

The voice of the Voluntary Arts

Developing European links and opportunities

The most successful voluntary arts and crafts groups are those that have the strongest networks, drawing in information and support from a broad range of sources, and promoting themselves as widely as possible to both potential participants and partner organisations.

Despite this, we often find ourselves confined by our national borders, for a number of reasons – not knowing where to start, a perceived language barrier or just plain anxiety about the unknown. If we turn our attention to the rest of Europe, however, we discover a wealth of voluntary and amateur arts and crafts activity – a pool of potential partners, information sources and funding opportunities. This briefing will help you get started on that journey.

A. Networks and information providers

One of the best ways of finding out about opportunities in Europe is to join one or more of the networks set up to help foster European connections amongst cultural groups. As well as checking their websites for potential partners and collaborative projects, you can use them to help publicise your group and the kinds of partnerships you wish to initiate.

Listed below are some of the main networks and organisations set up to help artists/craftspeople and arts/crafts groups and organisations work across European borders. For contact details, see the *Further Resources* section.

EUCLID (UK)

EUCLID provides a range of information and signposting on all aspects of cross-European working. It has been appointed by the Department for Media, Culture & Sport and the European Commission as the official UK 'Cultural Contact Point' to promote the EU's funding programmes for culture.

It provides information on European funding programmes relevant to voluntary sector organisations (for example, Europe for Citizenship Programme and Lifelong Learning Programme) and organises seminars and conferences in the UK and in Europe on European and international topics.

EUCLID's main information portal is Culture.Info, a huge resource that may at first appear daunting, but it is worth digging beneath the surface for the wide range of opportunities it presents. The aim of Culture.Info is to be the first port-of-call for users seeking cultural information on a particular topic.

Each sub-portal provides a carefully researched set of links to information that is more focused and useful than that which is available from the vast majority of existing listings or search engines. For example, <http://practical.culture.info> provides practical information on a range of useful topics when working in Europe, including travel and transportation, accommodation, communicating, dealing with money, health and insurance.

Culture Action Europe

Culture Action Europe is an advocacy organisation representing the interests of thousands of artists and cultural organisations across Europe. Membership is open to any cultural organisation (at local, regional, national or European level) wanting to find out what's happening in European culture and to get involved in European cultural affairs.

Culture Action Europe is a membership and networking organisation, relying on the active involvement of its members to validate its work. By connecting its members, it hopes to strengthen the sense of common purpose for the arts at the European level.

Among other things, members benefit from access to one-to-one advice on European related issues, dedicated space on the website for members' events and activities, and web links to your group from its website.

LabforCulture.org

LabforCulture.org is another network set up to provide information on European arts and culture. Its mission is both to ensure that all those working on cultural collaboration have access to up-to-the-minute information and to encourage the cultural sector to become more experimental with online technologies.

LabforCulture.org provides information, research and analysis related to cultural co-operation and collaboration, including funding opportunities, critical perspectives, research, news and online networking tools.



Amateo

Amateo, based in Ghent, Belgium, is the European network of organisations with a national remit to encourage active participation in cultural activities. It was created by members of various European organisations involved with the conferences 'art4all' in Utrecht (2004) and 'Value, Include, Connect' in Cardiff (organised by Voluntary Arts in 2005).

Amateo is based on the belief that active participation in cultural activities should be better acknowledged by politicians, bureaucrats, researchers, opinion leaders and professional artists for its importance to art, society and individuals, and that it should be recognised as worthy of support from national and EU institutions.

The two current UK members of Amateo are Voluntary Arts and Making Music. National organisations that wish to join Amateo can apply at www.amateo.info/pages/network/join_us.htm.

Other organisations with an international focus

The **British Council** is Britain's international 'cultural relations' body, set up to nurture greater trust and understanding between different countries and cultures. It builds strong international links to and from Britain, giving people opportunities to learn, share and connect, not just within Europe, but worldwide.

Culture Ireland is the Irish State Agency that promotes the best of Ireland's arts and culture internationally and assists in the development of Ireland's international cultural relations.

Town twinning

Look at any town twinning projects your area, as many rely on cultural exchanges. Arts and crafts often provide a way to bridge any language barriers and can be a great way for your group to get involved. A good place to find town twinning projects in the UK is www.towntwinning.org.uk.

B. Collaborations and residencies

I. Collaborations

Ideas on finding potential partners and making useful international contacts can be found through any of the networks listed in the previous section, or through the following sources:

- **Partners.Culture.Info** – www.culture.info/partners – this section of the Culture.Info website is an online bulletin board, listing project ideas from organisations seeking partners in Europe or internationally for arts and cultural projects. You can search existing opportunities, or to add your own listing, send a blank email to partnersearchlisting@culture.info. You will then receive an email with instructions on sending your submission.
- **European Cultural Contact Point Ireland** (in the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon) – www.ccp.ie – provides information, advice and technical assistance to anyone in Ireland interested in applying to the European Commission

for funding under the Culture Programme 2007-2013, and anyone interested in developing links and collaborative projects with colleagues elsewhere in Europe and beyond.

2. Residencies

Residencies allow artists and craftspeople to further their practice away from their usual environment. A variety of arts and crafts organisations, tertiary and higher education institutions run them. They can include activities such as giving talks and lectures, presenting workshops and formal teaching.

Residencies are often taken up by professional artists, but do not exclude skilled amateur artists and craftspeople who want to share their art or craft in a wider arena. Alternatively, you could host a residency (either professional or amateur) at your group, organisation or local community – perhaps in partnership with other groups in your area or your local authority arts division.

- **Residency.Culture.Info** – www.culture.info/residency – this section of the Culture.Info website lists residencies not only in the EU, but throughout the world.
- **Res Artis** – www.resartis.org – the largest existing network of artist residency programmes, representing the interests of more than 200 centres and organisations in 49 countries worldwide. It provides a forum to support and represent the interests of residential arts centres and programmes internationally, contributing to the creation of an international network of residential arts centres and programmes.
- **Trans Artists** – www.transartists.org – a knowledge centre on artist-in-residence opportunities. It provides information on international artist-in-residence programmes as well as other opportunities for artists to stay and work abroad. It is also intended for organisations offering international residency opportunities, or interested in doing so, including residential art centres, providers of guest studios, art initiatives, cultural institutions and governmental organisations.

C. Funding

European funding can be a good source of additional income for voluntary arts groups and organisations. Depending on the source, it usually requires you to work with partners in other European countries, and/or promote themes of international cultural co-operation within your work.

There are a range of European Programmes that voluntary arts and crafts groups might explore – some of which include smaller funding strands and less onerous application/reporting requirements than the larger international programmes. These include the Europe for Citizen's Programme (Active Citizenship, Town Twinning etc); Media Programme (film and cinema); Lifelong Learning Programme (programmes like Gruntvig are applicable to lifelong learning in the non-formal sector, e.g. crafts groups); Rural Development Programme



(activities which regenerate rural areas) and PEACE III (*Northern Ireland only* – see www.seupb.org).

Sources of European funding information include:

Culture.Info

The main funding portal of Culture.Info is at <http://culture.info/funding-24>. It contains the following funding sub-portals:

- Awards – <http://award.culture.info>
- Competitions – <http://compete.culture.info>
- Culture Programme – information on the EU's funding programme for culture (see below) – www.culturefund.eu
- Deadlines – for EU and UK funding programmes in the next nine months – <http://deadline.culture.info>
- Foundations – foundations providing funds or organising projects – <http://foundation.culture.info>
- Funding from the European Union (EU) – <http://eufunds.culture.info>
- Sponsorship – <http://sponsor.culture.info>
- UK / Funding – selected links to UK funding opportunities – <http://uk.culture.info/funding>
- CUPID – an online database of cultural projects that have received funding from European Union funding programmes – <http://cupid.culture.info>

The main funding portal page also contains a useful list of publications, associations, networks and online funding advice from each European country, as well as ideas for alternative financing.

Culture Programme (www.culturefund.eu)

The EU's Culture Programme (2007-2013) has a budget of €400 million for projects and initiatives to celebrate Europe's cultural diversity and enhance our shared cultural heritage through the development of cross-border co-operation between cultural operators and institutions. Its three strands are as follows:

- **Strand 1:** Support for cultural actions –
 - multi-annual co-operative projects over a period of three to five years (*1.1* – deadline 1 October each year);
 - co-operative projects over a maximum period of two years (*1.2.1* – deadline 1 October each year);
 - literary translation projects (*1.2.2* – deadline 1 February each year); and
 - co-operation with third countries over a maximum period of two years (*1.3* – deadline 1 May each year).
- **Strand 2:** Support for cultural bodies working at the European level (deadline 1 November each year for annual grants; 1 November 2010 for organisations seeking three-year grants);
- **Strand 3:** Support for analysis and dissemination activities.

The good news is that strands *1.1*, *1.2.1* and *1.3* of the Culture Programme are some of the easier EU programmes to apply for,

as recent changes have considerably simplified the criteria and the application procedures. However, the programme focuses on co-operative projects involving at least three partner organisations (not individuals) from at least three different eligible European countries.

Partners can be found on, amongst other places, the Culture.Info website at <http://europe.culture.info>.

CultureEuro Seminars

EUCLID runs seminars throughout the UK, providing detailed information on the full range of EU funding programmes, including the Culture Programme. The seminars also cover background information on the EU (how it works and what's in it for you), ways in which cultural organisations can develop European partnerships, and how to deal with the latest EU rules and regulations.

For dates and locations of upcoming seminars, visit www.cultureeuro.info.

LabforCulture.org

LabforCulture.org's funding pages allow you to find funding for your project, initiative or organisation, and learn more about mobility schemes, foundations, corporate sponsorship, philanthropy and alternative sources of funding – www.labforculture.org/en/funding.

European Cultural Fund

The European Cultural Fund (ECF) aims to bring people closer together through cultural co-operation and creative activities. It invests in people and projects whose work is innovative and border-crossing, and gives young people the chance to make the most of their creativity and have their work displayed and discussed in mainstream media. It encourages open artistic exchange, through special collaborative projects and by funding the travel of artists and cultural workers.

For individuals, ECF provides Artistic Projects Grants for outstanding artistic projects which show vision in illuminating the issues of diversity in Europe, as well as STEP Beyond Grants for artists, cultural operators, journalists, translators and researchers travelling within the wider Europe.

For organisations, there are Artistic Projects Grants and Making Collaboration Work grants which stimulate collaboration between cultural organisations. EPIM (European Programme for Integration and Migration) Grants are aimed at strengthening the role played by non-governmental organisations active on migration and integration issues.

ECF also funds two awards: the Princess Margriet Award (giving recognition to artists and cultural organisations from across Europe whose exceptional art works and groundbreaking initiatives give us a positive understanding of European cultural diversity), the Cultural Policy Research Award (a competition for cultural policy scholars and PhD students under the age of 35), and the Prix Europa (an annual competition and festival for the best European radio, television and internet broadcasts).

For further information, visit www.eurocult.org.

Further Resources

Organisations

- **Amateo** –
c/o Ms Marjeta Turk, JSKD, Stefanova 5,
SLO - 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.
www.amateo.info
- **British Council** –
British Council Information Centre, Bridgewater House,
58 Whitworth Street, Manchester M1 6BB.
T: 0161 957 7755 F: 0161 957 7762
www.britishcouncil.org
- **Cultural Action Europe** –
10, Rue de la Science, 1000 - Bruxelles.
T: +32 (0) 2 534 4002 F: +32 (0) 2 534 1150
www.cultureactioneurope.org
- **EUCLID** –
12 Charlotte Street, Manchester M1 4FL.
T: 07000 382543 F: 0161 245 3322
www.euclid.info / **Culture.Info** – <http://culture.info>
- **European Festivals Association** –
www.efa-aeef.eu
- **European Music Council** –
www.emc-imc.org
- **European Network of Cultural Centres** –
www.encc.eu
- **European Theatre Convention** –
www.etc-cte.org
- **Europa Cantat** (bringing Europeans together through singing) – www.europacantat.org
- **European Writers Congress** –
www.european-writers-congress.org
- **International Festivals and Events Association Europe** –
www.ifeaeurope.com
- **LabforCulture.org** –
European Cultural Foundation, Jan van Goyenkade 5,
1075 HN Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
T: +31 (0) 20 573 38 68 F: +31 (0) 20 675 22 31
www.labforculture.org
- **Opera Europa** –
www.opera-europa.org
- **Res Artis** –
www.resartis.org
- **Trans Artists** –
www.transartists.org

Don't forget that global networks for your particular art or craft form will often have a European aspect – for example, CIOFF – the International Association of Folklore Festivals has a large number of festival opportunities in Europe – www.cioff.org.

Plus remember you are a resource yourself – it is amazing how much cross-border working comes from informal connections through friends and people who share the same interest talking to others whilst on holiday.

Information contained here may go out of date and you are therefore advised to check its currency.
Updated information may be available on the VAN website: www.voluntaryarts.org

Disclaimer: Reasonable precautions have been taken to ensure the information in this document is accurate. However, it is not intended to be legally comprehensive; it is designed to provide guidance in good faith at the stated date but without accepting liability.

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