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Artists and Culture Professionals

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CHAPTER 13

Information Providers for At-risk and Displaced Arts Workers



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On the Move is the international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 86 members from 32 countries. Since 2002, On the Move provides regular, up-to-date and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions and funding, and advocates for the value of cross-border cultural mobility. Co-funded by the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture, On the Move is implementing an ambitious multi-annual programme to build the capacities of local, regional, national, European and international stakeholders for the sustainable development of our cultural ecosystems.

On the Move regularly commissions researchers to investigate different themes closely related to the network's activities and the work carried out by its members. Reflecting on transversal concerns and key areas of artistic and cultural mobility, the network tries to establish a clearer picture of the current movements and trends while formulating policy recommendations.

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CHAPTER 13

Information Providers for At-risk and Displaced Arts Workers

by Claire Rosslyn Wilson

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This chapter explores some key areas of work, challenges and opportunities for organisations that provide practice information to at-risk and displaced arts workers. The need for such a chapter was highlighted by the work of [Mobility Information Points \(MIPs\)](#), a working group formed by On the Move member organisations who help artists and culture professionals with the administrative issues of cross-border mobility, through free information and consultation services. Some of the professionals of these MIPs provide information for and support to artists at risk and organisations that work with them.

The administrative hurdles that artists in general face during cross-border mobility can be significant. As was reported in [Voices of Culture report: status and working conditions for artists, cultural and creative professionals](#), a ‘widespread and common barrier to cultural/ artistic mobility across geographies and artforms is linked to the administrative processes of applying for funding, dealing with international taxation, travel, and accessing social services.’¹ This can be multiplied for at-risk and displaced arts workers, as they can have the additional challenge of irregular residency status or additional complexities when applying for visas. Some of the key issues the MIPs are consulted on include visas, social insurance, taxes, and customs, and these can be complicated when artists have temporary or irregular residency status.

It is worth highlighting that this chapter is **exploring the administrative challenges and needs of arts workers at risk and the ways**

in which organisations can support these processes. This means that the chapter discusses visas or residency permits that might define arts workers as being at risk, as these processes are what information mobility points can assist them with. However, navigating these administrative definitions does not mean that the work produced by these arts workers needs to be related to their residency status. Some of the other chapters in this series examine how arts workers at risk might feel pressured into making work linked to their personal experiences of risk or that their identity becomes entwined with this experience in ways they are not comfortable with.² Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the discussions below are about the administrative process and definition, not the artwork itself.

This chapter, then, started with the question: what information is most necessary for at-risk or displaced arts workers and how best can information providers deliver it?

Methodology

This article is based on group discussions held in July and August 2025 with a group of representatives from the MIPs, including [Cultuurloket](#) (Belgium), [MobiCulture](#) (France), [touring artists](#) (Germany), [CzechMobility.Info](#) (Czech Republic), [Loja Lisboa Cultura](#) (Portugal), [Tamizdat](#) (USA), and [Arts Infopoint UK](#).

As the MIPs work in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Portugal, Slovenia, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and because their work is shaped by the specificities of each organisation, the research for this chapter also reached out to other organisations working in

1 Saviotti, A. et al, [Voices of Culture report: status and working conditions for artists, cultural and creative professionals](#). Goethe-Institut, 2021.

2 See for example [Volume 2](#) in this series, or [Chapter 8](#) in this volume.

this space. These organisations included the Creative Europe Desks in France, Portugal, Greece and Latvia, Ukraine-based organisations working on international projects ([IZOLYATSIA](#) and the [Ukrainian Cultural Foundation](#)), and organisations supporting at-risk and displaced arts workers ([Vitsche](#), Berlin-based NGO that amplifies Ukrainian voices and subjectivity in Europe; [Question Me & Answer](#), which offers guidance to international artists new to Vienna and curates regular events; and [Office Ukraine](#), established in 2022 to support Ukrainian artists in Austria).

This text is not intended to be a mapping of all information providers of arts workers at risk, but is rather a sample from a very active group of practitioners with experience in the field.

The geographic reach is principally focused on the experience of European organisations (as well as one example from the USA), some of which developed in response to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. The practices and challenges presented here are with regards to at-risk and displaced artists generally, rather than entering into the specific needs of different groups.

Mobility Information Points and other information providers

In early 2025 On the Move produced a report that analysed all the consultations (in-person or online sessions during which MIPs give individual advice to artists or culture professionals), and engagement activities (usually workshops covering specific issues connected to cultural mobility) that the MIPs conducted throughout 2024. Of the 2,187 consultations involving nine MIPs, there were 134 recorded as being for arts workers at-risk. The most common nationalities of these artists-at-risk were Iranian, Russian, Belarussian, Ukrainian, Turkish and Palestinian. Their destination countries were mostly Germany followed by France, Portugal and Austria. In the case of Germany, the higher number of queries could be due to the fact that 'touring artists' has more staff members and a help desk service that has been active for a longer period than the other MIPs (and does not necessarily reflect a higher demand from arts workers at risk when compared to other countries). The main queries these artists at risk had were quite similar to the wider trend in consultations; the top three most queried topics

were related to visa, residency or work permits, tax, and social security.

One key difference was the way arts workers at risk were referred to the services of the MIPs; arts workers at risk were mainly referred by Government departments or Ministries, national or regional association for artists, or friends/colleagues (with referrals via the website being very few), while the overall number of arts workers and organisations were more often referred to MIP services by friends/colleagues, web/internet searches or other consultation services. This difference could in part be due to the German MIP 'touring artists' involvement with the [Weltoffenes Berlin](#) programme of the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion, in which artists at risk are directed to their services (estimated at more than half of their consultations for arts workers at risk). They also work with Hamburg's Department for Culture on their programme for artists at risk, [INTRO](#), in a similar capacity.³

³ touring artists advises applicants for the Weltoffenes Berlin programme of the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Social Cohesion and supports the funded fellows with workshops and networking opportunities. See more about the ways touring artists supports artists and culture professionals who have had to leave their home countries due to the political situation and are now living in Germany [here](#).

Other MIPs work more with organisations that work with artists at risk, rather than consulting directly with the artists themselves. It was highlighted during the focus groups in July and August 2025 that it is also important to support these organisations who are interested in employing artists at risk, as they can potentially provide an element of stability through sponsoring visas or providing long term employment. However, the process of sponsorship can be very complex and organisations, especially if they are smaller or lack the experience in this area, might need support in navigating these administrative processes.

In addition to the MIPs and [Creative Europe Desks](#) (which provide assistance related to the Creative Europe programme and help cooperating with organisations in other Creative Europe countries), a number of other organisations in the focus groups provide information for the administrative processes to artists at risk.

Office Ukraine: Support for Ukrainian Artists was founded shortly after the start of Russia's large-scale war of aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. The initiative supports Ukrainian artists and cultural workers of all disciplines who fled from Ukraine to Austria to escape the Russian invasion. As a mediation platform, the most important goal of Office Ukraine is to enable displaced artists and cultural workers to continue their artistic work in their respective fields and to promote long-term artistic collaboration between artists from Ukraine and the Austrian art scene. Office Ukraine is represented throughout Austria with a total of three offices, in Vienna ([tranzit.at](#)), in the MuseumsQuartier Wien Graz (< rotor >), and Innsbruck ([Künstler*innenhaus Büchsenhausen](#)). The teams in each office are made up of the members of the steering group as well as team members who have experience in the local art scene and/or are well-connected in the Ukrainian art scene. Since its inception, Office Ukraine has been contacted by more than 1,700 Ukrainian artists and cultural professionals

and has worked with more than 270 local and international art institutions and initiatives as well as many individual supporters.

At its inception, Vienna-based curator and writer Georg Schöllhammer, art historian and member of the Office Ukraine steering group, Simon Mraz, and the curators Margarethe Makovec and Anton Lederer from the Graz-based < rotor > Centre for Contemporary Art, Andrei Siclodi from [Künstler*innenhaus Büchsenhausen](#) in Innsbruck, Karin Zimmer from the [Federal Ministry for Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport](#) (BMWKMS), and Michaela Geboltsberger from [IG Architektur](#) and Larissa Agel from [tranzit.at](#), shared their experiences with Syrian artists who fled their homeland in 2015 and came to Austria. As Schöllhammer explains, 'In most cases, initial contact with refugee artists, often precariously housed, was soon lost and they vanished from the horizon of Austrian cultural institutions.' This was something they did not want to happen in the case of Ukrainian artists.⁴

From within Ukraine, there was the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation and IZOLYATSIA. The Ukrainian Cultural Foundation is a state-owned institution created in 2017 with aim to facilitate development of culture and arts in Ukraine, to provide favourable environment for development of intellectual and spiritual potential of individuals and society, wide access for the citizens to national cultural heritage, to support cultural diversity and integration of the Ukrainian culture into the world cultural space. IZOLYATSIA has several initiatives that work with and support European organisations helping Ukrainian artists. One such example is [Re-Source Ukraine](#), which grew out of an in-depth discussion between Ukrainian artists, cultural workers, and European cultural organisations to identify barriers and solutions for integrating Ukrainian artists and audiences into the European cultural scene as artists and engaged community. To ensure better inclusivity of Ukrainian artists and cultural professionals

4 For more about the founding of Office Ukraine, see Office Ukraine. Support for Ukrainian Artist, 2024, [Office Ukraine. Two Years of Support for Ukrainian Artists](#), Verlag für moderne Kunst.

in European contexts, the project included art productions that represented their practices with the connection to the local Ukrainian community and networking events for artists and cultural professionals. The programme's main event was the Ukrainian month in Europe, which involved local and Ukrainian artists, represented their artistic work and involved even more people from wider local audiences. IZOLYATSIA also worked with local organisations in a number of countries who introduced Ukrainian artists to the local context. In some contexts it was challenging to identify Ukrainian artists, while in others there were many programmes available.

Question Me & Answer's (QMA) work includes supporting cultural institutions in implementing mechanisms for the inclusion of artists with different backgrounds living in Vienna into their regular programme, paying particular attention to the tokenisation of people belonging to a certain minority. In addition, they provide monthly

consultation sessions for those who have newly arrived in Vienna, covering topics such as financial support, where to go for help on social security and taxes, local cultural organisations and spaces, and networking to local artists. As part of this work, in 2023 QMA, along with the researcher Oliver Meurer, interviewed artists with migration and/or refugee experience about their demands to the City of Vienna. The result was a [manifesto](#) addressed to the administrative apparatus and it contains three groups of demands: administrative demands, monetary demands and social demands. Some of the administrative demands in the manifesto include reducing language barriers through the translation of key documents, increased transparency in the visa decision process and further guidance on questions regarding administrative procedures, targeted to artists and cultural workers with a migration and/or refugee background to clarify specific questions of this interest group. The manifesto also calls for more accessibility to public funds.

Stages of support

Throughout the focus group discussions it was highlighted that there are several stages where arts workers at risk might need access to information and administrative support.

Seeking refuge, emergency support and settling in

One of the first stages might be when they are in their home country seeking a way to relocate to a safe place. In this case, organisations such as MIPs are not the best places to assist, as MIPs have expertise in their own national context and there are fewer national mechanisms that allow for direct relocation from another country. Therefore, there are other organisations that are more relevant for arts workers at risk while they are in their home country or a neighbouring

country, such as [Artists at Risk Connection](#), [Artistic Freedom Initiative](#), [Artist Protection Fund](#), [Scholars at Risk](#), or [International Cities of Refuge Network](#), or [Martin Roth-Initiative](#), to name a few.

Once arts workers at risk have relocated from the country where they were at risk, they might enter a stage during which they need **initial emergency support**, such as finding housing or accessing financial support (one example is through government schemes such as the Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainians seeking refuge in the European Union, which grants them residence, access to the labour market and housing, medical assistance, social welfare, and education for children across all EU member states⁵), and learning about their

5 To read more about the activation of the 2011 Temporary Protection Directive, see European Commission '[Temporary protection](#)' at Migration and Home Affairs.

new context by connecting with community groups. These initial and urgent needs were what Office Ukraine first focused on after the full-scale invasion by Russia and finding accommodation, in particular, was a real challenge. Other support included information about funding and legal questions. However, from this early stage Office Ukraine also offered events and networking meetings; even though the basic needs of housing and financial support were the most urgent, their main goal was to support artists to work in their field, so this connection to the Austrian scene was very important. Vitsche has also moved from a consultation centre for artists to facilitating cultural projects such as exhibitions, festivals, and residencies, within which they try to involve as many Ukrainian refugee artists as possible.

Aside from these initial emergency needs, arts workers at risk might enter a **stage of cultural adaptation and settling into their new location**, where they might need support in learning a language, help in gaining a deeper understanding of the cultural context, or health and wellbeing support. For example, Tamizdat's [Safe Haven Incubator for Musicians: New York City](#) (SHIM: NYC) programme supports artists through the day-to-day challenges, navigating things such as doctor's visits, insurance claims (which can be confusing for those who have lived their whole lives in the USA), or how to access mental health support (which can be an ongoing need). This can also include more personal support, beyond the administrative issues of resettling in a place, and takes a holistic approach.

Part of this role, then, is knowing what support each artist might be eligible for or able to access (which might depend on what visa they are on and what financial resources they have access to), what their specific needs are and then knowing the right place to refer them to. This might include walking people through administrative processes or it might be connecting them with particular communities or it might be helping

them in the processes of finding ongoing work. Office Ukraine also highlighted how their initial focus on emergency support (such as emergency accommodation) has shifted to questions related to long-term adaptation (such as finding ongoing work or prolonging their stay).

Transitioning to long term residency

Another challenge that was highlighted in the focus group discussions was that some arts workers at risk might have access to short-term programmes, such as artist residencies, but that **the transition to long-term residency in a country can be challenging**. This might depend on visa requirements; for example, if they want a long-term visa or residency permit, they might need sponsorship from an organisation or consistent paid work (which might require a minimum number of hours per week or letters of intent from potential clients), which can be challenging in the arts. This might necessitate that arts workers adapt to work within the constraints of the visas available (such as pursuing academic paths, as this path might be more open to them). However, certain visas can restrict the ability for arts workers to sustain themselves financially, through a limit of the number of hours they are allowed to work, making it challenging to support themselves. In the UK, there has been interest in the [Global Talent Visa](#)⁶, especially from areas that are experiencing conflict and instability (this is a long stay visa that is a fast track towards settlement). However, this visa can be expensive and it would not be open for everyone.

The transition from short-term programmes and visas to long-term residency can be where MIPs are contacted by arts workers at risk, for example, to ask for help in the renewal of their residency permit. As Anaïs Lukacs Director of MobiCulture mentions when there are strict regulations it can be challenging to know what status each artist is eligible to apply for, so MIPs often help artists navigate this residency permit renewal process.

6 The Global Talent Visa is open to a leader or potential leader in one of the following fields: academia or research, arts and culture, and digital technology.

When an artist already knows or already has contacts with an organisation who will hire them or work with them this can help the process, as without the assurance of work it can be difficult to access these long-term residency permits. This process might also be led by the development of creative projects: if an MIP receives a very general inquiry about a residency permit or wanting to find an organisation to partner with it can be difficult to know where to direct them, however, if an artist comes with a specific project in mind then the MIP can be more targeted in where they can refer the query.

Transitioning to long-term residency permits requires artists to think about the next stage even as they are just starting their temporary stay. Many public funding programmes or grants that are directed at displaced artists or artists at risk are short term and they do not always think about what happens afterwards. As Sebastian Hoffmann from Germany's touring artists explains, 'what we see a lot is that artists at risk, they have this kind of financial cushion, this kind of safety during these government-sponsored fellowship programmes, but the time after is usually quite catastrophic because they don't have any money and they don't have any other grants that they can survive on after that fellowship has ended.' MIPs can try to ease this transition by encouraging arts workers at risk who are on these programmes to think about what will happen afterwards and to raise awareness about the available funds and timelines. In the case of some MIP (such as touring artists from Germany), they have been working with local organisations who advise artists on where they can apply for public or private funding for their projects, so that artists at risk can be prepared for this transition. In some cases arts workers at risk have had to leave their host countries due to lack of funding and information providers do not always have the resources to provide in-depth consultations or educational programmes for arts workers at risk.

The step from emergency support to longer term stability might require giving up support provided to those with asylum seeker or refugee status (that might have maximum income caps, for example) in order to take up employment, become an entrepreneur or to earn more. However, given **the income and employment instability that can come with working as an artist**, this can feel like a big risk. As Stijn Michielsens from Cultuurloket in Belgium highlights, 'if [artists at risk] have a social protection in Belgium, and then they want to develop professional activities, it's difficult for them because they need to let go of their basic protection to go to an unstable professional protection, and that's something really difficult for them to lose.'⁷

Developing a community

A point raised throughout these discussions, which is relevant at any stage of the settling in process, was the importance of **developing a sense of community** and the feeling of a safe space. As arts workers at risk come from different local contexts, even if they are from the same country it does not mean they have a shared experience. Therefore, many information providers have provided regular spaces where arts workers at risk could meet each other, talk to each other and share experiences. For example, Office Ukraine, from April 2022, have implemented Information and Networking events in Innsbruck, the Get Together meetings in Vienna and the Open House project in Graz, in which every second Wednesday they met each other and those from the local arts scene so Ukrainian and Austrian art communities got to know each other and found new contacts and connections. As explained in the publication [*Office Ukraine. Two Years of Support for Ukrainian Artists*](#), the Open House concept has also given rise to the Solidarity Art Event series, in which Ukrainian artists are offered a platform to present their artistic work. Other formats, such as workshops and readings, were also integrated into

⁷ This was also reflected in [QMA's Manifesto](#), with interviewed artists explaining that 'when you are in a transition moment, also from student to artist visa, it's very difficult ... you don't necessarily have the security of having not to earn money in order to focus on getting attached to an institution or an intuitional program or any type of project funding.'

the Solidarity Art Event programme, to increase the visibility of Ukrainian artists in the local scene. Finding these points of connection is also important for internally displaced people, taking into consideration the diversity of communities.

Speaking one's own language can also be an important element of creating these community spaces, as the language barrier can be one of the main challenges facing artists at risk. Making spaces that are more welcoming can include working with community members to co-deliver

sessions in different languages, and this language assistance can also be included in administrative processes. For example, in the USA there are translations available for certain processes, but arts workers also need to know that they have a right to ask for this.

It is important to consider how these spaces are created and with who, as inviting representatives who are involved in administrative processes (such as apply for a visa) might make participants feel less able to share freely about their challenges.

Supporting at-risk and displaced arts workers in their resettlement journey

Through the discussions several issues were raised about how to best support arts workers at risk. The below section summarises some of these challenges and approaches raised in the focus groups.

Defining roles: being clear about the limitations

Given the different stages of the settling in process of arts workers at risk, it was highlighted in the discussions that it is very important to be clear about expectations around what MIPs and other information providers can assist with. This is especially the case for queries that come from outside the information point's own country, such as queries from artists seeking to flee situations of risk; the information point does not have the knowledge or expertise to address these queries, although they can direct the queries to other relevant organisations. Additionally, the support or information required by an asylum seeker still in their home or neighbouring country is very different to that of someone who has already relocated to, for example, a European Union country.

An example of other areas where information points are not able to provide extensive support was given by Germany's touring artists, which has two areas in particular where they are not able to provide advice or support: asylum seeker processes and applying for social benefits. In both these cases there are well established organisations that are experts in these areas. Additionally, these are both complex processes that are always evolving. However, it was also noted that sometimes these other **organisations lack the specific knowledge about the arts sector and the specific challenges those working in the arts sector might face**, and Hoffmann from touring artists notes that 'there is definitely a lot of need for more specialised services regarding social benefits.'

Another area that lay beyond the MIPs' mandate is matching artists with organisations, a process that can be particularly important for those wanting to transition to different visas or more stable residency and employment opportunities. Although they provided spaces for networking, they could not undertake a more detailed matchmaking role. Hoffmann explains that 'as a mobility information point, we just don't have

the staff and knowledge to match artists with a potential host organisation.’ Lukacs from MobiCulture also expressed her frustration at not being able to provide this support, saying that ‘our missions as Mobility Info Point is not matching artists and organisations’ and that is also not something they can do for artists generally, not just arts workers at risk. Lukacs tries to share resources of where arts workers can find opportunities, but when there is already a project in development they can be more targeted in their advice. Nicola Smyth from the Arts Council England (part of the Arts Infopoint UK) highlights that although they have access to networks and information that would be required for a matching process (since they are in a funding relationship with a lot of the organisations that people would be wanting to work with) they do not have much staffing resource within the MIP. Smyth highlights that for them, ‘it’s less about access to the information and more the time required to do that kind of individual consultation.’ This matching might be outside resources of MIPs, but it is a much-needed support service for arts workers at risk, and it is not always easy to find an organisation that can help with this process.

Rachel Switlick from Tamizdat’s SHIM programme also highlights **the importance of being clear about the limits of what they can provide and their expertise**, directing people to other professionals when necessary: ‘while we do very much care, it’s not the same as having actual licensed mental health support ... so [it’s about] being clear about some of the limitations that we have, and then trying to find resources for them that are accessible if they exist.’ These limits can come in the form of lack of expertise but they can also be defined by the parameters of the programme, funding of each organisation, or the political context. For example, the SHIM residency is normally for one year, and while the programme aims to keep in touch with the residents and endeavours to prepare them for the time after

the residency, they cannot continue to provide the same level of support⁸. Switlick adds that talking about the level of support is particularly important in expensive cities like New York City.

Katie James from Wales Arts International (part of the Arts Infopoint UK) is sometimes approached by arts workers at risk to clarify if they are eligible for public funding (especially with regards to their particular visa, which might be different to the visa of artists who are not at risk) or from those who are having difficulty understanding the information online or who have slow response times to their applications. James explains that they are seeking to ‘develop a bit more of a signposting page on our website ... recognising that this skill set probably lies elsewhere, and there’s already support schemes in place.’ They see their website as a starting point in being able to direct people to support structures that already exist.

Throughout the conversations the MIPs in particular emphasised their roles as **‘dispatchers’**, directing queries to the most relevant experts and maintaining relevant and up-to-date information. Hoffmann explains the process as follows: ‘Let’s say, when we get a request from an artist at risk, our role as a mobility information point is also kind of a dispatcher; we should have a certain knowledge of what other organisations and services exist and then we could try to direct the person who asks us to maybe a specific service for a queer Ukrainian speaker, or someone who may not need help with applying for cultural funding, but maybe more psychosocial help or medical help, which is not something that we can provide.’ For Hoffmann, this directing to the most appropriate support can be one of the biggest challenges, due to the different types of structures with very different financial resources. Additionally, ‘if an artist needs information in a very regionalised country like Germany, you would need a lot of different information because there’s different contact

8 For more information about the SHIM programme, see Allia, L. ‘Chapter 14: Case Study: New York City Safe Haven Residency Programme’ in *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals—Volume 3 Case Studies*, On the Move, 2025.

points in different regions and cities.’ Hoffmann has also found that it is a challenge to point towards up-to-date information, since many links to this kind of collated information, and especially about funding and grants specific to artists at risk programmes, are short term and are quickly out of date: ‘this especially frustrating regarding help for artists from Ukraine, because there were so many networks and information pages that were set up in 2022; they’re still online, but they’re outdated.’

Developing partnerships

Many of the organisations highlighted the different ways that they developed partnerships to either provide information, reach out to arts workers at risk or build trust.

During the discussions several organisations mentioned **the importance of directing arts workers at risk to expert service providers** (for example, in asylum seeker or social security applications, or health providers). For SHIM the partnerships are sometimes built on a case-by-case basis, given the situation of each arts worker at risk (as it might need to be adapted to their visa, financial or personal situation). However, the programme itself is a collaboration between Artistic Freedom Initiative, Joe’s Pub at the Public Theater, and Tamizdat and it is also part of the larger The New York City Artist Safe Haven Residency Programme, which is a coalition that includes Residency Unlimited, and previously, Westbeth Artists Housing.

However, some partnerships can be more challenging to develop, and the difficulty of **building trust** was mentioned during the focus groups. Sometimes it would take a someone with a personal relationship, even if they were based in another country, to make the first introduction.

Finding the right communities to connect with was also seen as an important way to get information to arts workers at risk but that it

was not always easy to reach out to arts workers at risk. Nastia Khlestova from Office Ukraine mentioned personal networks as key in reaching out. This personal connection can be vital in getting information to the right people. For example, Mykhailo Glubokyi from IZOLYATSIA provided the example of websites that provide a lot of information but that have not been able to reach out to wide audiences, so that people just do not know they exist. An example where a platform does seem to be working is the [House of Europe](#), which is a programme funded by the European Union and implemented by Goethe-Institut Ukraine fostering professional and creative exchange between Ukrainians and their colleagues in EU countries and the UK.

It was also mentioned in the focus groups that some organisations are at times approached because they are very clear about working with arts workers at risk, such as Office Ukraine or others who have built a reputation working in certain communities. This could also be seen in some platforms that were established at the beginning of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine, such as the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation’s platform connecting artists’ emergency needs (such as housing, equipment, or support to continuing doing their work) with stakeholders who could help them meet these needs⁹. For MIPs, it can be more challenging to raise awareness of their work for arts workers at risk, given they are just one of their many target groups. As has been mentioned above, there is information available directed at arts workers at risk (for example, since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, CzechMobility.Info established a special section for Ukrainian artists in their information channel [CultureNet](#)), but it is important to find the right space alongside other organisations supporting arts workers at risk. Hoffmann mentioned that they were interested in developing more connections with organisations that cater to specific diaspora groups, as the support these organisations provide (for example connecting

9 Other examples of such platforms set up in the wake of the full-scale invasion include [United for Ukraine](#), [EU4UA](#) or [Helfende Wände](#), which all grew out of the need for emergency housing.

with community, being able to communicate in one's mother tongue, creating a sense of feeling at home, to name a few) are complementary to what a MIP can provide. Office Ukraine is already working with many interest groups (to help spread information, for example), as these are already established networks. Anastasija Konkina from [Creative Europe Desk Latvia](#) also mentioned how working with the Ukrainian Creative Europe Desk was particularly helpful in finding the right people and organisations, as they were connected to the Ukrainian diaspora and they could connect Creative Europe Desk Latvia with those who wanted to participate in Creative Europe projects. This outreach can be a continual process, especially as every arts worker at risk is on their own trajectory with different needs and at different stages. Therefore, it might be necessary to develop a mixed approach (connect with interest groups, communities and diaspora organisations, provide information in online and in-person networking sessions, developing spaces for networking with new communities, and more) to make sure arts workers at risk do not fall through the cracks.

Developing partnerships is also a way to **support the limited resources of MIPs**. As Mafalda Sebastião highlights, partnerships with the public institutions could be further developed. These partnerships could include access to spaces (such as schools or libraries) or connections with public institutions that have the competence to take care of these basic needs in social, legal, health or economical spheres. Sebastião emphasises that although these partnerships might seem like they are not possible, it is sometimes easier to develop than it seems. It might take time, but once such partnerships are established they can help by providing updated, secure and correct information, joining MIPs in a more active partnership. It can also be the role of the MIP to advocate for arts workers at risk in these contexts, by raising awareness of their particular needs and challenges.

In other political contexts it can be important to consider private partnerships. In the USA, for example, there have been more discussions about how to develop different funding partnerships that are less reliant on public funding, raising the need to build more relationships with private foundations.

How can the provision of information for at-risk and displaced arts workers be upscaled?

The following outlines key operational aspects that would ideally be in place for running a mobility information provider targeted at arts workers who are displaced and at risk. It draws from the conversations, practices and experiences shared throughout this document. Mobility Information Points or other information providers may already implement some or many of these features. The elements below are not intended as a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather a consideration of the key elements to be included, as well as some key points to consider, to upscale what already exists.

Organisational structure

There are many organisations working with arts workers at risk at various stages, therefore it is important to ensure that 1) a targeted information provider does not replicate the work other organisations are already doing and that 2) arts workers at risk do not fall between the gaps of service providers. Mobility Information Points are well placed to help arts workers at risk through moments of transition (which might involve moving between different organisations or

service providers working with arts workers at risk or navigating unfamiliar bureaucratic processes). However, it can be a challenge for one Mobility Information Point to have enough familiarity across all artistic disciplines and all stages of the settlement or resettlement process, on a local, national and international level. This challenge could be addressed through **developing a consortium that can pool together their expertise, networks and experiences** in order to provide targeted and up-to-date support for the individual needs of arts workers at risk. A Mobility Information Point (ideally one based in each country) could coordinate this consortium, as they have an overview of mobility processes as well as the expertise in accurately directing queries. The members of the consortium could change (responding to the changing communities of at-risk and displaced arts workers in the case of outbreak of conflicts, for example) and the consortium could reach out to specific community groups or diasporas as the need arises.

These consortia could be established at a national level and they might include **organisations with specific expertise in certain regions or localities** (which might be the case in regionalised countries or in hubs, such as Berlin, which receive more arts workers at risk) or **across different art forms**. It would be most effective if it were to **join public and private bodies**; this would help to share public resources, be up to date with changes in administrative, social security and visa processes, and be connected and build trust within communities of arts workers at risk.

Although operating at a national level, these **consortia would collaborate closely with other such bodies at an international level, both within receiving countries and countries of origin**. Developing a network with other receiving countries can help to share learnings and resources, connect arts workers at risk who might be relocating and to advocate at European or international level for better conditions for arts workers at risk (particularly in identified points of tension, such as the transition between different visas or having visa conditions that take into

account the specificities of the culture sector – short contracts, etc.). Creating strong networks with countries of origin can help in developing cultural competence and understanding of where the arts workers at risk have fled from, and it can also help the consortium to identify and reach out to communities with arts workers at risk in their own countries.

Outreach to at-risk and displaced arts workers

Reaching out to arts workers at risk (so that they can identify these consortium as a key place to go for information about their cross-border mobility administrative issues) is partly achieved through the members of the consortium – through those organisations that have already been working for a long period with arts workers at risk or with specific communities or community interest groups. It **takes time to build trust** within community groups and building strong partnerships with such communities is a way to reach out, raise awareness of the work of information providers and keep up to date with the challenges arts workers at risk face. In this process it is important to consider ways to **create spaces for community feeling**. Some activities or approaches to help develop these community spaces can include **in-person gatherings**, involving **cultural mediators or translators**, or involving **those with lived experience as an arts worker at risk** within the organisations of the consortium.

Alongside this trust-building and creating spaces for a feeling of community, the consortium can also reach out by **publicising their activities and services**. This could be through community and diaspora groups (also in native languages), personal networks, social media and more **informal, trust-based communication methods**. They can also reach out to organisations based in the home country to help connect with displaced arts workers. Finally, attention should be paid to intersectional factors when reaching out – are there specific interest groups that are relevant for certain at-risk arts workers?

While engaging with arts workers at risk, it is valuable to **embed feedback loops for listening to the actual needs and adapting the services and approaches**. This is also a way to adapt to the changing needs (for example, as new conflicts arise) or to changing political contexts (where visa or asylum seeker regulations might change). The consortium model can adapt to these changes in a more agile way, incorporating different organisations as the needs change.

Providing information and supporting people through the administrative processes

One of the key deliverables for a consortium on the delivery of cross-border administration support to at-risk and displaced arts workers to it direct people to clear information and help them find answers to their administration challenges, whether that is through providing direct answers, directing them to further online information, or directing them to another organisation that provides specific support.

One of the first steps, especially for general queries or for those seeking to orient themselves in the process, can be an **online website, managed and kept up to date by the consortium**. This online portal would need to clearly signpost information that is specifically for arts workers at risk. In terms of what it contains it would need to:

- clearly outline the information needed at each stage of the settlement process,
- provides detail for the specific process and supporting organisations in each locality, and
- connect to an international network of up-to-date information portals so that a national information provider and easily refer someone to another context, when needed.

This first entry point could help at-risk and displaced arts workers to gain an understanding

of what processes they need to think about, where they are in the administrative journey and who they can approach for more detailed assistance.

In addition to these information portals, there would need to be **personalised consultations** for at-risk and displaced arts workers. These would be adapted to individual needs and they would be a way to 1) provide answers to complex queries to which there is no straightforward answer available and 2) **accompany the arts worker in this complex process**. The latter might involve more proactive follow up to support them through the steep learning curve and to help mitigate the feeling of being overwhelmed in an unfamiliar environment (and within a bureaucratic process). This can also mean directing people to mental health and well-being support or other cultural adaptation or community support. Proactive follow up can also help at-risk arts workers make sure they are aware of what they need to be thinking about at each stage (for example, applying for the next round of grants in time before their government support might end) to help them in the particularly challenging transition processes.

An element that could be expanded upon further would be the capacity for the consortium to help at-risk and displaced arts workers identify and approach organisations that they could work with. This **matchmaking** role is particularly important for arts workers at-risk as finding a local organisation to work for or with might be a requirement of obtaining an ongoing visa (a requirement that might be particularly urgent in situations in which they are not able to 'return home' or develop relationships without the time pressure). How this matchmaking is developed might depend on the size of each country and the numbers of at-risk and displaced arts workers that country might host, although it would need to take into consideration different localities and art forms (for example, through developing a wide network of experts such as curators or producers).

Finally, the consortium can **host in-person gatherings and create informal spaces** for at-risk and displaced arts workers to gain information, build networks, and develop a sense of community. Things to consider when hosting these spaces can include language and translation (for example, host gatherings in partnership with diaspora groups and/or in multiple languages), include those with personal experience of being arts workers at risk in the design and implementation of the gatherings and consider ways to make these gatherings feel safe (for example, that they are not hosted or do not include those who can make decisions about a person's residency status, as that might inhibit participants from sharing openly).

Advocating for at-risk and displaced arts workers

Given that a consortium would be very up to date on the cross-border administration challenges faced by at-risk and displaced arts workers, part of their role could be to **advocate for the needs of these workers at a national**

and international level. For example, they could raise key challenges, such as the lack of transparency of processes, long wait times on visa processes and decisions, lack of flexibility within administrative processes to adapt to the specific challenges in the culture sector (such as shorter contracts or more precarious employment conditions). Gathering the data and personal accounts across different consortia would provide an overview of the pressure points across Europe and internationally.

The consortium could also **support cultural organisations who are interested in sponsoring visas and work permits for arts workers at risk.** This could include activities such as raising awareness about the possibility of employing arts workers at risk, sharing networks so that arts workers at risk can connect with relevant organisations, or providing information about the administrative process to these organisations.

Additionally, the consortium could **educate those who provide support and services to those at-risk on the specific needs of arts workers.**

About the author

Claire Rosslyn Wilson is the Data Collector and Analyst for On the Move and she also works as the Editor for the Asia Europe Foundation culture platform ASEF culture360. Born in Naarm/Melbourne (Australia) and based in Barcelona (Spain), she has over 10 years of experience as a freelance cultural writer, researcher and editor working with non-profit and cultural organisations in the Asia-Pacific and Europe (such as the Committee on Culture of the United Cities and Local Governments, IN SITU, Østfold Internasjonale Teater, European Dance Development Network, City of Bilbao, and others). She also has a PhD focused on translocal creative practice.

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To fully appreciate the breadth of the research on The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals, please do consider reading the [other chapters](#) gathered in this third report, as well as the first two reports available for download: [Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition – Volume 1 Scoping Review](#) and [Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments, and Patchwork Solutions – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis](#).

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