultural sub-sectors**, because mobility is ultimately relevant for all artists and cultural professionals and should also integrate opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaborations.
- d) **Need for adequate and realistic funding**, by tackling existing imbalances, covering some costs in full and finding ways to being more inclusive.
- e) **Need for longer-term cross-national interaction**, including opportunities for re-iterated visits enabling the sustainability of professional contacts and deeper links to local community.
- f) **Need for enhanced employability**, recognising mobility's value-added to skills and career development.
- g) **Need for self-initiated forms of mobility**, that is mobility embedded in professional projects formulated by individuals or resulting from existing projects or initiatives.
- h) **Need to advocate for European diversity and new collaborations**.
- i) **Need to embrace societal concerns**, including the willingness of professionals to consider social, economic and political challenges in their projects.

### **Analysis of the funding sources and their complementarity**

The research team reviewed 1,611 regular cultural mobility funding schemes in the 41 countries under study. These included 370 schemes for visual arts, 298 for performing arts, 295 for music, 277 for literature, 187 for cultural heritage and 184 for architecture. Many other schemes were identified and analysed separately, including 'one-off' programmes, and demand-led funding opportunities, the latter representing a total of 459 funding schemes.

The diverse typology of mechanisms that emerges from this analysis is presented in detail in the study, and only some details are summarised here. Among them is the striking concentration of mobility opportunities in a reduced number of countries: in all the sectors analysed, **over 50% of both offer-led and demand-led mobility opportunities identified concentrate in only 5 to 8 countries**. While the list of countries varies slightly, a large majority are Western European countries particularly for demand-led funding opportunities.

Meanwhile, evidence suggests that there are very few mobility opportunities in the non-EU countries participating in the Creative Europe programme. Where they exist, they tend to be provided by European national cultural institutes, EU-funded programmes, development agencies, private foundations or initiatives, and are often related to specific time-framed projects.

The analysis also covered EU funding programmes in areas other than culture (e.g. ERASMUS+, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs (EYE), etc.) and found that, while these can occasionally be relevant for cultural professionals, in general individuals cannot apply directly for mobility support, but need to do so either via an organisation or through an online platform. The objectives of these programmes are also different from those more traditional in cultural projects, and this affects the ability of some cultural projects from accessing these opportunities in their own terms.

Several mobility programmes have a Euro-regional and/or transnational focus, which partly serves to rebalance existing asymmetries, although, very often, they also tend to highlight deeper disparities with regions that lack both national and regional forms of support.

Overall, the analysis of existing support schemes shows that sector needs are not properly met. These findings have informed the design of the proposed instrument, which is also consistent with the existing EU policy and legal framework. Indeed, one such scheme is in line with the preconditions for intervention by the EU as per the subsidiarity principle, the notion of European added-value and solidarity principles among Member States. The proposal is also in keeping with the goals set by the Council of Ministers in the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, and with broader EU values (e.g. transparency, cultural diversity, fundamental human rights, etc.).

## **Profile of the new European operational framework and related instrument**

The final chapter of the study proposes an operational framework for the mobility scheme, on the basis of the evidence collected and analysed in previous sections as well as a more detailed analysis of a range of existing schemes. The main elements of the

proposed framework can be summarised as follows:

- **Values and impacts:** the European mobility scheme shall embed an inclusive understanding of the purposes of mobility, consider flexible formats and selection mechanisms, and include measures to reduce environmental impact.
- **Solidarity enhancement:** the scheme shall allow artists and culture professionals from countries with limited support to be part of the European cultural conversation in a more consistent and regular way.
- **Complementarity:** the scheme shall help to tackle inequalities and better connect regions and countries; it should also complement existing supply by privileging self-directed travel grants (for one's own project or purpose), which are less frequently available.
- **Ethics:** the scheme shall contribute to a fairer implementation of mobility and provide a more complete sense to the definition of cultural mobility.

The research team proposed the operational framework to be based on a **decentralised model**, ensuring that information, assessment and data analysis are well spread, and relying on a set of Intermediary Organisations (IO), selected through a call for proposals by the European Commission, for its implementation. This is a model similar to that implemented by the EYE programme and demonstrates benefits in terms of cost-benefit ratio, EU added value, capacity building leverage, communication potential, data collection, funding and grant management, and the European administrative burden while providing administrative information, following the Mobility Information Standards' framework.

In order to address some potential risks (e.g. disparity of objectives among different IO), the study provides some recommendations, including the need to ensure a common, harmonised framework at programme level.

Despite shortage of information to detail the business model, the specific competencies and legal capacities required by the IO involved in the implementation of the programme are introduced in the study, as are the tasks to be fulfilled by them and their potential internal structure. IO should work closely with Creative Europe Desks, meet the European Commission yearly, and hold informal exchanges with the few existing transnational mobility funds and Euro-regional mobility funds.

Finally, the operational study presents a detailed set of characteristics of the new instrument proposed, including the following aspects:

- a. **Eligibility:** focus on individuals but consideration of groups, particularly in some sub-sectors; openness to professionals from all cultural and creative sub-sectors,

and all ages (above 18), nationals and legal residents in countries participating in the Creative Europe programme. A diverse range of formats could be eligible, with specific conditions applied to some of them. Mobility should take place between countries participating in the Creative Europe programme and could be either short-term or long-term (between 3 and 90 days). Travel and subsistence costs should be at minima covered, and more support could be made available to mobility which is ecologically responsible.

- b. Application:** applications should come from natural, rather than legal, persons; they should involve a short, concise application form and further supporting documents where essential. The scheme should be open on a rolling basis and be based on a web-platform managed by EACEA and accessible by IO.
- c. Selection:** EACEA should operate as a support office for the overall management of the scheme, whereas IO would be in charge of the financial management of funding and contact with the beneficiaries, following the input received from the relevant selection advisors, who would be in charge of assessing the applications.
- d. Financing and payment:** payments should be made by IO to beneficiaries, in two instalments, with Simplified Cost Options (SCOs) used wherever possible.
- e. Reporting and evaluation:** mandatory, but simple, reporting procedures, and establishment of an impact assessment mechanism to identify longer-term impacts in particular.
- f. Communication and dissemination,** involving all relevant stakeholders (EC, EACEA, Creative Europe Desks, IO, beneficiaries), through several media, ensuring transparency and accessibility.
- g. Online platforms:** a centralised one managed at the level of the EC and websites at the IOs level

The research team recommended other ideas to be taken into consideration within the pilot phase out of a very detailed table articulated around the above 7 points of focus.

Last but not least, the research team made a set of recommendations to the Consortium (selection, communication, accessibility, analysis of supported mobilities and success benchmarking), the EACEA agency (centralised web-platform, selection of IOs, data collection and overall communication strategy) and the European Commission (amount allocation for the new instrument and commitment of the MS) to pave the way towards the implementation of the new instrument to support in a consistent, fair and

comprehensive way the mobility of artists and culture professionals in Creative Europe countries.

This includes among other the conduct of a legal and regulatory EU study to fine tune the business model around an operational framework articulated around IO.

The proposal, based on the findings of this operational study, shall help to devise a relevant Instrument in the post 2020 Creative Europe programme, to support at a large and impactful scale the mobility of artists and culture professionals and to allow in an efficient way professional exploration, creativity boost, market opportunities and skills' development.

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