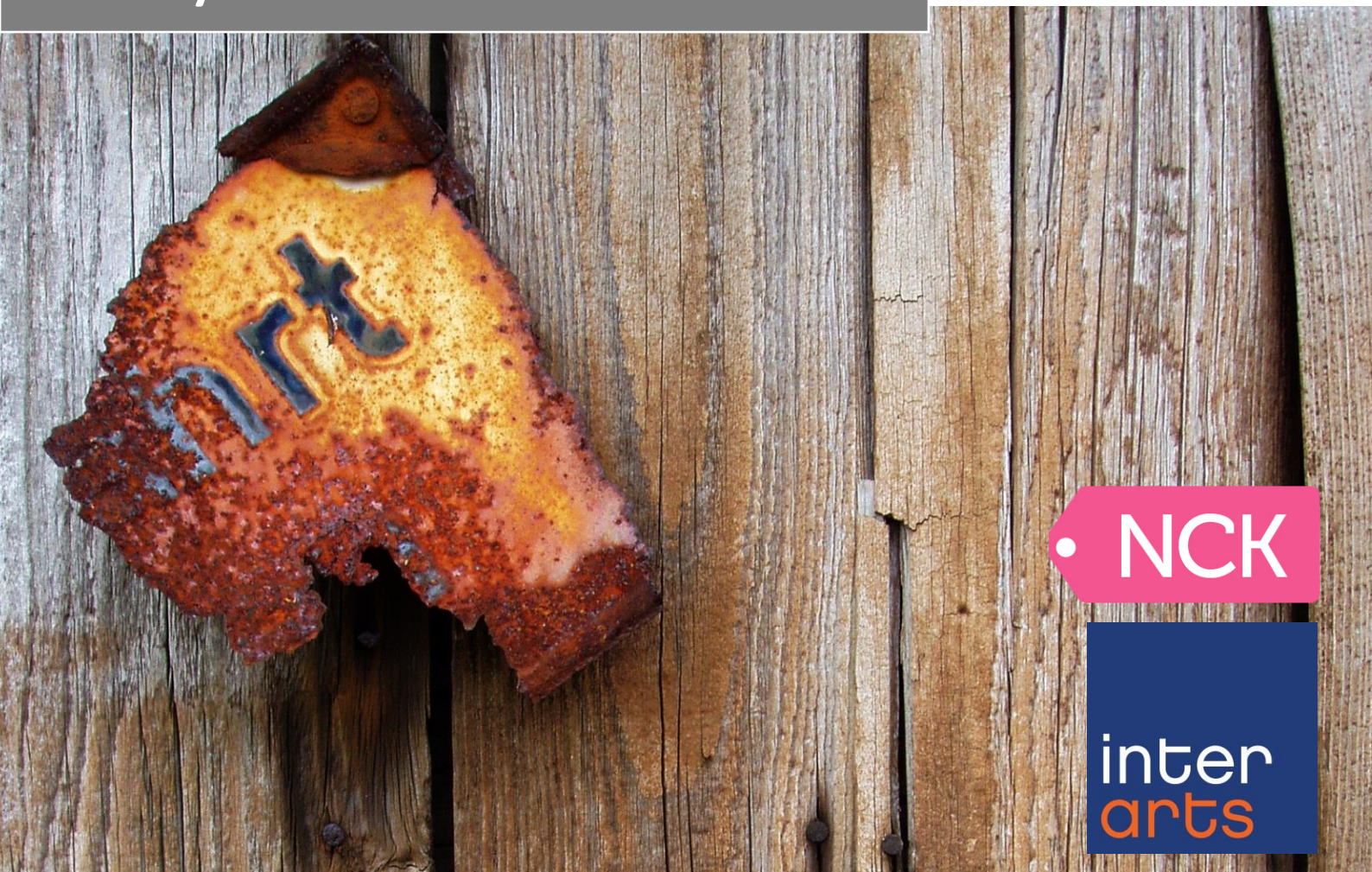


# Access to Culture – Policy Analysis



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Project presentation, May 2013

‘Access to Culture – Policy Analysis’ is a project funded by the European Commission’s ‘Culture Programme, coordinated by EDUCULT (Austria) and involving five other partners – Interarts (Spain), the Nordic Centre for Heritage Learning and Creativity AB (Sweden), Telemark Research Institute (Norway), the Cultural Policy and Management Research Centre at Istanbul Bilgi University (KPY, Turkey) and Zagreb’s Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO, Croatia). This 24-month project starts in May 2013 and will end in April 2015.

## 1. Project Rationale: Access to Culture as an EU priority

Access to Culture has become a major topic on the cultural policy agenda of Europe as well as on other levels of government. The European Civil Society Platform on Access to Culture, launched in the context of the European Agenda for Culture’s structured dialogue process, has developed policy guidelines with a range of recommendations to the European Commission, EU member states and other levels of government. They range from “understanding the needs of all publics” to “raising awareness of the legal frameworks on Access to Culture”. The guidelines stress that there is a specific gap between normative discourses stressing the need to provide Access to Culture for all and the social reality:

*“Access to Culture is an essential right of all citizens but becomes fundamental in the case of those with economic and social challenges such as young people and the elderly, people with disabilities and minority groups. Supranational institutions such as the European Union as well as its Member States have come a long way towards incorporating strong cultural normative practices and principles in their policy-making. However, there is a notable gap and a lack of political and public debate on and between principles and commitments, and everyday practices of fostering Access to Culture”.<sup>1</sup>*

However, apart from references in the Commission Report on the Implementation of the Agenda for Culture (2010)<sup>2</sup>, Anne Bamford’s Paper on “Main Trends in Policies for Widening Access to Culture” (2011)<sup>3</sup> and the most recent report produced by the expert group on “Better Access and wider participation in culture” (2012)<sup>4</sup> we know little about the question of how the EU focus on Access to Culture is influencing policy-making not only on a programmatic level, but also on the level of implementation in different political systems.

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<sup>1</sup> The House of Culture on behalf of the Access to Culture Platform (2010): Access to Culture. A fundamental right to of citizens. Policy Guidelines. p. 3 [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/PlatformAccessCulture\\_guideline.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/PlatformAccessCulture_guideline.pdf), accessed 02.10.2011.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2010): Commission Report on the Implementation of the Agenda for Culture. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0390:FIN:EN:PDE>, accessed 02.10.2011.

<sup>3</sup> Bamford, Anne (2011): Main Trends in Policies for Widening Access to Culture. Professor Anne Bamford on behalf of the European Expert Network on Culture. Produced for the OMC group on Inclusive Culture.

<sup>4</sup> Working Group of EU Member States Experts on Better Access and Wider Participation in Culture (2012): Policies and good practices in the public arts and in cultural institutions to promote better access to and wider participation in culture.

Therefore, this project aims at addressing this gap between social reality and political normativity in the area of Access to Culture and develop a set of recommendations to the EU, aiming to improve European thinking on this issue and to interlink national discourse and the European dimension. Recommendations will be supported with the collection and analysis of existing indicators on Access to Culture applicable across the countries included in EUROSTAT, showing the achievements of policy initiatives in each setting.

Research on the issue of Access to Culture should contribute notably to the understanding of various aims and objectives of policy instruments in the countries selected and in supranational bodies relevant for policy-making in Europe. Using the methodology of policy analysis, the project will investigate whether and how Access to Culture can contribute to democracy and peace for all, foster social inclusion or open cultural institutions to less represented groups, through policy instruments such as those focusing on mobility of arts, artists and audiences, the digitalisation of culture, etc.

### **Main question**

The project intends to, firstly, analyse the nature of Access to Culture, differences and similarities between countries and recommendations and principles on the European and international level:

- What is the meaning of Access to Culture, which are the aims of policies in this field and which instruments are employed?
- How and why do the definitions and instruments of Access to Culture differ (in terms of approach/content and target groups) among countries?

Secondly, the project will contribute to the understanding of how EU agendas and policies impact on Access to Culture policies on national levels and how future policy setting on European level can inspire more efficient strategies to increase access. This will be accompanied with a set of indicators and benchmarks that can be used in the comparative cultural policy research and will support governments to compare their efforts against.

## **2. Aims of the project**

### **Enhance research and policy analysis on Access to Culture**

- To investigate different approaches and instruments of Access to Culture policies in different political systems by looking at the reasons for these differences and understanding the dynamics of change.
- To analyse the impact of further cross-European determinants like the financial crisis and digital-shift on Access to Culture.
- To compare the findings from different states and draw conclusions and recommendations for the EU policy on Access to Culture derived from national differences, including the context of the Creative Europe programme, the Council of Ministers' work programme and other activities from the European Agenda for Culture.
- To define a set of indicators reflecting Access to Culture on European and national levels, followed by a benchmarking of partner countries which will contribute to further development of evidence in Europe. Indicators will not only state the current status of implementation and policy setting, but also identify relevant influencing variables enabling European comparisons. This will contribute to future data collection in Europe (EUROSTAT) and on state level.



### **Enhance policy-making and foster European exchange**

- To establish a network of national and European stakeholders for exchange, discussion and learning of good practices and use of existing networks like the Compendium on Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe<sup>5</sup>, NEMO, CultureWatchEurope and CultureActionEurope to which the longstanding experience of project partners provide access to and will help to sustainably implement the findings of the grouping among further countries.
- To inform policy-makers and practitioners how to foster Access to Culture in their area of influence by developing specific recommendations based on the analysis of specific contexts and agendas.
- To foster debate on the meaning of Access to Culture for European citizens to European culture

### **3. Approach of the Policy Grouping**

#### ***a) Analysis of preliminary studies and other contributions***

The project will involve an evaluation of relevant documents on Access to Culture at the European level and the analysis of existing studies and evaluations on national level. Moreover the exchange and discussion of Best Practices will be fostered by contributions of cultural sector practitioners who will attend project meetings in the project countries.

#### ***b) Defining “Access to Culture”***

An in-depth investigation of relevant European and international documents providing recommendations and setting principles will identify relevant indicators that define Access to Culture. This is the basis against which national policies can be compared. This includes interfaces with other policy fields – specifically social, education and integration policy, and thus opens the issue of policy transfer.

#### ***c) The policy analysis***

The defined indicators will be enhanced through a policy analysis framework. According to Thomas S. Dye (1976), “policy analysis is what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes.”<sup>6</sup> This classical definition is widened in our project, as we are not only concerned with governments as political actors, but also with other policy-makers relevant to Access to Culture in the respective country contexts, comprising individuals (politicians, journalists, researchers) and organisations (parliaments, unions, NGOs etc.) in cultural policy and other relevant policy fields (social affairs, integration, education).

#### ***d) Assessment, Evaluation and Recommendations concerning indicators and benchmarks***

All the aspects identified through the investigation and knowledge exchange on Access to Culture during the project duration will contribute to the compilation and assessment of indicators. Previous contributions like the Culture Watch Europe 2012 Conference and official statistics are taken as a starting point for further development of indicators. Hereby the policy grouping will contribute to future data collection and policy evaluation in this field.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/index.php>

<sup>6</sup> Dye, Thomas S. (1976): Policy Analysis: What Governments Do, Why They Do It and What Difference It Makes), Tuscaloosa.