



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

Speech to London4Europe

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“Does Brexit have to mean less cultural diversity and weaker creative industries?”

Thank you for inviting me today to share a discussion about the cultural dimension of our former EU membership and where Brexit leaves us culturally. This is within a context of UK cultural/creative sectors contributing 4% to GDP and over £100 billion to the economy. They were in surplus with the EU and the rest of world. However, they have lost 31% of their turnover in 2020.

Given the importance of the sector, bigger than aerospace and the car industry combined, and the soft power embedded in our arts/culture sectors, its amazing that there hasn't been more discussion about the effects of Brexit on these sectors.

In addition to the industrial implications there is the cultural dimension...

“If I had to do it all over again, I would start with culture.”(EU Founding Father, Jean Monnet). He understood that building intercultural understanding across frontiers through cultural cooperation was key. Particularly in the fight against extremism and populism.

Cultural and creative sectors are important for ensuring the continued development of societies and are at the heart of the creative economy. Knowledge-intensive and based on individual creativity and talent, they generate considerable economic wealth. More importantly, they are critical to a shared sense of European identity, culture and values. In economic terms, they show above-average growth and create jobs - particularly for young people - while strengthening social cohesion.

Just by way of background...

Background

From 1984 – 1999 I served as a frontbencher for the Socialist Group in the Euro Parliament on the Committee for Culture, Media, Education and Sport .

During that time we developed a range of important programmes rarely mentioned in UK Brexit political discussions...

TV Without Frontiers is a law mandating that 51% of our screens must carry local TV/film production. I helped to defend this provision in the face of huge US opposition. It still exists now in a revised AV Media Services Directive where, keeping pace with new services, 30% of the catalogue of streaming platforms should be from our local culture. But as a result of **Brexit it is hard to know how it is being implemented. We need to be able to see our stories made by us on these platforms.**

Furthermore being part of this directive and of the EU in general meant a majority of TV channels registering for licences in the UK...since Brexit the number has dropped by 5% each year. About 1/3 of all programming was broadcast from the UK. Now, most of that has gone to Amsterdam etc and the production companies have followed.

The promised bonfire of EU laws could mean this TV laws as I have described being dropped. We then open the door to more global programming from somewhere else.

My 1996 “**Future of public service broadcasting**” report led to the EU protocol on PSB in the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty...this is such an important protection for PSB in the face of an onslaught to reduce an invaluable democratic pillar to the smaller US type version with severe implications for cultural diversity and democracy.

During my time on the Culture Committee many media, cultural and heritage initiatives were developed and are now folded into the...

Creative Europe programme... The main objectives of the programme are to

- safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage
- increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the audio-visual sector

Out of this comes a number of things which are a cultural good in themselves but also operate as the R&D of the creative industries and of future careers of all those working in the arts/cultural sectors. Creative Europe facilitates cross border partnerships/networks across the EU and beyond to include third country members. There's a new initiative to support journalism partnerships. It supports EU literature prize; the EU LUX prize for film; the Music Moves initiative; European Capitals of Culture and much more besides...

One such **Creative Europe project** was led by the PRS foundation based in London. **The Keychange project** was to create a network of women in the music business and support their careers through exposure to network events, showcases and a Creative Lab Capacity Building Programme. These were devised and run through six music festivals in Europe and an associate festival in Canada.

A second project continued the talent development programme alongside an international campaign for **gender equality in music**, and the project continues to create new international opportunities for performance, creative collaboration and capacity building among European female musicians and industry professionals. Keychange aims to promote the creative and economic contribution of female talent in Europe's music industry through innovative, inclusive action. We need it to when you recall Best British Artist category at the Brits didn't include one female artist.

Also in **Creative Europe** is the famous **MEDIA programme** which supports training, development, production and distribution of national/European film. Films like **Slumdog Millionaire, the Kings Speech** reached Europe wide audiences thanks to support from this programme of up to 750K towards marketing and distribution. There is also a transnational financial facility for audio-visual production. All of this is much needed in an era of strong competition from UK streaming platforms bidding up talent and crew costs for our independent producers. Even the South Bank hasn't got enough crew for its projects now as they leave to work for streaming platforms.

The MEDIA programme awarded money to the Europa Cinemas project to support cinemas showing non-national European films. 47 UK cinemas with 104 screens have been members of the Europa Cinemas network during the period of 2014 to 2019. They are spread across 33 towns and cities in the four nations. 70% of them are outside of London. Now we are no longer part of the partnership. Yet less cultural exchange between us and our European neighbours.

Economically **British film makers were big beneficiaries of this project.** From **2014 to 2019**, 9% of all admissions and **16% of all European film admissions in the Europa Cinemas network were for British films.** There were more than **38.2 million admissions for British films in this period among the cinemas of the Europa Cinemas network – with 84% of those admissions reported outside the UK.** UK films are often present in the top performing films in the network. 2019 saw *The Favourite*, *Downton Abbey*, *Yesterday*, *Rocketman* and *Sorry We Missed You* all make the top 10.

The government has created a small £7million Global Film Fund instead of us re-joining Creative Europe and the MEDIA programme.

Netflix, which aims to produce 52 global films a year, is offering budgets of £7 – £20 million a movie. So is this non-national company taking over from Creative Europe in the UK ? In which case where is the hankering for cultural sovereignty? Where are the voices to re- join Creative Europe ?

Hard Brexit. So what does it mean ?

What else have we lost since the government refused membership of Creative Europe and the €1 billion slice of its funding over 5 years. Plus the fact we are proposing to put EU laws on a bonfire:

- **We are losing, without little or no discussion, cultural partnerships** in theatre, music, literature, architecture, design. We've lost that contribution to our mutual understanding and the creative industry innovation effects and career building of young artists that gives.
- **Also lost is access to European platforms to showcase UK creative works**
- Plus the political/economic effect of our leaning towards US culture more than ever before
- British people are **less aware of our cultural ties** with the rest of Europe
- According to UK Trade & Business Commission there is a €200 m Brexit black hole where no membership of **Creative Europe** meant our arts sector lost this amount per annum and only received £7m from UK government.
- **No membership of Creative Europe** also means lost film development, training, co-production, marketing and exhibition for our films
- **No more free movement for our artists/performers** to move around Europe, with result that particularly young artists/performers work/careers have been really adversely affected, often losing a large chunk of their income and ability to boost their profile across Europe
- No proper implementation in this country of the **AV Media Services Directive with loss of funds to indie production**
- No proper **implementation of the 2019 copyright directive** to protect IP holders, artists and performers to **get proportionate remuneration for the exploitation of their work online** and for trade unionists in creative industries to be able to negotiate more fairly with their employers
- No participation in **EU digital, AI legislation** and other initiatives with huge cultural impact

- **No cultural protection in trade deals** where the EU has a cultural exemption. In any US trade deal they could demand that we don't further regulate our media in our sovereign cultural interest
- **No participation in updating EU laws that regulate our media** in the interests of pluralism, diversity of expression, i.e., The European Media Freedom proposals

What are we doing to fill the gap ?

We at the **UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity** are one organisation that is networking with our sister coalitions in the European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity which I Chair:

We are **working with our European coalition partners** on the following issues trying hard to include the UK.....

- a) **Status of the Artist**...an EU framework or employment, social security rights to be recommended to M States
- b) **Implementation of copyright laws/author's rights** to ensure that artists/authors/performers receive a fair share of internet revenues
- c) **Discoverability of diverse** cultural content online
- d) **Finding new financial ways to underpin indie film** and increase local production **in a world of streaming platforms**
- e) **Defence of public service broadcasting**

The Future

All depends on us ending the current antipathy and refusal to connect/cooperate meaningfully with our European friends/partners. Yes to Re-Join but in meantime we can build trust with our partners if we....

Re-join Creative Europe

Any government could take us back in to Creative Europe as third country member, alongside Iceland, Norway, Tunisia, Armenia, Turkey and others. I am lobbying, along with others, for that to happen.

Free Movement of artists/performers with temporary coordinated visas

These would have to be reciprocal and could be negotiated. In the meantime, we should create a proper DCMS information centre which can help artists with touring logistics

Making cultural freight easier to ship

So our musicians/orchestras can still travel and others can come here

Keeping partnerships going

ACE, British Council and others have a role in developing and keeping partnerships with European friends/arts and culture people/organisations going as do organisations like the UKCCD....

Let's re-hear EU Founding Father Jean Monnet as we have to do it all over again... **Let's start now with culture and build those indispensable relationships of mutual understanding that will help pave the way for us re-joining the EU.**

Thank you for listening.

The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity, UKCCD, is the UK's leading civil society network supporting UNESCO's groundbreaking Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005. UKCCD acts as a consultative partner to UNESCO-UK and the UK government on the implementation of the aims and obligations of the treaty, which became legal in this country in March 2008. UKCCD is a founder member of the International Federation, IFCCD, which links over 600 creator and cultural organisations worldwide.