

## Context:

I would first like to sketch out the context in the EU, for the current interest in artists' and art's mobility, as it is quite specific and probably not at all common to the situations where most of you are living and working, in Africa for example.

First of all, it must be understood that there are "three basic freedoms" for citizens of the 27 Member Countries of the European Union : the freedom of movement of persons, of goods and of services. This is what creates the basis of the common economic space of the EU, and these freedoms apply equally to artistic persons, artistic goods and artistic services.

The EU first became interested in arts mobility due to this **political** context, seeing arts workers as political subjects, and then later was interested in the culture sector as an **economic** one. Just as in the USA where the work force is a mobile one, with unemployed people moving from areas where there is no work to places where there are jobs, the EU wanted to support a European work force as mobile as possible in order to decrease unemployment in certain regions and address workers' shortages in others. (We can discuss later some of the negative aspects of mobility such as brain drain or, 'artists'-drain when artists leave their country, the possible loss of 'roots' and a local devoted public, difficulties in adapting to a new culture, carbon emissions from air travel and so on, but on the whole arts mobility is understood as being a positive phenomena.)

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the rise of the cultural networks in Europe. Networking is a particularly European success story; there are literally hundreds of pan-European cultural networks regularly bringing together individuals or structures in the arts sector, for every art form and genre: from contemporary dance, to choruses, to jazz, to museums and so on. In the 80's and 90's, the networks were actively creating a "common cultural space" by encouraging arts collaborations, exchanges, co-productions and touring of performances or exhibitions as well as creative, process-based arts initiatives. These 2 decades also saw movement in the European Commission, which started to listen to the culture sector and to better adapt its few culture-specific programmes to the needs and realities of the profession.

In 2000 the EU's DG (Directorate General) for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities commissioned a study on new tendencies in employment in the cultural industries. Note that this was not the *Culture* DG, but the *Employment* DG. The study, undertaken by a mostly Austrian-

Germany research consortium, included a section on obstacles to the cross-border mobility of these so-called 'flexible' new workers. (Flexible because they worked independently instead of having fixed employment; they changed employers, worked on project-by-project basis, changed locations, often worked from home, often were only paid on completion of a production...)

Shortly after this, a French-led study basically looked the same list of obstacles to the cross-border mobility of artists in the EU.

The EU declared 2006 as the "EU Year of Workers' Mobility". (There is usually a special EU celebration or focus each year). IETM, the contemporary performing arts network for which I work, together with the Finnish Theatre Information Centre, PEARLE (the network of employers in the performing arts), Visiting Arts in the UK, On the Move mobility portal for artists' mobility and the Fondazione Fitzcarraldo which undertakes research and cultural management training in Italy, all came together to create a project for this 'year'. It was called "Mobile.Home" and alongside a number of other actions, we commissioned Richard Polacek to make a study. Not only to list of the obstacles which had already been identified, but to detail real stories of these problems, in order to render them crystal clear to policy-makers. Richard categorized them under three main headings: a) visa problems (including those of arts workers residing and legally working in the EU, even though not EU citizens) b) tax and social security problems, and c) copyright and authors' rights issues. Importantly, Richard proposed short (or easy), medium and long-term (more complicated) solutions to the obstacles, which he proposed should be carried out by national governments as well as the EU.

This publication, "Impediments to Mobility" is now, happily, regarded as 'the bible' for policy makers to improve the situation. And finally the Culture DG of the European Commission became directly involved, although it must be said that their culture-funding programme always indirectly supported and encouraged artists and arts mobility throughout the EU. In 2007/8, the Culture Committee of the EU Parliament voted a budget line for studies and pilot projects aiming to improve the situation for arts mobility; these funds were devolved to the Culture DG to manage.

Whereas the EU level does not have the 'competence' to require its Member States to harmonise certain national legislation, including their tax and social security laws, the EU is allowed to 'coordinate' the Member States' actions. And so recently, the Culture DG has created a platform bringing together representatives of the Member States' culture ministries to look at arts mobility obstacles and solutions, around a common table.

## **Examples of solutions:**

It is probably pretty obvious that two main obstacles to the cross-border mobility of artists and cultural operators are: funding for travel and also crucial information about opportunities, available support, initiatives, legal requirements etc. So now, I would like to describe a few of the support initiatives for arts mobility as well as some of the solutions to the various obstacles.

**A) Funds or structures which support the mobility of individuals.** These funds started to appear in the early 1990's, to ensure that European culture professionals in the former Soviet Union countries could meet their colleagues from the West.

- the Council of Europe ran a scheme for several years (now finished) offering 100% travel and accommodation costs to individual professionals from Central and Eastern Europe to participate in training, networks, festivals etc in Western Europe.
- the European Cultural Foundation created a travel grant programme called APEX, which then evolved into APEXchanges and finally had a few more transformations before finishing recently. The programme was addressed to individuals from Central and Eastern Europe, then opened to the South Mediterranean and South East Europe. What is notable is that it started by giving funds for travel, then it evolved to giving the possibility for a second funding application for a project which had been generated by the first trip.
- the Trust for Mutual Understanding is an American foundation which offers support for travel to Central and Eastern European professionals to come to the USA on study or professional trips.
- the Roberto Cimetta Fund is a fund which was created by individual, independent initiative, not by a foundation. I am a founder of this very small fund which supports professional travel for individual artists or cultural operators in the south Mediterranean countries. We receive funding from foundations and national culture ministries, but there are no quotas: the funders cannot demand that we fund only 'their' citizens.
- AMA , Art Moves Africa is a similar fund, originally inspired by the Cimetta Fund, which will be presented by Khadija el Bennaoui here today.
- the many cultural networks in Europe, and also what we call "project consortia" (groups of arts producers or presenters who come together for a concrete project to co-produce work which then tours to all of their countries) are important supporters of arts mobility: they bring professionals together on a regular basis, and encourage them to

collaborate, in this way generating thousands of touring arts productions and exhibitions.

- artists residencies have also become very widespread, offering places for all types of artists to come and work for a defined period.

Sometimes the costs are offered by the residency, and sometimes artists must pay their own costs.

- there are now various opportunities for training for mobility. For example, the Arts Council of England has, in the past, offered training programmes for UK artists and cultural operators, giving them advice and case studies on how to prepare and follow-up a professional trip, how to maintain the relationships, how to network efficiently.

**B) Support for the mobility of groups.** Of course, this is more expensive, so it is more complicated! However, some examples could be:

- the Japan Foundation has a very interesting and useful programme called PAJ (Performing Arts Japan) in the USA and also in Europe. PAJ Europe funds tours to 3 or more non-major cities, for Japanese artists and groups. The funding is given to the presenters. They also fund process-based collaborations between Japanese and European artists which may lead to a production which could tour, but a product is not a requirement.
- there are many examples of bilateral exchange programmes between two countries, but often these are not open to application.
- some regional programmes encouraging arts collaborations exist, for example funded by the Nordic Council or the group of Nordic Ministers
- festivals, showcases, performance platforms offer an enormous support to arts mobility because they can fund international programming, creation projects, co-productions and help artists and their works circulate.
- long term programming partnerships between festivals or theatres allow for reciprocal invitations for artists and groups
- As one of the four 'mobility pilot projects' recently funded for 3 years by the EU Parliament's budget allocation which I mentioned above, the SPACE project was created to improve the mobility of performing arts productions, not individuals. Over the next 3 years, SPACE will compare national arts policies (which can either help or obstruct the mobility of their artists' works), and provide training for journalists, programmers and policy makers

**C) Information and guidance:**

- some countries have set up help desks (for arts mobility - I believe the Danish set one up for contemporary dance, some years ago here in South Africa.

- One of the other 'mobility pilot projects' which has recently started in the EU is called PRACTICS. It will set up and test the efficacy of arts 'mobility info points' whose mission will be to provide legal and other advice for artists and groups wishing to travel for their work
- In the EU, there are citizens' services who do a wonderful job in advising people of their rights when they move from one EU country to another.
- .. and of course, the cultural networks in Europe continue to bring professionals together and give them the knowledge, skills, information and contacts necessary for successful professional travel.

**D) Finally, there are some important political initiatives which can be cited as good examples:**

- the EU DG for Culture, in its legitimate role of 'coordination', has convened an on-going group of representative of culture ministries to discuss obstacles and solutions to mobility. It's called the OMC, the Open Method of Coordination, and is a format which is used by the EU for other issues.
- In Finland, 3 ministries (Culture, Foreign Affairs and Trade) came together to research, write and implement a common policy to support both outgoing (export) and incoming (import) arts mobility.
- the EU Year of Workers' Mobility in 2006 gave both visibility to the issues, and also legitimized (in an informal way) political and social focus on these problems, but also highlighted the success of the culture sector in being so 'mobile'
- some trades unions, although always needing to protect their own members, have created advice and welcome programmes for members of unions in other EU countries. The so-called "dancers' passport" gives advice to dancers moving to other EU countries to study and work.

**What is CRUCIAL:**

- to be successful in setting up mobility support programmes in Africa, you will need strong spokespeople and a clear, strong sense of purpose. The question to answer is: why is arts mobility important in Africa?
- political will is crucial and can be gained with good advocacy to the politicians. If you can make strong arguments to them, you can convince them!
- an understanding of and for the bureaucratic hurdles is also crucial. The bureaucrats who obstruct artists' visa applications usually don't do it for personal reasons: often the legislation is so complicated they don't even know what it is, or they do not have sufficient training to keep up with legal changes. If we understand their context, it is easier to work with them and to have a successful outcome. 'My own network is currently trying to get a visa for a Congolese artist to come to our network meeting in Lithuania next

week. When he went to the French Consulate to get the EU Shengen visa, he was told that Lithuania was not in the Shengen EU.... which it has been for the last 2 years already!

- It is important to be able to work in close collaboration with public administrations, and with funders, both state and private. If trust is built up on both sides, future problems can be resolved more quickly and more easily.
- and finally, we need the cooperation of the professionals who are travelling: in terms of documenting, monitoring, reporting, evaluating, tracking the effects and the impacts of their professional traveling. It is, in fact, this information which will form the basis, strong arguments and proof of the importance of arts mobility, which will convince the funders.