

SEPTEMBER 2018

MOVING BEYOND BREXIT – REFLECTIONS

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Reflections from Kate Arthur, Director Arts

In September 2018, the British Council helped bring together sixty cultural and creative leaders to shape a shared vision and practical recommendations for post-Brexit collaboration that go beyond those already made. [Kate Arthurs](#), the British Council's Director Arts, spoke at the event and reflects on its outcomes and the British Council's role in making cultural connections happen ahead of our UK EU Roadshows.

Since the referendum on the UK's membership of the EU, the British Council has done a lot of thinking, a lot of talking – but mostly a lot of listening – about how the UK can reimagine its role in Europe and the world after Brexit.

In creating the spaces for that listening to take place, we have brought together leaders and partners from right across Europe to paint a picture of this future relationship and – crucially – to suggest interventions that will allow it to continue to flourish.

Our shared European future

In 2017, we held events in Berlin, Madrid and London with key players across arts, culture, education, science and research looking at how we can help sustain collaboration. What came out, after deep consultation, was a set of recommendations for Brexit negotiators on a whole range of issues, from residency rights and ease of movement to EU funding and opportunities for young people.

With calls including future pan-European cooperation and continued UK participation in EU programmes such as Creative Europe, the recommendations of the 'communiqué' – [Our Shared European Future](#) – have received over 600 official endorsements from people in 28 European countries.

Taking the conversation forward

The communiqué has been a powerful resource, playing a role in influencing the UK's current policy position.

In the Brexit White Paper that followed, the Government set out an intention for a 'culture and education accord' governing ongoing cultural collaboration between the two parties. The UK Prime Minister stated an aim to secure continued participation in EU cultural and education programmes such as Creative Europe and Erasmus+. I am pleased that the conversation is moving forward, but as the UK's relationship with Europe continues to be determined, there is still much to do.

Moving beyond Brexit

In the same spirit of collaboration and conversation, in September 2018 the British Council partnered with BOZAR and the European Cultural Foundation on a one-day workshop in Brussels entitled 'Moving Beyond Brexit: Uniting the Cultural and Creative Sectors'. We are grateful to Paul Dujardin and his team at BOZAR for initiating and hosting this event.

Sixty leaders in music, design, screen, visual and performing arts, and publishing came from across Europe to raise their voices, roll up their sleeves and put forward actionable steps to strengthen the mutually beneficial bond between the EU and the UK's cultural and creative sectors.

It was energising to be reminded that the creative and cultural industries are substantial contributors to the British and wider European economies, driving innovation and cross-border collaborations which build shared values and secure an environment of peace.

It was agreed that, in a post-Brexit environment, we need to guarantee this framework of cultural exchange, so that the next generation has the freedom to continue creating, inspiring and thriving. The [full recommendations](#) are required reading for the future of the UK and European cultural sectors. I'd like to highlight a few key points.

On funding and partnerships, the group led by British Council colleagues Gaëlle Croisier, EU Affairs Manager, and Christoph Jankowski, Head of Culture, [Creative Europe Desk UK](#), recommended greater clarity and commitments on UK eligibility for funding programmes and a steering group to advise UK-EU policy makers during the transition.

On legal issues, the group led by John Newbigin, Chairman of Creative England, and Francine Cunningham, Senior Public Affairs Manager at Bird & Bird, recommended measures relating to the movement of people, goods and services, including the opportunity for students to stay and work in their country of study for a period of two years.

On mobility, the group led by Marie Le Sourd from, On the Move, and Marie Fol of Dutch Culture, recommended a number of arrangements for free movement of artists and cultural professionals and their equipment between the UK and Europe.

What's next?

These recommendations chime with the ambitions and concerns of the sector and many of the UK's best cultural institutions. I strongly believe that it is long-term connections, through culture, that keeps us all afloat in the hardest of times. The British Council has a vital role to play in creating the space for discussions and making sure that the sector's priorities are heard in the UK-EU negotiations.

Starting this week, we are keeping this conversation going out on the road in the UK. Our EU Arts Strategy Roadshows in Coventry, Newcastle, London, Manchester, Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff, will explore how the British Council is playing an active role in enabling lasting strategic connections between the people and cultural bodies of the UK and the EU.

We want to hear views on new ways of working in the EU and understand what role artists and cultural professionals want the British Council to play in strengthening existing, and brokering new, UK-EU relationships. We look forward to meeting you.