

## On the Move (OTM) – working group (En)forced mobility

### Edited Summary of the OTM working group on (En)forced Mobility and Artists Impacted by Displacement

Edited by Mary Ann DeVlieg, 15.07.2020

This document reflects the discussion and feedback of the two informal OTM working group meetings on 'enforced mobility' that took place as part of the OTM General Assemblies in Lisbon, May 2018 and in Prague, May 2019, lastly updated in July 2020. Some participants (indicated as\*) are also Mobility Info Points, also known as MIPs, members of On the Move<sup>1</sup>. Readers should understand that this summary represents discussions and information given at that time only and may not be up to date.

This edited summary is in three sections: [Recommendations](#); [Issues](#); [Examples and Services](#). [Contributions in each section are listed alphabetically by country or region of the office base. Web links to the contributing organisations are added within the text.](#)

#### Recommendations

From **La Cité internationale des arts - Problems that might be useful discussion themes:**

- **A 'fashion trend' for refugee artists or artists in exile is to be avoided:** it is not enough to give grants to solve problems, but rather it's necessary to have a reflection on what happens afterwards: the problem of the post-residence period is faced very often for all artists, but for refugee artists and artists in exile, even more so.
- **Specificity: not to forget that they are artists before being refugees;** they have become refugees because they are artists (who have faced obstacles to the freedom of creation); the artistic project and professional integration are at the heart of their concerns once their basic needs are met (housing, food).
- **The difficulty of employment for artists not having obtained the officially recognised statute of refugee** (institutions that are very willing to collaborate with programmes targeting refugees are sometimes hesitant to accompany asylum seekers).
- The **"double bind" for refugee artists** who can seem doubly privileged (compared to artists in general), benefitting from accommodation ideally placed in the centre of Paris, in the current context of housing shortages.
- **The question of publicity given to residency programmes:** residencies don't work anymore via the network/ friends/ word of mouth and yet it's more risky or stigmatizing to organize a public call in that it might not be seen relevant by the most high-priority and most vulnerable target groups.
- **The necessary discretion** to avoid putting the artists and their companions in danger vs. the desire (thankfully relative) for publicity by the institutions that financially support them. Certain artists whom we support do not want to appear as potential 'refugee artists' or asylum seekers, even when they would fulfill the criteria, because they wish to be able to always return home and don't want to be seen as refugees or to potentially put their families at risk.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://on-the-move.org/news/article/19558/mobility-information-points/>

- More generally, it is also important to avoid a **form of institutionalization** and to maintain **flexibility and reactivity**.
- The **length of the residency of refugee artists** is very often extended beyond a year (which is a derogation of our rules) and the **question of rehousing after the residency** is acute. Indeed, we offer short term residencies of 3- 4 months on average and a maximum of a year. The question is of **what happens after, of sustainable housing, professional integration** (that sometimes unfortunately means stopping, at least temporarily, their artistic careers or to undertake two jobs simultaneously) whereas the length of time of the process of requesting asylum gets longer and longer.
- **The question of the 'post-residence'**: the access to social housing at the end of an art residence (waiting lists and working conditions) is crucial.
- **Social and admin assistance is indispensable**, something we are not really competent to provide; it's necessary to work with people in the social field.

#### From **Mobiculture.fr** \* – possibility of European MIP joint action

- It is not specific to artists at risk nor refugees, but the revision of the EU visa code is probably a good target for a common action on visas. The MIPs discussed some possibilities such as a common “grid” listing visa refusals and problems.

#### From **Touring Artists\*** – developing an interesting initiative

Dachverband Tanz Deutschland/Association for Dance was part of a great initiative that would be worthwhile to repeat/ or develop: an artists` salon, 'Meet the Makers', dedicated to Artists in Exile (in Europe) to present their work, to facilitate their networking in a new (European) context; including a mentoring. The Artists` Salon was part of the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in 2018, organised by ONDA in France and additional partners from Belgium and Germany. You can find a short info about it [here](#).

### Issues

#### From **Cultuurloket\***, Brussels – regulations concerning incoming artists

In Belgium, we have a new regulation on the employment of foreign people. However, the different regions in Belgium have their own conditions, which are similar, but may vary. This means that we need to check in each situation which regulation is applicable.

#### From **La Cité Internationale des arts** - support and alliances for refugee artists

We welcome many resident artists who are neither refugee nor asylum seekers, but who work on these themes and find in Paris and the Cité an important resource on these questions and are also themselves factors of integration. Note that artists in exile are the first to launch solidarity projects with the most vulnerable, for example monthly dinners organised by artists with the forty or so SDF (homeless) who sleep outside, in a covered arcade on the edge of la Cité.

#### From **Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste / IGBK\*** – online info specifically for refugee and migrant artists

In terms of training workshops or online info directed at migrant, refugee, or exiled artists, the question of “low-threshold information” is an issue: Where to start, when explaining administrative procedures and/or the background of these procedures? Who should be involved when setting up online information, is it possible to do so without a close cooperation with someone of the target group? Is it necessary to have simultaneous interpretation in a workshop/info session?

### From **ARC (Artists at Risk Connection)**

ARC partner organizations working with displaced artists have a limited geographical reach, leaving entire regions of the world underserved. Consequently, there are major disconnects between where services are available and where artists are located. Resources are heavily concentrated in the Northern Hemisphere, while there are at least as many artists at risk located in the Southern Hemisphere. While many partners claim a global remit, their actual experience and reach are often limited.

Rather than relocating artists to where the resources are, as has historically been the standard approach, ARC is encouraging its partners to bring resources to where the artist is -- and often prefers to remain. Not only is removing an individual resource-intensive, disruptive to their life, temporary as a solution, and ultimately detrimental to artistic productivity and impact, but short-term and localized solutions often provide many unique advantages. In many cases, short-term safe havens within the region allow for continued relationships with family, tighter integration within the community, and less long-term psychological impact and isolation. Providing better support locally involves engaging a far more extensive range of regional and country-based actors, possibly including law firms, arts institutions, universities, private foundations, multilateral entities, etc.

### Examples and Services

#### **Cultuurloket, Brussels\* – regulations concerning incoming artists**

<https://www.cultuurloket.be>

Most artists try to come to Belgium with a short stay visa (max. 90 days). To get this visa, certain conditions are necessary, for example, sufficient income to stay in Belgium (or that a Belgian organization will take care of the person) and that the person has enough money to go back. This can cause problems for young artists or artists with insufficient income.

We worked out a note in cooperation with the Belgian Immigration Office and the Belgian Office of Foreign Affairs, to clarify the procedure for short stay visa for our cultural sector:  
<https://www.cultuurloket.be/kennisbank/internationalisering/visumaanvragen-voor-culturele-activiteiten>

If artists want to stay longer, they need to apply for a single permit which contains a right to work and a right of residence. To gain this single permit, market research by the employer needs to be done, except if an artist has international fame or earns a large amount of money (34.819 euro in 2019, 35.104 euro in 2020 (Flanders) or 35.761 euro in 2020 (Brussels). This makes it very difficult for artists who are in a precarious situation to come to Belgium for their artistic projects.

If artists are in Belgium and have obtained legal status as 'refugee', there is a possibility to work as a volunteer. After a waiting period of 4 months, they can be entitled to work in Belgium. This waiting period starts from the effective request for international protection.

The agency for integration in Belgium (<http://www.agii.be/contact>) is a very reliable institution to advise people about international mobility.

### **Arts and Theatre Institute, Czech Republic\* – projects dedicated to persecuted and refugee artists**

Artistic projects dedicated to this theme started first in Archa Theatre in 2005.

A performance made with refugees in the refugee camp in Bela nad Bezzem in CR. The website of the performance is only in the Czech language.

<http://2003.archatheatre.cz/main.php?s1=program&id=463>.

This work led also to setting up a company, Allstar Refjúdží Band, which mixes music and theatre with workshops – more here:

[http://www.asrb.cz/asrb/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=18](http://www.asrb.cz/asrb/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=18)

Following this experience, Archa in 2010 set up Festival Akcent of documentary theatre, where many projects on persecuted artists, migrants etc. are presented:

<https://www.festivalakcent.cz/en/akcent/?akcent=1>

Other Czech performing arts companies are also bringing questions of displaced artists to their performances. Latest, for example, is Farm in the Cave and the performance, Refuge. -

<https://farminthecave.com/en/projects/25-refuge/>

### **La Cité Internationale des arts – residencies, support and alliances for refugee artists**

<https://www.citedesartsparis.net/en/>

La Cité internationale des arts hosts artists of all disciplines and nationalities in Paris since 1965, in 326 studio/apartments, managed by 135 partners (governments, cities, universities, art schools, foreign and French foundations). La Cité internationale des arts provides a neutral and protected space where differences are blurred and where artists are free to create, exchange and work together whatever their origins, sometimes facilitating collaborations that are unique or impossible elsewhere.

Some examples:

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR) underwrites an apartment in the Cité for longer-term, one-year, residencies. This apartment is currently dedicated to cinema, whose residents also benefit from the guidance and expertise of the association, l'Usage du monde..

Since the Cold War la Cité has welcomed stateless artists and artistes in exile, for example during the war in Yugoslavia. This is why some nationalities are strongly present at times. For example, Chileans, when Pinochet came to power, or an apartment of the Qattan Foundation for Palestinians.

In 2011 the City of Paris joined ICORN (International Cities of Refuge Network and dedicates a studio/apartment in la Cité for a residency of one year to a laureate selected by a jury. We also have partnerships with ICORN city, Poitiers, and also with St. Briac, near St. Malo.

Developed with the French Ministry of Culture and the French Institute, we have a specific programme for artists in exile: studio apartments, living cost grants, French language lessons, integration in the professional network and the artists' community of the Cité, and giving visibility to their work, especially allowing them to create in good conditions.

We also have a close working relationship with associations such as the Atelier des artistes en exil.

**MobiCulture \* – info including visas and residency permits; European MIP (Mobility Info Point) round-table on refugees**

<http://mobiculture.fr/en>

MobiCulture, as a Mobility Info Point (MIP), gives all artists info on visas and residency permits (criteria and procedures for application...). This can be useful to artists at risk or in exile and the organizations helping them, who may not necessarily be aware of the conditions necessary for a residency permit.

MobiCulture is involved in the “Artists Visas Committee” piloted by world music network, Zone Franche. This service helps solve problems with visas applications or blocked situations, through a sort of “hotline” towards a contact at the Ministry of Interior/Home affairs who can then contact the consulate blocking the visa application or having rejected it.

In the framework of the “Artists Visas Committee” and at the occasion of “Pop Mind” (<http://www.pop-mind.eu/programme-2/>), an event organized collectively in March 2019 by different organizations gathered within l’UFISC (cultural organizations’ union), MobiCulture led a round-table presenting the work of other European MIPs on visas (DutchCulture, Touring Artists) but also initiatives dedicated to refugees “at large”. These actions are led notably by the CRID - Centre de Recherche et d'Information pour le Développement .

“Les États Généraux des Migrations” (<https://eg-migrations.org/>) produced a cartography of actors mobilized towards refugees and publications after a wide consultation on the topic : “unacceptable facts\_” and “alternatives” papers: <https://eg-migrations.org/Le-cahier-des-faits-inacceptable-et-le-cahier>) and others were relayed in a book written by Jean-Francois Corty “La France qui accueille”<sup>2</sup>.

**Touring Artists\* – information portal and helpdesk service for artists touring into Germany and also those travelling out**

<https://www.touring-artists.info/en/home/what-is-touring-artists/>

Touring Artists (a project of the International Theatre Institute (ITI) Germany and Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste/IGBK) maps the circumstances, legal regulations, and administrative procedures in Germany – for foreign artists and creatives who work here temporarily and for German artists/creatives or artists/creatives who live in Germany and who work abroad for a limited time. It also considers the perspective of Germany-based organizers. The website is available in English and German.

‘Welcome: Turkey’ provides information for artists and others in the cultural sector from Turkey who come to Germany temporarily to work or who (want to) stay in Germany for a longer period. A downloadable pdf can be found here.

[https://www.touring-artists.info/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Willkommen/Welcome\\_Turkey.pdf](https://www.touring-artists.info/fileadmin/user_upload/Willkommen/Welcome_Turkey.pdf)

It is also relevant for organisers in Germany collaborating with colleagues from Turkey. It covers questions on entry, residence, and work permit, illness, tax aspects and customs among other aspects. In Turkish, German and English. Our Summer 2018 newsletter was dedicated to this topic and can still be found here.

<https://www.touring-artists.info/en/home/newsletter/summer-2018-turkey/>

We work together with the Berlin Career College of the University of the Arts Berlin that offers training especially for refugee artists.

---

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.editionsatelier.com/index.php?page=shop.product\\_details&flypage=bookshop-flypage.tpl&product\\_id=723&category\\_id=27&manufacturer\\_id=1&option=com\\_virtuemart&Itemid=1](http://www.editionsatelier.com/index.php?page=shop.product_details&flypage=bookshop-flypage.tpl&product_id=723&category_id=27&manufacturer_id=1&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=1)

Touring Artists has been offering a possibility for individual consultations since 2014 and expanded it in 2018, for artists and culture professionals who were forced to leave their home countries and are now residing in Germany. Individual consultations on international projects as well as on questions on how to achieve a future career in Germany are offered. Culture professionals can also obtain information on the Berlin job market in particular. Moreover, the helpdesk service addresses cultural institutions in Berlin that collaborate with arriving artists. A workshop on the topic of contracts between refugee artists and culture institutions in Berlin was organized in 2018.

Touring Artists consultation service also offers consultations for artists from countries affected by crisis and for institutions working with them. Colleagues from the consultation service take seminars/further trainings in migration law/working permit with different residency statuses etc. in order to be able to give better advice and support.

**Howlround Theatre Commons – subject tags; invitation to contribute to on-line information, stories and conversations on enforced mobility <https://howlround.com>**

HowlRound is an international commons-based platform for performing arts. We are happy to discuss pertinent ideas with the international arts community on using the platform, such as writing an essay, organizing a livestreamed conversation or an online video conference call. For more information about [contributing content](#), please visit that page.

Howlround's website has two subject tags that are generally relevant to enforced mobility. As more artists and cultural managers contribute more essays and livestream more conversations about these topics, they will appear in under these subject tags.:

Peacebuilding, Conflict Transformation, & Conflict Zones

<https://howlround.com/tags/peacebuilding-conflict-transformation-conflict-zones>

Artist Rights & Safety

<https://howlround.com/tags/artist-rights-safety>

**ARC (Artists at Risk Connection) – partnerships, North-South divide, localized solutions; other initiatives of interest**

<https://artistsatriskconnection.org>

The Artists at Risk Connection (ARC), by PEN America, is an online collaboration of global organisations that provide life-saving resources to artists worldwide who face oppression, persecution, arrest, and violence for their creative work. Through its online database and other tools and services, ARC assists persecuted artists by connecting them to our growing global network of resources; it facilitates cooperation among human rights and art organizations; and it amplifies the stories and work of at-risk artists as well as raising visibility of the field of artistic freedom.

**Tamizdat\* – legal aid and counsel (USA)**

<https://www.tamizdat.org>

Tamizdat's broad strategic approach to all issues related artist mobility is threefold:

(1) To use our legal and cultural expertise to develop and implement tactics and strategies to help the international performing arts community work within and around the systemic bureaucratic and economic impediments to international cultural mobility.

(2) To promote legally sound and culturally sensitive best practices regarding cultural mobility within the international cultural communities.

(3) To advocate for long term improvements in the legal, economic, political, and cultural systems that control international cultural mobility, making those systems more transparent, consistent, affordable, equitable, and more supportive of maximizing international culture's power to promote global civil society.

Many of Tamizdat's projects will benefit artists whose mobility is forced, just as they can benefit any international artists. However, in regards specifically to concerns about forced mobility, Tamizdat has two lines of work that specifically address issues of forced mobility:

(1) Tamizdat, in collaboration with CoveyLaw, has led the effort in the U.S. to pioneer legal strategies to seek waivers of the current administration's "Travel Ban." This has been critical, in that it has created a means for refugee artists to enter the U.S. to perform.

(2) In collaboration with the Artist Freedom Initiative, we have designed a program to help musicians who have been subject to forced migration, find contacts and mentors within the international music industry.

### **Arts Council of Wales<sup>3</sup> – supporting projects by artists impacted by displacement**

<https://arts.wales>

In 2018, the Arts Council of Wales drafted a Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan. Below are some recent examples of projects, regarding artists impacted by displacement, that have been supported by Arts Council of Wales:

#### **Eric Ngalle Charles**

Eric is a writer, poet and dramatist settled in Cardiff, who came to Wales from Cameroon via Russia. He has addressed themes of migration and exile, as well as documenting the story of his own traumatic journey to Wales through his writing. In 2017/18 he was awarded the Arts Council Wales - Creative Wales Award for research into Migration, Memory and Trauma. Wales Arts International has also supported Eric to develop creative links and exchanges between writers in Cameroon and Wales through the "Bridge Building" project 2017-18.

#### **Be Aware Productions**

Be Aware are a Wales based theatre production company whose enforced mobility was a result of a political creative project that forced them to move out of Turkey. Arts Council of Wales has supported a number of their projects, the latest production being staged in Cardiff is Y Brain / Kargalar <http://www.beawareproductions.com/portfolio/y-brain-kargalar/>

#### **Wales – Nation of Sanctuary**

The Welsh Government launched their Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum seeker plan (<https://cityofsanctuary.org/2019/02/07/wales-nation-of-sanctuary-welsh-government-launch-refugee-asylum-seeker-plan/>) earlier this year, which includes specific references to projects supported by Arts Council of Wales and the portfolio clients they fund.

---

<sup>3</sup> Wales Arts International is a member of On the Move and a Mobility Info Point.