SEMINARIO INTERNACIONAL
INDICADORES CULTURALES
SU CONTRIBUCIÓN AL ESTUDIO DE LA ECONOMÍA Y LA CULTURA
7 al 9 de mayo de 2003, Ciudad de México

CONACULTA   UNESCO

Building An Information System for Cultural Policies in Europe
Experiences from the *Compendium* Project

Danielle Cliche[1]
http://sic.conaculta.gob.mx/seminario/menu.html

Introduction

The first day of the UNESCO/CONACULTA International Seminar on Cultural Indicators identified seven key messages which relate directly and indirectly to the principles and methods used to build an information system for cultural policies in Europe. These include:

1. Databases of basic information are a prerequisite for the formulation of policies for culture and as a tool to make cultural policies operational.
2. Databases of information facilitate understanding on the part of civil society regarding the ways in which decisions are made (transparency).
3. There is a need to launch specific programmes throughout Latin America (on local, national and regional levels) to begin collecting a certain minimum amount of both quantitative and qualitative information. A small selection of indicators would need to be developed that would reflect the diversity of Latin American countries on the political, administrative, institutional and professional levels.
4. The development of indicators is not necessarily a technical but a *political process* which requires an ongoing programme bringing together the participation of many actors. This process would require a constant re-negotiation of interests.
5. Information systems go hand in hand with evaluation strategies and therefore indicators need to be made relevant in order to facilitate the future monitoring of policies, programmes and projects.
6. Every indicator will have both a qualitative and quantitative reality and therefore multi-methodological approaches to data collection and analysis are required.
7. Procedures on how to create a database of information on cultural policies is very important in order to lead to the creation of a sustainable system.

This paper will intermittently refer to each of the seven points listed above as they related to the current project run jointly by the Council of Europe and the European Institute for

---

[1] **Danielle Cliche**, European Institute for Comparative Cultural Research (ERICarts). ERICarts is an independent, trans-national body (NGO) which is committed to: facilitating sustainable co-operation in the field of comparative cultural research; developing reliable empirical tools and improved documentation resources for cultural research, in general, and policy making, in particular; ensuring consideration of cultural dimensions in diverse fields and policy areas and implementing universal principles and goals such as diversity, transparency and equality in the cultural sphere.
This paper is published on: http://sic.conaculta.gob.mx/seminario/menu.html

Comparative Cultural Research, "Cultural Policies in Europe: a compendium of basic facts and trends", herein referred to as the *Compendium,* a web based *public information system*.

NB. This paper was presented to the UNESCO International Symposium on Culture Statistics, 21-23 October 2002, Montreal, Canada and published on the symposium website: http://www.colloque2002symposium.gouv.qc.ca/. Some amendments and updates have been made by the author, particularly referring to developments in the Compendium project which have taken place during the first half of 2003, namely first proposals to develop monitoring activities for the project. Some first ideas on the *process* of building a similar information system for Latin America have been added as a conclusion.

Some Milestones in a 30 Year Effort

One of the earlier and notable benchmark examples of gathering information on cultural policies in Europe which stands out on a (not so) long, but winding road, are the national cultural policy profiles published by UNESCO in a Series of monographs in the 1970s and early 80s. As stated in the preface of each country profile, the purpose of the series was to "show how cultural policies are planned and implemented in various Member States". Each country was asked to prepare their profile concentrating on the more technical aspects of cultural policy and according to a "a similar pattern so as to make comparison easier".[2] Many of the profiles published in this series were updated and included with the results of a questionnaires sent out by UNESCO at the beginning of the 1980s, in a reference document to the World Conference on Cultural Policies, otherwise known as MONDIACULT, held in Mexico City, 1982. The final document did not make any comparisons between the countries, yet noted the inequalities in the level of information collected in the various member states (especially cultural statistics) and the need to train researchers who could continue to further develop the field of applied cultural policy research.

At around the same time, the Council of Europe was publishing a handful of more integrated reports in preparation for the Conference of European Ministers with responsibility for cultural affairs, held in Oslo, Norway[3]. A comparative report was written on public measures in support of the visual artists[4] as well as on cultural policy in 14 towns across Europe[5]. The introductory statement to the Conference noted that it was the "first occasion for the Ministers with responsibility for cultural affairs of the member states of the Council for Cultural Co-operation to compare problems of cultural policy in relation to their shared acceptance of democratic values".[6] The Final Conference Resolution referred to the mounting challenges facing the development of national cultural policies from the growing impact of the mass media and the dangers of it creating uniform values and tastes; upheavals in family life and the unresolved inequalities between men and women; exclusion of cultural communities from

---

2   Paul Schafer, "Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy" published in the UNESCO Series, *Studies and Documents on Cultural Policies*, UNESCO, Paris, 1976, Preface.

3   First national reports on cultural policies from Council of Europe member states were also provided as background material to the conference. A comparative summary was later publi shed as "Cultural Policies in Europe": a synopsis of these national reports, by Jacques Depaigne, Council of Europe 1978.

4   County "monographs" were prepared by independent experts and government officials in the Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. An integrated report of the country results was prepared by Raymonde Moulin, Director of Research at the National Centre for Scientific Research, France and presented as a background paper to the Ad Hoc Conference of European Ministers with Responsibility for Cultural Affairs, Oslo, Norway, 1976.

5   Stephen Mennell, *Cultural Policy in Towns*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 1976.

6   Ad Hoc Conference of European Ministers with Responsibility for Cultural Affairs, "Report of the Conference", Council of Europe, Oslo, Norway, 1976, p 7.

taking an active role in cultural life, especially "migrant workers". It called on the Council of Europe to "devote more of its resources to keeping member states informed by collecting all relevant information from the national ministries concerned, and particularly statistics....and to collate the documentation thus collected"[7]. It further proposed to circulate this information with the help of a network of qualified correspondents.

The collection and integration of information on public policies across countries in other disciplines was not new. Comparisons of political, economic or legal systems had been conducted between the borders of academic inquiry and policy making for over 2000 years.[8] The innovation of both the Council of Europe and UNESCO exercises was the emphasis being placed on the construction of the first cross-national observations about cultural policy developments in their respective member states in order to identify some common goals, not necessarily common approaches, to cultural policy making. While these first efforts were not necessarily pursued in a systematic manner, the results of both exercises highlighted the pit falls to gathering comparative information and data in this developing field of policy-making and the importance of finding common methods which would also acknowledge the diversity of heritages and traditions of cultural life of individual countries. Cited obstacles included:

- incomplete and out of date information due to changes in cultural policies;
- sources of information used in the preparation of the profiles were not uniform;
- differences in political, economic, social systems not to mention historical backgrounds, cultural traditions and differing administrative systems;
- lack of evidence below the "surface" of national institutions;
- ambiguous definitions and terminology;
- non-existence of statistics etc.

An article written by Andreas Wiesand[9], identifies some the major exercises or "milestones" undertaken since the 70s by intergovernmental bodies, national governments, publicly supported and independent research bodies and networks to gather information and data on cultural policy developments in Europe. In his assessment, Wiesand refers to stand alone reports of transnational working groups on cultural statistics[10], historical assessments and internal political or legal country profiles[11], European handbooks[12], guides or directories[13] which have been published by various public and private organisations and/or institutions. Beyond these somewhat singular references, Wiesand notes a paradigmatic change, partly as a

7   Ibid., extract from Resolution No. 7 on the dissemination of information, p 160.
8   In his article, "Prologue: achievements and challenges in 2000 years of comparative res earch", Karl Deutsch argues that the history of comparative research is linked to the development of the nation-state and cites the works of the Greek historian Herodtus, the conceptual analysis of Plato, early studies by Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hamilton, Morgenthau in laying the foundations for the field. See M. Dierkes/H.Wieler/A.Antal, *Comparative Policy Research: learning from experience*, WZB Publications, Gower, 1987.
9   See Andreas Wiesand, "Comparative Cultural Policy Research in Europe: A Change of Paradigm" published in N. Duxbury (ed.) *Making Connections: Culture and Social Cohesion in the New Millennium*, papers from the CIRCLE/CCRN Round Table, May 26-27 2000, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, Canadian Journal of Communication, Volume 27, Numbers 2&3, 2002.
10   For example, the EU Leadership Groups (LEG) working to develop a new framework for cultural statistics to be applied by all member states in the fields of financing, participation and employment.
11   For example, a study conducted by the Österreichischen Kulturdokumentation, *Cultural Policy and Cultural Administration in Europe: 42 outlines*, Vienna, 1996.
12   ZfKf/ERICarts (eds) *Handbook of Cultural Affairs in Europe, 3rd edition*, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, Baden-Baden, 2000.
13   Culturelink, *Guide to the Current State and Trends in Cultural Policy and Life in the UNESCO Member States*, country profiles.

result of new and increasing demands from the European Union and European Parliament[14] "to monitor and evaluate the cultural dimensions of its policies and, in particular, the ongoing process of enlargement in the East and South" which places even greater importance on 1) the regular collection of basic cultural policy information and data and 2) reliable and timely comparative policy analysis (which is, of course, dependent on the value of the first).

Another major development which can be seen as part of this paradigmatic shift in the last 10 years is the increasingly complex nature of culture as a separate domain of policy making. Major world and European exercises[15] have acknowledged this transition from a more narrowly focussed domain of policy with supporting measures and instruments to, among other things, improve the socioeconomic status of artists, to one which can no longer ignore a broader agenda of cultural development and an emerging system of governance for culture and artistic creativity.[16] Today cultural policy makers in Europe are being forced to navigate between policy fields which regulate the (global and local) markets for cultural goods and services and the information society as well as immigration and identity politics. They have to consider the changing employment status, working practises and mobility of artists. No one says it better than Carl-Johan Kleberg, "policy makers and policy planners need to be helped!".[17] Clearly they require better and more information on a range of issues which necessitates the establishment of closer ties and exchange with the research community who can provide them with a knowledge base to inform their work; what some may today call "knowledge transfer and uptake". Kleberg goes on to say that "governments and international organisations must be motivated to set aside resources for the complicated work demanded".[18] There are, however, few national bodies (public or independent) located throughout Europe with enough resources to collect such extensive amounts of information and data on a regular basis within their own country. Until the late 1990s, systematic exercises - requiring co-operation between actors such as independent researchers, statisticians and national policy makers as well as resources to develop regular monitoring tools and data collection - were few and far between at either the intergovernmental or national level.[19]

A Turning Point in Europe

In 1985, the Council of Europe began the first major undertaking whose main goal was to "create a reliable knowledge base for monitoring and evaluating cultural policies ... with special attention paid to indicators for cultural policy monitoring". The European Programme

---

[14] In November 2001, the Parliamentary Group of the PSE, European Parliament released a publication, "The Unity of Diversities: Cultural Co-operation in the European Union". This report, otherwise known as the "Ruffolo Report", published the EP Resolution on cultural co-operation in the European Union (2000/2323 (INI)) which recommended, among other things to set up "a European Observatory to monitor cultural co-operation, with the aim of promoting the exchange of information and co-ordination between the cultural policies of the Member States and Community cultural policy" (excerpt from Article 10).

[15] Notable examples include: UN/UNESCO World Commission on Cultural Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, UNESCO, Paris, 1996; European Task Force on Culture and Development, *In from the Margins*, Council of Europe, 1997; Stockholm Action Plan of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference, *The Power of Culture*, Stockholm, 1998.

[16] See an ERICarts Report prepared by Cliche/Mitchell/Wiesand, with Heiskanen/Dal Pozzolo, *Creative Europe: on the governance and management of artistic creativity in Europe*, Bonn, 2002.

[17] Carl-Johan Kleberg, *The Need for a New Type of World Culture Report*, 4 October, 2002.

[18] Ibid, 2002.

[19] There are of course some exceptions ranging from the work of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Bureau, the French Départment des Études et Prospectives or the Research Department of the Finnish Arts Council. For a more extensive survey of the activities of the research and information infrastructure in Europe see. Mark Schuster, *Informing Cultural Policy*, CUPR Press, 2002.

on National Cultural Policy Reviews and Expert Evaluations, managed by Ritva Mitchell from 1992-1997 was, according to her, "an effort to modernise cultural policy to a policy field comparable to educational or technology policies .... modelled after the OECD review of national systems of education".[20]

Over the last 18 years, the Council of Europe Review Programme has facilitated the production of key documents describing, analysing and evaluating the cultural policies and systems of 23 European countries; many of which would have not been otherwise produced (especially those in Eastern Europe which were invited into the Review Programme after 1995). Without going into detail about the complexity of the programme and the challenges it faced[21], it is important to underline that the Review Programme had two distinct activities and subsequent products:

1) compilation of information and data by national experts from the government, universities and independent research bodies into a "National Review" and

2) an evaluation report produced by a team of independent international experts based on the information provided by the national reports and interviews conducted with the relevant actors throughout the respect countries during a sequence of country visits or missions.

The result is thousands of pages of information and data on cultural policy in Europe which did not exist before as well as witness accounts to the validity (or not) of such material. In this respect, it has definitely succeeded in fulfilling its original goal. An important by-product of the programme was the training or "capacity building" it provided to researchers in former communist countries to think about culture within a democratic framework. Today, many of those researchers which were involved in the Council of Europe Review Programme (more specifically locals involved in writing the national reports) have moved on to top positions in newly established or reorganised Ministries of Culture, arms-length bodies or have set up their own observatories to monitor developments in cultural policy.

At the end of the 90s, the Council of Europe was in possession of a wealth of information, from both Western and increasingly from Eastern Europe as a result of the Review Programme. The value of this treasure chest was, however, diminishing year by year in the context of a demanding and complex information society. The material became increasingly out of date and there were no procedures yet in place to ensure that it would be continuously valuable and accessible to policy makers in search of inspiring models beyond their borders. Without negating the ongoing work, it was felt desirable to establish a parallel and dynamic activity complementing the Review Programme.

The Cultural Policy and Action Department, in charge of the Review Programme knew they had a good head start with the material lining their book shelves. One of the challenges was to take the books off the shelf and transport the information and data into a framework or format; a compendium of information which had similarly been devised for other fields such as social security. The style should be "journalistic", "accessible" and "user friendly", however, at the same time not lacking seriousness. The Department recognised that the landscape for cultural policies in Europe was and still is changing. This required a new type of exercise; an ongoing pan-European forum which could provide a focal point for the provision and regular updating of basic information and data on cultural policies; what Ritva Mitchell

---

[20]   Ritva Mitchell, *Cultural Policy Evaluation as a Means of a Schemata Construction and as a Policy Instrument*, paper presented at the 2nd International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, Wellington, New Zealand, January 2002.

[21]   For a more complete understanding of the review programme, see Ibid., Ritva Mitchell, (2002).

would call a more *rationalist* based approach rather than *value-based assessments*.[22] Despite the wealth of material gathered not only by the Council of Europe and UNESCO but by a growing community of independent research bodies and networks, the availability of updated basic information on cultural policies in Europe had surprisingly not yet been achieved.

The initial political impetus for developing a new system was to:
- Make use of, digest and add value to the Council of Europe's Review Programme and establish a more permanent updating structure for them in the future;
- Provide an information pool for the countless external information requests received by the Council of Europe and for in-house information requirements;
- Provide - so far unavailable - brief and concise cultural policy country profiles; with a view to developing more comprehensive material.

Designing an Offspring to the Council of Europe's Review Programme

In Spring 1998, a first meeting was held to discuss the construction of this new exercise: "Cultural Policies in Europe: a compendium of basic facts and trends", otherwise known and referred to in this paper as the *Compendium*. Its goals needed to be sketched, the physical form it would take needed to be defined and a model or grid needed to be designed which would enable the systematic collection of data and information on cultural policies in Europe - from Azerbaijan to the UK, from Finland to Malta.

Some additional questions we asked ourselves were:
- Who would be the main partners involved as producers of "content"?
- Which indicators would be used?
- How to make best use of the years of efforts to develop indicators to harmonise statistics or frameworks within which to assess cultural policies?

It was clear right from the start that the *process* of delivering integrated data and information on cultural policies in all 48 member states to the European Cultural Convention would be almost as important as the *format of delivery* and *content*.

First steps to define *the process*

A key concern of the Council of Europe was to engage an institutionalised, central structure, with sufficient international documentation and good connections to experts in the majority of the 48 member states. The European Research Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy Research (ERICarts) - a pan-European structure whose *raison d'être* is to co-ordinate transnational research projects together with independent experts in the field of cultural policy - was invited to co-pilot the process together with the Council of Europe. The Council had the foresight of hindsight and took up the recommendation of their 1976 Oslo Resolution to enlist the help of "a network of qualified correspondents" in the form of "regional" satellite partners working in partnership with ERICarts. The selection of such partners was done on the basis of:
a) their involvement as pioneers in the design of several of the signpost exercises of the past 30 years;
b) their contacts to experts in their "region of responsibility", especially in those areas of Europe where information and data on culture may not be fully accessible due to language or lack of research infrastructure or regular data collection mechanisms;

---

[22]   Ibid., Ritva Mitchell (2002).

c) their level of knowledge regarding not only trends, but also the historical context in which cultural policy has developed in the past 50 years in the individual countries making up their "region of responsibility".

The following institutions were identified: Finn-EKVIT (Helsinki), Österreichischen Kulturdokumentation (Vienna), IRMO/Culturelink (Zagreb) and the Zentrum für Kulturforschung (Bonn). The LIKUS system developed by Franz-Otto Hofecker following the Austrian National Review was to be employed as a means to collect the data on public financing.[23]

Together, the partners discussed a very pragmatic step-by step-approach to the project which would allow for the constant development and evolution of a methodological framework generated from the information and data provided in subsequent country profiles; a bottom-up approach which is flexible and able to accommodate the myriad of changes and expanding parameters of cultural policy throughout Europe. Three main phases were identified:

- a first or 0-phase would synthesise already available information coming from 4-6 countries which had prepared a national report to the Council of Europe's Review Programme into a discussion version which would help to sow the seeds for future efforts and a subsequent refinement of content and indicators;
- a second phase would then cover an additional 14-16 countries based on an improved methodology;
- a 3-year main phase to include the other countries party to the European Cultural Convention, while constantly updating the material of the already existing "country profiles" (institutes and experts responsible for the national entries would be designated to update these profiles).

Such a pragmatic approach to collect synthesised information over a period of years meant that generating comparisons was not an immediate objective. In fact, the ambitions were to reach a point, one day, when "observations about cultural policies in Europe could be generated and comparisons made at individual discretion, the methodology, approach and framework would become part of a systematic process subject to ongoing change. Final products and results can not be expected until the process has been lived".[24]

This process was also deemed necessary to take into account the sometimes radical differences in approaches, instruments, measures, budgets and conditions for cultural policy making across the 48 member states. Could it really be possible to eventually produce a framework and working procedures within which, for example, newly formed Baltic States or South East European countries, France and the UK (with long traditions of cultural policy making) could all identify themselves? Experience so far shows us that the answer is an undeniable YES; but only if the process is participatory, remains open and flexible and regularly integrates constructive feedback. On the other hand, the process requires a common horizon for all to follow, stable signposts to guide partners along the way and strong editorial leadership and communication to bring the results into a language understood across national specificity's. In other words, it was decided to adopt parameters which were somewhere

---

[23]   For more information on the LIKUS system, see Franz-Otto Hofecker, *Cultural Policy Comparative Research Work in Federal Countries: How to deal with the differences?*, paper presented to the International Conference on Cultural Policy Research, Bergen, Norway, November 1999.

[24]   ERICarts report, "Trial Version ("0-Number") for a future Compendium" submitted to the Culture Committee of the Council of Europe, September 1998.

between Mark Schuster's "inclusive", "floating" and "anchored" boundaries of comparative inquiry.[25]

Designing *the format of delivery*

Two main proposals on the format of this new product were pursued:
a) presentation of country profiles in a *loose leaf binder* similar to legal directories with the possibility to replace updated pages each year and
b) design of an interactive *multilingual electronic space* on the Internet where users from all over Europe and from various disciplines could submit as well as benefit from the inventory of information without the burden of bureaucratic procedures or high costs.

It was argued that such a self-sustaining mechanism for information processing would contribute to the longevity of the project and ensure that information is up to date; a disadvantage of traditionally published/printed material and of former harmonisation efforts. However, it was agreed that the printed version would be essential, especially for those countries in the eastern or southern parts of Europe where access to computers and the Internet was, per capita, much lower and slower than in most northern parts of Europe. Keeping such challenges in mind, technical research was to be pursued into the most appropriate operational system. Main decision-making criteria would be the cost-saving benefits, an uncomplicated introductory learning phase, and a system that could be employed by the greatest amount of user groups. The web site housing this new database/online information management system needed to be user-friendly and self explanatory so that visitors could navigate through the site, extract and contribute information with great ease.

Setting the Framework for *content*

Determining which *content* should fill the pages of these brief (15-20 page) country profiles was a more complicated exercise. The methodological approach chosen for the pilot phase, otherwise known as the 0-Number, was initially inspired by secondary information and data provided in the existing national reports generated via the Council of Europe Review and Evaluation Programme both in:

- *Scope:* only those countries which had gone through the Review Programme would be initially included in the first editions of the *Compendium* (Austria, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Sweden) and;
- *Breadth* of issues: the *history* of cultural policy and the *objectives* formulated by official institutions and government bodies, the *decision-making process* at the national, regional and local levels, public *expenditure* for culture and summaries of the main *legal instruments* adopted or in the process of becoming law. Measures to *support creativity* and *trends in decentralisation and new partnerships* were chosen as two specific issues for exploration. Information on policy issues such as the culture industries, cultural minorities, heritage, participation in cultural life or individualised sectors such as the performing, visual or literary arts etc., were planned to be addressed in subsequent issues of the *Compendium* series.

---

[25] In the early 90s, Mark Schuster identified three different ways of setting boundaries for comparative inquiry: inclusive, floating and anchored boundaries. See J. Mark Schuster, *Making Compromises to Make Comparisons in Cross-national Arts Policy Research*, Journal of Cultural Economics, Vol. 11, No. 2, December 1987.

The main observations resulting from the production of the O-Number and that took the project into new directions were:

- the need to work towards developing new approaches to the collection of information in order to achieve a comprehensive compilation of basic facts, figures and trends;
- data collected in the different countries was not readily compatible to the prepared framework, mostly due to definitional problems. It was proposed that work should continue in this area, perhaps in co-operation with experts in some member countries, the Council of Europe Secretariat as well as the statistical working groups of UNESCO and/or the European Union;
- the original main categories generated repetition and would need to be revised and further streamlined, also with new indicators making up a revised methodological grid;
- the burden placed on some of the "regional satellite partners" was too great to undertake the preparation of several policy profiles at one time without sufficient financial resources to support their work.

Going Beyond the Pilot Phase: towards building a flexible framework

A new grid of indicators elaborated by ERICarts, the Council of Europe and the regional partners was proposed at the beginning of 1999. A list of 14 countries[26] to be included in the next Phase was drawn up together with a list of nationally based independent experts who would be responsible for preparing the individual country profiles. In addition, the overall parameters of the project were further refined. The goal being an information system that was:

- Open and pragmatic - modelled from the information and data available;
- Flexible enough to accommodate the addition of future indicators without breaking the system;
- Able to capture the diversity of approaches to cultural policy in 48 countries based on different and changing systems of governance. It was acknowledged that while there may be a standard or interchanging list of cultural policy priorities which one can identify across the board, the way in which cultural policy is organised throughout the individual countries in Europe is unique. It is this diversity which should be captured;
- Transparent - to connect or create synergies with other transnational exercises such as those undertaken by the EUROSTAT LEG groups.

It was also decided NOT to
- Adopt clear cut definitions (framework and categories navigating between a broad and narrow definition of culture);
- Directly follow an existing statistical framework (e.g. national accounting systems, UNESCO-FCS framework);
- Take a sector specific approach but rather a *policy and issue driven approach* that would bring together both qualitative and quantitative information and which would try to capture the dynamics of change in the various sectors;
- Explicitly strive to make comparisons or value judgements, but rather to provide the basic informational tools that would allow researchers, policy makers and others to generate their own observations and comparisons. In order to achieve this goal, a framework was needed that would allow, on the one hand, the diversity of approaches to policy making in the different countries to shine through, but at the same time enable reasonable comparisons to be made as a by product;

---

[26]   These included: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden.

- Duplicate work with any other transnational exercises but make links to their methodological discussions and results.

The following general categories were agreed upon:

1. Historical perspective: cultural policies and instruments
2. Competence, decision-making and administration
3. Cultural policy, general objectives and principles
4. Current issues in cultural policy development and debate
5. Main legal provisions in the cultural field
6. Financing of culture
7. Cultural institutions and new partnerships
8. Support to creativity and participation
9. Sources and links

Under these main chapter headings 49 different categories or "soft-indicators" were elaborated (see annex I for an annotated list). The aim was to develop means which would produce relevant information and data for the different user groups (policy makers, researchers, documentalists, students and the so called general interested public) and reflect the changes and developments occurring in cultural policy debates (bringing together both qualitative and quantitative information). Over the past two years, the grid has expanded to include 10 major policy areas. Room is being made to accommodate new indicators on issues such as intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution for the 2004 edition. Suggestions for new indicators to be included in the framework are coming from within the Council of Europe, from the authors themselves who are curious about certain topics as well as from sponsoring partners such as foundations operating in the cultural field.

In all chapters and sub-chapters authors were asked to present information and data derived from a variety of sources as the profiles should not be written exclusively as official government documents. In addition to presenting policies, the profiles should refer to ongoing debates among the different public and private sector actors (e.g. artists, cultural producers, administrators) regarding the structural dynamics/policy changes and prospects. The profiles are to provide statistical evidence (where applicable) and meaningful examples and "good practices" by using examples to illustrate the functioning (or not) of policy or programme initiatives and measures.

Authors are required to report on almost cultural policy issues and trends ranging from gender equality to arts education, employment in the cultural sector to programmes reflecting the diversity of cultural communities in their countries. All of this within a 20 page limit - an almost impossible task! Again, the Council of Europe can be seen as a "capacity builder" in this respect: expertise and knowledge being garnered across the spectrum of sub-policy fields which is difficult to find not only in the capacity one individual researcher but also among individual government officials who are caught up with micro level daily priorities to maintain a "birds eye view" of developments in cultural policy at the macro level of analysis and understanding. Surely this would never have been achieved without a step by step process whereby authors build up their knowledge on the issues at stake over a period of time and thereby achieve a comprehensive overview of cultural policy developments in their respective country.

Dealing with Financing Statistics

The reader may be wondering how the question of *statistics on the financing of culture* was dealt with. There are many statistical experts and exercises which have been working over the past 30 years to establish a common framework and definitions to collect cultural statistics; not to mention the most recent efforts of the European Union Leadership Groups (LEG), that are closely followed. It was never the intention of the *Compendium* project to create a new framework for statistics and as soon as the ongoing efforts produce positive results, agreed upon frameworks will gladly be adopted. For the time being an open, but simple approach is followed. Let the information, or in this case, data speak for itself.

Four categories were selected as the most likely fields for which the majority of countries would have both quantitative and qualitative information.
1. Short overview describing some recent trends in the financing of culture as well as any political or policy developments which have affected levels of expenditure.
2. Public cultural expenditure per capita: figures in local currency and as % of GDP.
3. Public cultural expenditure broken down by levels of government existing in the different countries e.g. federal/central, regional, provincial and local/municipal levels. Total expenditure figures are to be expressed in local currency and % share of total for comparison purposes.
4. Sector breakdown of government expenditure on culture. Authors are simply asked to provide the data which is available in their country. A table developed by Franz-Otto Hofecker at the beginning of the project is provided to the authors as a guide to how the data could be presented. Clearly, most countries do not have the majority of figures available for all the cells and indeed the way culture is defined and divided up into sectors is currently not comparable across countries. For example, in some countries figures for music and theatre are amalgamated into one category (performing arts) while in other countries these figures are separated (similar story for libraries and literature). In some countries, education figures are part of the overall total, while in others not.

The use of exact currency figures alone was avoided. In all finance tables, authors are asked to provide the percentage relations, which allows to make some comparative observations. For example, the following table provides information about sector spending priorities by central level governments in 4 countries: Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland and France in relative terms.

Table 1: Sector Breakdown: % Share of Total Expenditure by the Main National Government Authority Responsible for Culture, 2000

Country	Libraries/ Literature	Museums/ Archives	Performing Arts (music + theatre)
Bulgaria	2,9%	6,9%	48,3%
Estonia	14%	8%	22%
Finland	37,5%	10,1%	18,8%
France	9%	16%	21%

Source: Council of Europe/ERICarts, "Cultural Policies in Europe: a compendium of basic facts and trends", Compendium Comparative View, 2002 <http://www.culturalpolicies.net>

While perhaps not the ideal model exercise statisticians are aiming at, this type of "intermediatory" phase of soft-comparisons seems valuable in stimulating further questions.

Joining the Information Society: 1ˢᵗ steps toward the creation of an information system[27]

In addition to establishing a more sound methodological grid and confirming a reliable system of partners as national experts responsible for preparing the country profiles, major steps forward were made on the development of the first multifunctional web-version of the *Compendium* in the Autumn of 1999.

The added value of presenting the *Compendium* on the Internet, rather than merely reproducing printed profiles in the loose leaf binder, is its accessibility, its navigational flexibility in accessing data and its facilities for updating information on a continual basis; features which reflect the overall methodological goals of the project. The 1999 web version of the *Compendium* enabled users to access the 14 country profiles via a digitised methodological grid; participate in a users forum about the content of the profiles and; download the country profiles onto their computer in PDF format. Some of the new technical features developed for the 2002 edition included: full text natural language searching, country cross-over navigation facilitated by horizontal hyperlinks to enable a transversal reading of the profiles, an advanced print module to print single chapters of interest across countries and a new feedback option referring to specific chapters.

The nature of the cross-over navigational system has produced an interesting side effect, namely, for users to begin making their own country by country comparisons. The possibilities offered by the new technologies and software, inspired the ex-post harmonisation of information presented in the country profiles. A "comparative view" function was developed relying on a database of tables[28] which were generated by ERICarts using the information provided in the profiles. This new database provided the user with the possibility to select, for a certain subject issue, one, several or all countries ("filter") and hence generate their own comparisons; this possibility has become one of the most popular features of the web version. The usability of such features developed for the *Compendium* web version could be used as a model for other information systems in the cultural field.

The presentation of the web version was a turning point in the whole project in terms of *process* ("observations about cultural policies in Europe could be generated and comparisons made at individual discretion"); *format of delivery* (the printed version has not been updated since 1999 and is not necessarily foreseen in the near future); and *content* (the ease of accommodating new indicators). The online version has catapulted the *Compendium* project to one of the largest e-content projects on cultural policies in the world[29] and has created a new "community of practice" for cultural policies in Europe.

---

[27] For a more detailed account of the technical innovations and development of the Compendium on-line version see, Gesa Büttner and Joerg Torkler, *The online Compendium: a web-based information system on cultural policies in Europe,* published in Cultivate Interactive 2002.

[28] There are currently 8 comparative view tables presented on the web version including: Public Cultural Expenditure broken down by level of Government; Sector Breakdown of Government Expenditure on Culture; Government Priorities in Cultural Spending; Current Cultural Policy Priorities; Main Features of the Cultural Policy System; Social Security Frameworks and Measures for Freelance Artists; Incentives for Public-Private Partnerships; Linguistic Diversity.

[29] The *Compendium* on line version is being used daily by policy makers and administrators, researchers, documentalists, and journalists on national, European and increasingly international levels. It is also being used as a tool for university professors around the world wanting to introduce their students to the diversity of issues and approaches facing cultural policy makers in Europe today. As statistics for Autumn 2002 revealed, there were 2,690 hits a day to the web version and the number of daily user working sessions was 107. In comparison, the number of hits in 2001 was at an average of only 794 per day while daily working sessions were at 39 – so the use has increased by ca. 274%! in one year. The Compendium online version has also received the "Best Practices Award for Social Sciences" by the

A new "community of practice" of cultural policy experts in Europe?

Since the mid 1990s, scholars have been presenting various approaches on the points of convergence between knowledge production, management and dissemination within the context of the information society. In their article, *Knowledge Communities and Innovation*, Harry Scarbrough and Jacky Swan, present a description of an ideal type of system based on a "community of practice" school of thought: "inter-community interactions involved in innovation and the importance of what can be termed 'knowledge communities' in advancing innovations...such innovation is typified by flatter structures, debureaucratisation, decentralisation, networked forms of organisation and co-ordination through increasing use of information and communication technologies...if successful, new ideas are utilised in the form of new products, services or ways of organising and become used routinely.... different episodes of the innovation process are seen as centring on the involvement of different groups of social actors - interactions between these groups are crucial to mobilising and integrating the knowledge required by the process".[30]

How does Scarbrough and Swan's description relate to the organisation of the *Compendium* project and its style of knowledge management?

As discussed earlier in this paper, as much attention has been placed on the *process* of the project as on the *format of delivery* and the *content*. Certainly one of the most important aspects of the project is the unique mix of partners[31] involved to produce, verify, update and manage the distribution of information on cultural policies, measures and instruments in Europe. While the *Compendium* project was first developed in partnership between the Council of Europe and ERICarts and its regional partners, it would not exist without the commitment of the individual and newly formed groups of authors who write the country profiles[32]. Today, this new *decentralised* community of practitioners monitoring cultural policy developments in their respective countries has become an informal system of partners across national borders.

The project is supported by a shared will among members of the Council of Europe Steering Committee for Culture as well as by a set of key ministerial contact points (called ACPs) which feed authors with the latest information and data required to prepare the profiles. This latter step in the preparation of country profiles helps to facilitate networking among public and private actors within national borders and opens up an exchange between local research communities and the public policy makers responsible for culture; in many countries with great success! For example, some of the country profiles have been sent to Cabinet or

---

University of California; was selected "Web Site of the Month" by the Information World Review in October 2001; has also been included in the Council of Europe's contribution to the 2nd Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on the Information Society, Geneva 2003.

[30] Harry Scarbrough and Jacky Swan, "Knowledge Communities and Innovation" in Huysman/van Baalen (ed.), *Communities of Practice,* European Institute for the Media, Boom Publishers, the Netherlands, 2002, pp.7-8.

[31] The individual roles and responsibilities of the different actors in this process are outlined in "Compendium Guide" for preparing country profiles. Adherence to a "10-step approach" to preparing and validating the information in the profiles is closely supervised by the Council of Europe and ERICarts.

[32] In 2003, experts from 35 countries are partners in this emerging community of practice: Albania, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia-Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

Parliament members to be reviewed. Other countries are issuing press releases, distributing printed copies of their national profiles and making web announcements on their national culture portals with links to the wider European project.

One of the key aspects to the "community of practice" model is the use of information and communication technologies. The online version of the *Compendium* facilitates *interaction* between the authors and the target audience or user groups of the information. On the other hand, interaction taking place in a common and real-time space is also crucial to "mobilise and integrate knowledge required by the process". Such face to face communication, via a yearly meeting of authors, is essential to exchange information, knowledge and experiences when preparing the profiles and review the overall coherence as well as methodological development of the project. The first meeting, which took place in January 2002, led to the production of *new content* (new indicators added to the methodological framework), *new services* (the addition of custom made technical features to the online *Compendium*) and new *ways of organising* (ideas to set up new sub-working groups tackling questions of compatibility). A second meeting took place in April 2003 at which time, the experts were organised into working groups to address the development of new indicators on topics such as cultural participation, social cohesion, cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. These groups are to continue their work over the year and their results are expected in Spring 2004 at which time they will be integrated into the overall *Compendium* framework.

Prospects for the Future

The project continues to evolve and expand in different directions: increasing the number of countries, developing new indicators and features, further elaboration of the functionality of the system. The irony of the project is that while it was born from the Council of Europe's Review Programme, the *Compendium* framework is now being used by researchers and policy makers in countries where the system of governance for cultural policy had partly collapsed, namely, in East and South East Europe, as a means to prepare themselves to participate in the Programme. Policy makers can easily see what is happening in other European countries and use the information on, for example, legal provisions for culture as a kind of check list.

As the project comes closer to reaching its goal of involving all 48 countries party to the European Cultural Convention, there are three main activities which are being pursued:

a) Reaching out to the local audience

In many countries, the profiles produced are the first comprehensive overviews of cultural policy available and therefore, the governments are encouraged to translate[33] them into the original language of the country in order to reach a broader and more local audience.

b) Pursuing a horizontal approach to the presentation of certain policy issues

One of the most important macro policy issues being discussed at the international level is the overarching concept of cultural diversity. While it is important to recognise that "cultural diversity" is not a clear cut policy area of the majority of governments in Europe, there are a host of measures which can be considered relevant but are not necessarily formulated in a strict policy manner. Therefore, a mainstreaming or horizontal approach was adopted that

---

[33] Profiles are submitted in English. A handful of countries have already prepared additional original language versions which have been posted to the web version.

underlies the treatment of cultural diversity in the *Compendium* exercise as opposed to creating a separate Chapter; an option suggested at one point during the exercise.

In fact, via this horizontal approach, information on cultural diversity can be found in very many areas of the *Compendium* from sub-chapters on language policy, media policy, policies for official and unofficial minority cultural groups, gender questions, support for artists and arts education, community arts, cultural industries or even in the section on general policy priorities (which mainly refer to principles of freedom of expression, participation in cultural life, protecting cultural identities and fostering creativity).

As more horizontal issues arise, we have decided to add a new cross-referencing feature to the *Compendium* which points to the relevant sub-chapters in a more user-friendly way. Separate pages indicating where those policies, laws, facts, figures and recent debates on the issue can be found with links to additional texts will be developed and made available online. A first test-model has been added to the web version addressing three policy areas: cultural diversity, cultural heritage and creativity.

c) *Evaluating the usefulness of the Compendium*

The Council of Europe has recently started a systematic evaluation of their activities in the cultural policy field and the *Compendium* serves as a model exercise. Examining the continual rise in the number of users and user groups via web statistics is one thing, but assessing the long term impact of the *Compendium* would require more sophisticated research and strong and systematic co-operation with the target groups/users in order to be able to assess, inter alia, the following three questions:

- How has *policy making* been affected (facilitated, inspired, changed, improved, etc.) as a consequence of the availability of comparative data and the cultural policy information and monitoring system?

- How has *research* been affected (facilitated, inspired, changed, improved, etc.) through the availability of comparative data and the cultural policy information and monitoring system?

- How has the work of the *Council of Europe* been affected (facilitated, inspired, changed, improved, etc.) through the availability of comparative data and the cultural policy information and monitoring system (e.g. improved programmes/ communication/background documents/publications, more efficient preparation of missions to individual countries thanks to concise information and data).

d) *Defining a monitoring function for the Compendium*

While the evaluation of the *Compendium* will enable the partners to better determine the value of the overall project in terms of its current usability by different target groups, the integration of a parallel "soft-monitoring" function is being explored as a means to make even better use of the information and data collected over the past five years. The expected result an information system which regularly and proactively monitors cultural policy developments at the national level, similar to other policy fields/issues being monitored at the Council of Europe.

Acknowledging the difficulties to harmonise data systems across all 48 countries party to the European Cultural Convention, and given the specificity of the cultural field, classical or strict monitoring systems which systematically chart changes can not be employed at this time. An important step along the path to monitor very closely the development of a certain policy issue or to conduct trend analysis is to ensure a constant flow of information based on reliable sources. In this context, systematic updating of the existing country profiles is critical. While formal updating of *Compendium* profiles takes place once per year, technical and resource solutions are being sought to encourage the governments and authors to work together to submit information on new laws, new statistical data or innovations in institutional change, as a matter of routine. This is essential for maintaining the dynamics and value of the project as an information and knowledge management system. A more proactive alerting system informing the user groups about developments in the various countries can allow them to track and begin to interpret the changes over a period of time.

The introduction of new monitoring activities could contribute to the further refinement of the existing *Compendium* system as well as lead to methodological developments in the overall field of cultural policy research.

In summary, three basic approaches to develop monitoring activities have been proposed and are currently being explored:

- *Better exploitation of available resources,* e.g., systematic reporting of policy changes over a period of time via an analyses of updated country profiles;

- *Introduction of additional indicators,* which would assist in the future monitoring of certain policy instruments (such as legislation) and issues of political priority[34] (participation in cultural life, cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and social and cultural cohesion);

- *Systematic collection of cases of best policy practice* in the field of culture at the national, regional and local levels (to be carried out in co-operation with existing bodies).

Based on the results of these activities, reports could be generated and distributed containing, e.g., recommendations for future policies in specific fields and trend analyses on selected issues reflecting political priorities. The availability of such reports would also facilitate flexible/rapid responses to political inquiries coming from Council of Europe bodies such as the Steering Committee for Culture, the Committee of Ministers or the Parliamentary Assembly.

Additional mechanisms for processing and channelling the results of future monitoring activities will be proposed including the development of new technical features that encourage current "users" to become more interactive "providers" of information.

---

[34] This activity could help to strengthen the political relevance of the *Compendium* by leading to the systematic monitoring of policy developments resulting from Council of Europe Declarations or Recommendations, e.g., the upcoming Recommendations on Cultural Diversity and on Intercultural Dialogue.

The *Process* for Building An Information System for Latin America: Some First Ideas

The conference organised by UNESCO Mexico and CONACULTA has made an important step in bringing together some of the key actors or partners which together could build an information system for culture and cultural policies in Latin America. While the project could follow a similar *process* as the one taken in Europe, relevant quantitative and qualitative indicators for Latin America would need to be developed and agreed upon in co-operation with public and private (third sector) actors representing all countries making up the region. Based on the presentations made during the conference, first indicators on, for example creativity, culture industries, trade and copyright could be developed as a common point of departure and of interest for all countries.

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (Montreal) in cooperation with UNESCO HQs in Paris could act in a similar role as the Council of Europe in co-operation with a regional body or observatory from the non-governmental sector to co-ordinate the project. The latter body would need to be located within the Region and be designated as a mediator working in partnership with identified key experts located in either governmental research units, based in university departments or independent research organisations (ngos). These experts could form a new network of cultural researchers in Latin America and could co-operate closely with the community of practitioners currently making up the network of *Compendium* experts of cultural policies in Europe. Contact points within the various ministries responsible for culture in the different countries would complete the tripartite partnership and strengthen communication between the governments and civil society. The individual roles and responsibilities of the different actors in this process could be negotiated and outlined in a Guide as proposed in the presentation by Teixeira Coelho, University of Sao Paulo.