



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

SUBMISSION TO UK GOVERNMENT QUADRENNIAL REPORT ON ACTIONS TAKEN IN SUPPORT OF UNESCO'S CONVENTION, 2005

SECTION 3 – AWARENESS RAISING AND PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Promotion of the Convention in the UK has been largely driven by the UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity, (UKCCD), which has held conferences and bi-lateral meetings to raise awareness and understanding of its existence and articles of operation. UKCCD held meetings with such cultural institutions as the Arts Council of England, The British Council, The Federation of Entertainment Unions, British Screen Advisory Council, National Campaign for the Arts, the All Party Committee on Media Culture and Sport, and National Association of Local Arts Councils. General awareness of the Convention is still limited, with professional cultural organizations and those within the arts sector best informed. It remains a matter of concern that, in spite of ratification, there is very little awareness of, or proper consideration of the articles in the Convention across the breadth of UK Government departments. This is essential to action the government's commitment to bringing public interest considerations based on cultural and linguistic diversity of cultural expressions to bear on trade, education, communications and development policy.

UKCCD Actions to Promote the Convention

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| Sept 2007 | Founding Member of International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity, Seville |
| Nov 2007 | Presentation at Commonwealth People's Forum, Kampala: Culture & Development/Media & Development Committees. Convention included in final Kampala report to Commonwealth Heads of Government |
| May 2008 | Conference: Globalisation – a threat to Diversity of Expression? UNESCO's Convention for Diversity of Cultural Expression, 2005, London Metropolitan University |
| Nov 6 2008 | Conference: International Development & the UNESCO Convention for Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Commonwealth Foundation. |
| June 4 2010 | Forum: UNESCO's Convention, 2005: Forum for Young Leaders on Cultural Policy, City University & National Campaign for the Arts – to build U40 (under 40) Group in UK |

Jan 31 2012 Culture: an Added Value for Europe, Brussels, with European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity – an assessment of EU Implementation of Articles of Convention

Many other events have been held and actions taken by our members which implicitly support the aims of the Convention with regard to their specific sectors.

UKCCD Actions to Monitor the Implementation of the Convention

UKCCD members are experts in their respective fields within the arts sectors. They are also active in promoting measures to implement the aims of the Convention, for example developing new digital licences for greater legal access, creating a space for arts and culture in education, gathering statistics, conducting research, building international alliances and contributing to and monitoring UK government and European policy. There has been an attempt to monitor the impact of key legislative initiatives such as the Digital Economy Act, the forthcoming Communications Bill, and proposed changes to Public Broadcasting, in order to keep principles of diversity of cultural expression uppermost.

UK National Commission for UNESCO, 2005 - The UKCCD has advised the Cultural Committee and the Information and Communications Committee on the operational guidelines for the Convention and its implementation in European policy.

Some examples of UKCCD involvement:

- May 2009 Submission to DFID Consultation Document: Eliminating World Poverty: Assuring our Common Future
- 2010–2011 Founder member of Citizens Campaign for Public Service Broadcasting, lobbying in defence of public service remits, support for local, original content, children’s programming and international coverage.
- 2010 Presentations to the Arts Council of England to urge inclusion of the Convention, 2005, in the terms of its review of International Policy.

The UKCCD also works with the European Federation of Coalitions, (CEDC), lobbying EU Commissioners and MEPs to ensure the mainstreaming of the Convention’s articles across the competencies of the EU Commission in Trade, Education and Culture, Information Society and Development Cooperation, and makes regular submissions to consultations and on proposed legislative changes.

- 2012 Submission to the EU Commission on implementation of the Convention,
- 2011 Submission to the EU Commission on green paper on the distribution of audiovisual works online
- Submission to the EU Commission consultation on Creative Europe

SECTION 4 – ACHIEVEMENTS & CHALLENGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

Achievements

Since 2008, there has been greater recognition that culture and the creative industries play a significant role in achieving sustainable economic development. This has been

reflected in policy and reports such as the government's Creative Britain Report, 2008, and most recently the inclusion of arts and culture as a core planning and strategic principle in the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012.

This has also been echoed in major reports such as the mid-term review of the Millennium Development Goals, The Henley Review of Cultural Education and the National Music Plan.

Further positive steps include the Government's continued allocation of spectrum to support the roll out of high speed broadband and the policies that support it. This will help ensure the widest access to the benefits of digital technologies, both in production and in distribution.

The Government's continued commitment to maintain the principle of free entry to the UK's world class national museums and galleries also maximizes public access to the diversity of heritage and arts.

Challenges

Despite the achievements, the implementation of the Convention faces a number of specific challenges.

Foremost, the lack of Government initiatives and resources to promote awareness of the Convention across Government departments and in the wider public domain is a major shortcoming, especially compared to actions taken by other European member states and the European Union. This is further aggravated by the lack of encouragement or support for civil society to take initiatives for the promotion of the Convention.

The absence of consistent funding strategies and sustained investment has been detrimental to supporting a thriving arts sector, essential to fulfilling the aims of the Convention. Inconsistency in funding strategy for the arts sector by Westminster, Devolved and Local Government comes on top of the fact that in 2012 the United Kingdom had a lower Central Government spend per head on culture than many EU countries- 50% less than Germany and Italy and 25% less than France, Sweden and Switzerland. Only Greece, Spain and Poland spent less than UK (NCA Index, 2010). The Department of Culture, Media and Sport has made efforts to increase philanthropic giving and private investment incentives. However, these funds are diminishing, with a disproportionate impact in the regions, aggravating the London- regional resource divide, and leading to the closure of many local centres of excellence- libraries, theatres, galleries, museums, and arts and community centres that provide even the most rural of areas with access to a broad range of arts. This also impacts upon touring organisations, for whom rural tours become less financially viable and reduces the cultural offer to those outside larger cities and towns.

Consistency and coherence in measurement of the creative industries will enable proper tracking and promotion of this sector. Recent Government statistics have downsized the value of the creative economy from 7% of GDP, (almost as large as financial service sector), to 2-3%, although the basis for the latest figures is contested by the sectors themselves. Nor is there adequate or systematic inclusion of value added/impact factors such as tourism even though national galleries and museums are ranked among the most visited in the world. It is estimated that heritage tourism contributes over £20 billion to UK GDP (2010), more than advertising or the car industry.

Integration of Culture in Sustainable Development Strategies

For the effective integration of culture in sustainable development strategies it is important that the articles of the convention are applied across the competencies of government and not only in the cultural sector. Diversity of cultural expressions needs to be regarded as a general public interest pertaining to all policies related to development. Whilst the role played by the creative industries in sustaining communities and regenerating the UK economy is recognised, exemplified by the benefits to Liverpool through its status as European Capital of Culture in 2008, this is not always reflected in government policy.

All creative industries are affected by new digital technologies which represent both an enormous opportunity – additional networks, distribution platforms, cheaper means of production etc – and a potential danger – piracy, unequal access, convergence in marketplace – to diversity of cultural expressions. For the long term, and with respect to policy informed by smart growth strategies and the digital industries, regulation for diversity of expression will be essential. This will support net neutrality, the production of local content, intellectual property rights, fair and proportionate contribution by all internet stakeholders, education and the widest participation in and access to creative culture.

In particular, consideration needs to be given to maintaining equality of access for rural communities and the disabled, and to maintaining linguistic diversity on the net. It should also be stressed that confidence in the opportunities of the internet should not replace recognition and emphasis on the diverse live experiences on offer in the United Kingdom, across theatre, visual art and those art forms which are not immediately digital. Nor can the internet substitute for libraries or physical, cultural hubs which provide access to a more diverse range of works from a more diverse range of sources.

Preferential Treatment for Developing Economies

There is an absence of coherent policy to bring together initiatives in support of diversity of cultural expressions in the emerging economies, whether through developing infrastructure, policy or capacitation. Given the diversity of our own communities much more could be done to encourage the role of our diaspora communities to broker exchange and cooperation with other countries.

In spite of its being obligatory on all signatories to support exchange and cooperation with the developing world, the relevant articles of the Convention are not widely acknowledged in the programmes of the Department for International Development, nor the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

In the context of diminishing funds, there is a growing tendency for institutional policies to be inward looking on the UK, rather than incorporating an international dimension, to the detriment of the diversity of cultural expressions. This impacts upon diaspora communities and those with roots outside the United Kingdom as well as limiting international exchange and access for all nationals. Examples would be The Arts Council of England, The British Film Institute, the BBC and other public service broadcasters.

Visa Regulations continue to restrict visiting artists from the developing world and affect diversity of expression within the UK – the fact that the UK is not a signatory to the Schengen Agreement contributes to these limitations.

THE NEXT FOUR YEARS

Over the next four years, it is vital that Government Departments and the wider public are made aware of the Conventions and its aims.

The Government should give greater support for the role of civil society to raise awareness and advance the implementation of the Convention in the United Kingdom as a whole. It should also ensure that the principles of the Convention are mainstreamed across Government policy including competencies such as education, trade, communications and development.

With the emphasis on smart, sustainable growth and digital participation, the Government must regulate for the digital economy to ensure access to a diversity of product and expression on line, linguistic diversity, support for intellectual property rights of the creator and/or author of the content, protections against piracy and provisions for universal access.

To that end, Government must ensure that the objectives of the Convention are observed in bi-lateral, regional and international agreements.

To further the measuring of the diversity of cultural expressions in the United Kingdom, and to set baselines for future quadrennial reports, we would recommend establishing a clear set of indices, taking into consideration the work done in this area by UNESCO itself.

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