

EUROPE FOR GLOBAL CREATIVITY: THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN UNION INITIATIVES ON CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

EMESE PUPEK

PhD, general vice-rector of BKF, University of Applied Sciences, Budapest, Hungary

ABSTRACT

The role of creative industries has become increasingly appreciated in today's globalized society. Characteristically, the workers and creators of creative industries draw upon cultural roots (frequently looking for inspiration in their national culture), they need the freedom of expression, a global sphere as well as a network society to be productive. This work with its high added value, in turn, supports several other sectors (e.g. tourism), and establishes a vibrant and innovative environment that considerably affects people and their lives.

Recognizing the above mentioned developments, the European Union has invested a lot of effort in promoting the development of creative industries. The present study has collected the information specific to these activities with a view to measuring their effectiveness and impacts.

In addition to the analysis of the relevant documents and programmes of the European Union, the essay is based on the in-depth study of the COMPENDIUM database about the practices of individual countries.

The COMPENDIUM is a web-based¹ and permanently updated information system monitoring the national cultural policies of 42 European countries according to a predefined uniform structure. This transnational project was initiated by the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe and has been running as a joint venture with the European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts) since 1998. The country profiles, for the most part, only allude to creative industries but the topic is directly addressed under the "Cultural/creative industries: policies and programmes" and "Creativity and participation" chapters by the authors. The definition of creative industries and the demarcation of the sector pose great difficulty and the methods used by individual nations also considerably vary, but they have one thing in common, i.e., their cultural policies do relate to creative industries in some way.

Using the above resources, this essay focuses on the following main questions: How do European countries approach the issue of creative industries? What do these approaches have in common? What kind of good practices exist? What kind of impact does EU membership or potential membership have on these initiatives?

KEYWORDS: Creative Industries, Creative Strategies, Cultural Policies, European Union, Programmes

¹ <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/countries-profiles-download.php>, May, 2014

INTRODUCTION

Spreading the Idea of “Unity in Diversity”

Cultural diversity is a core value in the European Union. This idea is underlined by the fact that in 2000 the EU adopted ‘Unity in Diversity’ as its official motto. The slogan embodies the concept of diversity in culture, languages and traditions as an important value. It is through cultural initiatives and subsidies that the European Union seeks to maintain this idea and achieve its objectives including the establishment and strengthening of a European unity and European consciousness as well as supporting cooperation among nations and preserving diversity.

Since the Maastricht Treaty, European Union initiatives have multiplied in the field of culture. As a result of an initiative put forward by Melina Mercouri, former Greek minister for culture, the European Council launched the European Cities of Culture programme in 1985, the name of which was changed to European Capitals of Culture in 1999. The title is awarded to a city of a Member State for a period of one year and from 2009 onwards more than one cities may be designated as European Capital of Cultures. The programme offers an opportunity to demonstrate cultural development, renew culture and increase reputation across Europe. Apart from Bulgaria and Croatia, every member state has already implemented one or more European Capitals of Culture programmes in the framework of which they have developed their infrastructure and set up programmes and initiatives through significant investments. For example, in 2010 when Essen hosted the European Capital of Culture event, Germany cooperated with 53 cities from the Ruhr region and the other two capitals (Istanbul, Turkey and Pécs, Hungary) under the so-called Ruhr2010 program with the intention to emphasize the significance of culture using the dynamic motto of “Change through culture – culture through change”.

II. SUPPORTING CREATIVITY PROGRAMMES

Culture is also a major development factor in the Lisbon Strategy. The realization that culture is closely linked to know-how investments and innovations has been a very important step. In the communication titled “A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world (COM(2007) 242) 2007”, the cultural sector plays a key role in terms of its numerous social, economic and political implications, consequently, culture has a fundamental part in the process of European integration. The announcement defines three priorities:

- To urge cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;
- To stimulate creativity within the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs and
- To promote international relations in which the internationalization of culture is a vital element.

The European Union urged that the role of culture in development policies be strengthened, the process of which started as of 2009. In 2010 the European Union passed a Green Paper on the “Unlocking of the potential of cultural and creative industries” in which the European Union’s vision of unfolding culture, creativity and innovation in the creative industries is publicised and identified urging politicians to develop European creative industries. In 2013 the European cultural and creative sectors represented up to 4.5% of European GDP and accounted for some 3.8% of the EU workforce (8.5 million people).²

² Source: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-1399_hu.htm

Creative industries have an increasingly significant, pioneer role in knowledge-based economies and societies. Recognizing that fact, countries have undertaken to analyse the sector by conducting studies by government order (Czech Republic, Estonia, FRY of Macedonia, Portugal), working out strategies for creative industries (Finland, Malta, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Serbia) and in some cases even integrating these plans into government programmes (Austria, Lithuania, United Kingdom). With regard to the need for the development of suitable technics for the evolution of creative industries and the establishment of favourable circumstances, the promotion of R&D and innovation is in focus in Belgium, Finland, Lithuania, Switzerland and Sweden.

According to creative industry programmes and policies, the dissemination of economic knowledge and the unfolding of entrepreneurship constitute the two primary elements of success. In addition, international relations, international presence and their subsidy are crucial parts of these programmes and policies due to the international nature of the creative industries.

The European Union has supported the cultural and audio-visual sectors for more than 20 years within the framework of various programmes: Culture 2000, Culture Programme 2007-2013, MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus Programme (2011-2013). The Creative Europe 2014-2020 Programme has now replaced the above mentioned programmes with the aim of offering increased support in the field of cinematography, television, culture, music, performing arts and cultural heritage. Through this support the EU intends to help cultural and creative industries become the real engine driving growth and jobs.

In the European Union cultural and creative industries receive particular attention due to their role in stimulating the economy and employment with strategic EU documents giving high priority to these aims. In the second half of 2008, during the German EU presidency, Germany paid special attention to the cultural sphere which included three international conferences as well about the possibilities of stimulating growth and employment through creative industries. In line with the above, during the 2010 Spanish presidency Spain focused on three priorities in the field of culture:

- strengthening the possibilities of contribution to local and regional development through culture;
- strengthening the role of culture to promote growth and social cohesion and
- promoting the spread of digital cultural contents.

Cultural programmes are integral parts of each European Union presidency. Under presidencies national and international cultural events are regularly organized for the general public while each presidency offers the opportunity to exchange ideas and organize official meetings and conferences up to the ministerial level.

“EUROPEAN YEARS”

Since 1983 the European Union has dedicated each year to a special topic with the Member States initiating discussions and open debates about them. Each topic is of paramount importance and related to key public policies that represent major challenges. The topical issues of several European Years have been connected to the cultural and creative sphere. For example 1983 was the European year of SMEs and the craft industry, 1985 was the European year of music, 1988 was the European year of cinema and television, 2008 was the European year of intercultural dialogue while 2009 was the European year of creativity and innovation.

The European Union is continuously looking for and creating possibilities for both the Member States and non-member states to meet and cooperate in an increasing number of fields. Slovenia and Poland in the first half of 2008 and in the second half of 2011 respectively used their presidency to establish international cultural connections and promote their culture in other European countries. Poland for example has established a special programme (Polish Presidency – Promesa) allocating PLN 20 million to achieve that objective. Beyond that, under the Polish presidency Poland instituted a cooperation with artists from Eastern European countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Ukraine). Under the Czech presidency the Platform “Culture – Central Europe” was established with Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia among its members. The Platform aims to increase information exchange and participation inside and outside the European Union and to emphasize the common Central-European identity and demonstrate the creative force inherent in arts. The members have realized almost 50 supported projects so far.

Under its presidency Slovenia took the European year of intercultural dialogue seriously supporting its development with detailed programmes and a budget which was then maintained by the following French presidency. In comparison, the European year of creativity and innovation (2009) did not appear so directly in the programmes of the Czech and the Swedish presidency. On the other hand, in the first half of 2011, under the Hungarian presidency the elaboration of the Europe 2020 long-term strategy was in focus highlighting the role and place of culture about which a conference was organized. Under the Danish presidency in the first half of 2012, the elaboration of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020) entered into an active phase. In addition to the more efficient exploitation of the possibilities offered by globalization and digitalization, economic growth, increased employment, innovation and social cohesion as well as the promotion of the prevention and unfolding of cultural and linguistic diversity are expected from the above mentioned programme.

The European Union has made a concerted effort in the field of culture, especially in the audio-visual, copyright and digital sector that enjoyed top priority under the Polish and the following Danish presidency. The aims of these public policies and the results achieved at the community level are adopted not only by EU Member States but also by non-member states who observe them and use them as benchmarks.

ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

The institutional background for policies and programmes in the field of creative industries is now being developed. State institutions provide places for the representatives of the creative industries within various organizational structures. In some cases departments or directorates have been established within the ministries responsible for culture (Lithuania, Spain). Support and expert committees exist in Azerbaijan, Finland, Slovenia whereas in other countries a council operates giving advice and supervising the allocation of funds (Austria). In numerous countries creative industries receive special attention due to their potential for economic recovery, this is the case in Austria and Denmark as well where agencies are considered to be the most suitable type of institutional form for the exploitation of the economic potential of the creative sector.

Tony Blair established the Creative Industries Task Force in the United Kingdom as early as 1997 to measure creative industries and to develop government strategies. Similarly, in 2006 the Latvian government established the consultative Design Board and the Consultative Council of Creative Industries in 2011. In Estonia a Design Centre operates,

while Latvia has a Centre for Contemporary Art. In 2007, the National Association of Creative/Cultural Industries was established in Lithuania to promote the cooperation among arts, culture, artistic organisations and non-governmental organisations, businesses, the scientific and educational sector and to stimulate the activities thereof in international networks. A foundation and a working group have been established to realize the motto of the Malta Vision of 2015 (“Let our country be the country of creativity!”) and to develop the necessary framework to further the above mentioned aim. In Spain the Development Agency for Cultural Industries was established by the Galician government in 2008 which promotes developments, increases competitiveness, innovation, productivity and the cooperation among national and international cultural industries, arts and performers from all regions. In Hungary the Hungarian Intellectual Property Office is responsible for the protection of intellectual property. Acting on the recommendation from the European Council, a Cultural Policy Institute operates in Russia with an active role on the international scene. A Centre for the Development of Creative Industries has been established in St. Petersburg to help non-commercial entrepreneurship within public cultural institutions operating on the “boundary between culture and business” to provide related training, consultation and expertise.

There are several governments among the examined countries that are still working on the independence of their cultural institutional system trying to develop decentralised governance and to promote transparency with a view to efficiency which in turn have an impact on the creative industries.

Most organisations perform management activities in the field of creative industries though, their task is to support the sector, promote the competitiveness of public institutions and cooperation between the public and private sector. In addition, they offer planning and other services and help internationalisation.

COOPERATION AMONG NATIONS

In the field of cultural and creative industries France undertakes a leading position being an important actor in cultural diplomacy and having the headquarters of several international institutions within its borders (for example in Paris or in Strasbourg) in addition to an extensive network of international institutions. France sets not only national but also European objectives in the field of cultural and creative industries. Denmark, Sweden and Italy underline their significant role and responsibility at the European level as well, however, these kinds of aims are not referred to in German programmes.

By studying national cultural policies we can conclude that certain groups of countries have urged cooperation in the field of cultural and creative industries and that their accession to the EU has favourably affected these intentions and activities. Common institutions are established and concrete programmes are realized in the Scandinavian and Baltic countries. In the period from 2009 to 2011, the cooperation between Baltic countries was institutionalized by the respective ministries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. For the 2012-2014 period, Lithuania has allocated 800 thousand LTL per year for participation in the creative industry networks of Scandinavian and Baltic countries but the cooperation of the Visegrád Group of 4 (Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia) is also worth mentioning including the Visegrád Fund which finances joint programmes.

CONCLUSIONS

The European Union has a profound impact on the development of creative industries both at the European and the national level. The programmes and subsidies of the European Union outline the directions and frames of development and

future possibilities.

Creative industries have an increasingly significant role in the life of societies and economies. A number of countries expect the development of their economy and society from these industries.

Several countries have been paying significant attention to creative industries. Austria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Great Britain, Portugal and Romania all have a single document about the future of creative industries, they create creative industry strategies and they have also inserted these strategies into the programme of their government. At the moment, the general definition of cultural and creative industries are connected to each other, and except for the above examples, most countries deal with them together instead of separating these two fields.

National creative industry programmes have several common features. The main reason for that lies in the typical characteristics of creative industries: their activities are global, they need to meet similar challenges brought about by the spread of information and communications technologies and the demands of the network society. The second reason closely corresponds to the previous ones, namely that the creative industries emerged almost at the same time in different countries. The third reason is the impact of EU activities since several European Union programmes, funds and events promote the development of this sector in addition to the consequences of legal harmonisation and the issues related to intellectual property rights and digitalization which are given priority within the European community.

The European Union is fully committed to the development of creative industries. Thus, it is not surprising that the role of the European Union is central in the creation and operation of the above mentioned components (strategies, laws, institutions, subsidies, etc.) to promote creative industries. Furthermore, these activities not only affect the Member States or the candidate countries but they also serve as a pattern for other states, too.

Several financial sources are available for the development of the creative industries, most of them are national but some funds are operated by a group of countries (for example the Visegrád Fund and the cooperation of the Baltic countries) or by the European Union.

There are numerous examples of stable, concrete and productive international cooperation, principally among the Scandinavian and Baltic countries and in the Visegrád Group.

The creative industry is a novel industry showing an increasing share in national economic indicators while the number and rate of employees in the creative industries are also on the increase. The aim of studying the cultural policies of 42 countries was to examine whether there is a political commitment towards creative industries and if so, to reveal its content and nature. In summary, we can conclude that dealing with creative industries is becoming increasingly institutionalized and the European Union initiatives have a key role in the process.

The subject of cultural policies include cultural heritage, arts and – more and more frequently – the media and creative industries as well. Creative industries do not replace cultural policies, instead they draw upon them. Cultural heritage, national traditions, history, customs and the protection of the culture of (ethnic and religious) minorities are all important values. Culture creates values and cultural policies basically aim to create suitable circumstances for that process and to ensure that broad sectors of society have access to culture. The participation of society in cultural and creative activities positively affects both the public audience and the individual and the development of individuals through culture is

a key priority. The creation of suitable circumstances for creative work is a fundamental need of culture. Liberty, pluralism, quality and innovation evolve in culture and through culture while they in turn contribute to the evolution of creativity. Culture is an elemental part of modern society which contributes to the intellectual and moral development of each citizen. The creative and value creating processes constitute identities, unite nations and at the same time connect nations and generations.

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AUTHOR DETAIL



EMESE Pupek PhD political scientist, general vice-rector of BKF, University of Applied Sciences, Budapest

