

Report on the meeting of IFACCA's European Members

jointly hosted by the

International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFACCA)
and the Hellenic Culture Organisation

At the Athens University Cultural Centre, Athens, Greece on 2-3 November 2007

Representatives of 12 European members of IFACCA met for the first time in Athens, Greece, in November, to discuss current issues in European arts policy and to consider the benefits of joint discussions or collaborations. The gathering was organised to coincide with the half-yearly meeting of the IFACCA board. Board members and observers from another seven countries also attended the meeting, which was chaired by Dr Augustus Casely-Hayford.

Following discussion of a paper commissioned from ERICarts, *Arts and Artists in Europe: New Challenges*,¹ and presentations by delegates, the following issues, questions and responses were identified as priorities for future discussion and action:

1. European Union provisions for culture are, so far, very limited but a good starting point. There were questions raised about whether IFACCA's European members could provide input, where appropriate, to EU programs and policies, working in collaboration with existing networks such as the European Forum for Arts and Heritage and the European Culture Foundation.
2. National funding bodies have an increasing role in supporting international exchanges of artists and arts practice. Some members were interested in the possibility of collaborating on a more practical level in terms of comparing policy ideas and even supporting artists to develop international projects.
3. Members discussed cultural diversity and the question of freedom of speech versus cultural respect. There was interest in finding out more about how colleagues are addressing cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue and in investigating the positive and negative impacts of national policies on artistic diversity. Delegates expressed interest in sharing information on policies and practices that address the changing dynamics resulting from globalisation and shifting demographics and their impact on creativity and arts funding. It was noted that IFACCA is planning to undertake research on this topic as a lead up to the World Summit in 2009.
4. Some delegates expressed interest in widening the vision and increasing the awareness of the work of artists in other countries (in Europe and internationally) and of policies that impact negatively on their creativity. Some thought it would be valuable to have 'joined up' European-wide campaigns to support artists' rights and that raising awareness of policy achievements in other countries might give greater impetus to artists and governments to act locally.

¹ For report see <http://www.ifacca.org/whatsnew/announcements/7419>

5. The question was raised about how to stimulate, promote and support contemporary arts practice and exchanges across borders, being careful to balance the traditional with the contemporary.
6. Concerns about the working conditions of the artist/status-of-the-artist were discussed at length as was the need for information and case studies on practical approaches to supporting artists through strategies other than grant programs. For example, through training, tax legislation, employment rules etc. Included in this discussion were the issues of artist mobility and copyright – see below.
7. There was a considerable discussion about issues related to mobility of artists across Europe. There was a desire to identify barriers to co-operation, distribution of practice and mobility for artists. There was interest in considering whether it would be appropriate to consider levels of consistency across Europe for supporting artists' mobility and how this might be done.
8. Copyright income was also considered an important issue, especially in light of new digital distribution methods. Concern was expressed about the threats to respect for copyright and it was agreed that more information could be shared on this policy area.

At the conclusion of the meeting, delegates decided to meet again in 2008 to consolidate discussions and move forward on the issues raised. The Acting CEO of the Scottish Arts Council, Jim Tough, offered to host the follow-up meeting and Georgia Iliopoulou (Greece), Jane Clarke (Wales), Ellen Wettmark (Sweden) and Sarah Gardner (IFACCA secretariat) offered to help in developing the plans and agenda for the next meeting.

List of delegates

European members

Mr Poul Bache, Danish Arts Agency
 *Dr Augustus Casely-Hayford, Arts Council England
 Ms Jane Clarke, Arts Council of Wales
 Ms Mary Cloake, Arts Council of Ireland
 Ms Anne-Marie Croes, Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Administratie Cultuur, Belgium
 Mr Fernando Gomez-Riesco, Ministry of Culture, Spain
 Dr Andreea Grecu, Administration of the National Cultural Fund, Romania
 *Ms Georgia Iliopoulou, IFACCA Board Member, Greece
 Mr Daniel Kalchev, National Culture Fund, Bulgaria
 Mrs Zoe Kazazaki, Ministry of Culture, Greece
 Mr Iavor Koinakov, State Institute of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bulgaria
 *Mr Risto Ruohonen, Finnish National Gallery representing Arts Council
 Mr Jim Tough, Scottish Arts Council

Board Members () and Observers*

*Mr Quresh Ahmed, Bomas of Kenya
 Ms Julie Diphofa, National Arts Council, South Africa
 Ms Diane Dodd, IFACCA, Spain
 Ms Sarah Gardner, IFACCA
 Ms Huang Wenjuan, China Federation of Literary and Art Circles
 Mr Zhu Mengyu, China Federation of Literary and Art Circles
 *Ms Kathy Keele, Australia Council
 *Mr Lee Suan Hiang, National Arts Council, Singapore
 Ms Brenda Madumise, National Arts Council, South Africa
 Ms Kristina Rennerstedt, Statens Kulturråd - Swedish Arts Council (Will be a member from January 2008)
 *Mr Robert Sirman, Canada Council
 Stefanos Vallianatos, Hellenic Culture Organisation
 Ellen Wettmark, Swedish Arts Council (Will be a member from January 2008)

