

ON  
THE  
MOVE

# CULTURAL MOBILITY FLOWS

European Outermost Regions and  
Overseas Countries and Territories

REPORT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



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On the Move is an international information network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 67 members from 26 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.

**<https://on-the-move.org>**

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# Foreword

This publication follows a Mobility Webinar organised by On the Move in April 2022 as part of a series of online discussions investigating international artistic and cultural mobility issues. For this webinar, On the Move collaborated with Archipel.eu partners<sup>1</sup> in order to discuss cultural mobility in European Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories. Addressing the specificities of these European contexts (from operating in isolation to having a low sense of belonging to Europe, from dealing with the effects of the pandemic to reshaping postcolonial relations, etc.), arts professionals were invited to share experiences and trends, identify burning issues and related needs, and imagine action for fairer cross-border mobility flows.<sup>2</sup> We thank all participants for their contributions.

This report presents the main takeaways of the conversation as we greatly benefited from the input of representatives based in these European territories, who shaped and brought value to the online conversation. This publication also outlines

recommendations to cultural operators and decision-makers for providing contextual support – including support for professional development and access to professional information and tools. These recommendations are informed by years of dialogue with local stakeholders. Since 2018, On the Move has been coordinating PARI!,<sup>3</sup> the international professional development programme mentoring performing artists, visual artists, and music ensembles, including those from Reunion Island, Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Guyana. Moreover, On the Move regularly co-organises workshops and info sessions targeting arts professionals from Europe’s outermost regions.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, On the Move is finalising for the end of 2022, with the support of the French ministry of Culture, a mobility funding guide and related (administrative) issues focusing on the French overseas territories. This guide will be the basis of info-sessions with artists and cultural professionals from the focused regions.

We wish you an inspiring read!

**Marie Le Sourd,  
Secretary General**

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- 1 Led by the Institut français (France) in partnership with OCTA - Overseas Countries and Territories Association of the European Union (Belgium) and APCA - Agência de Promoção da Cultura Atlântica (Portugal) and co-financed by the European Union, the Archipel.eu pilot project (2021-2023) aims to implement a viable and effective financial support mechanism for both arts professionals and cultural institutions in the European overseas territories. Several institutional partners and cultural operators contribute to Archipel.eu, including the Tjibaou Cultural Centre, the Region of Reunion, Relais Culture Europe, On the Move, EUNIC, the University of Madeira (UMA), and the Directions des affaires culturelles of Martinique and Guadeloupe. See: <https://programme-archipel.eu>
  - 2 The recording of the Mobility Webinar as well as its Key Resources are accessible on the On the Move website: <https://on-the-move.org/work/events/mobility-webinar-cultural-mobility-european-outermost-regions-and-overseas-countries>
  - 3 PARI! (Parcours d'Accompagnement et de Réflexion sur l'International) is On the Move's flagship international mentoring programme. Initiated by the French Ministry of Culture and supported as well since 2019 by Institut français, PARI! Is coordinated by On the Move. It supports artists and organisations to think on a deeper level about what it means to be 'international', while meeting the environmental, ethical and social concerns of international work. Participants range from established organisations looking to make a strategic shift, to new or independent players who have the potential to develop but lack access to information, resources and connections. See: <https://on-the-move.org/work/projects/pari>
  - 4 For example, in January 2022 in Aruba, Dutch Caribbean, together with Plataforma: <https://www.plataformaruba.org/enhomepage>. On the Move also regularly holds workshops with French overseas territories' artists residents at Cité internationale des arts in Paris, France.

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# Report

The Mobility Webinar on European Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories aimed to explore the very definition of 'international mobility' by investigating the relationship of these regions both with mainland Europe's stakeholders and with operators in neighbouring countries. We had the opportunity to listen to first-hand experiences from arts professionals from or active in Madeira, Greenland and the Dutch Caribbean. The invited individuals were: Sharelly Emanuelson, a filmmaker and visual artist based in Curaçao who also engages in curatorial inquiries and founded Uniarte, an artist-run foundation that enhances the visibility and development of emerging professional artists in the Caribbean region;<sup>5</sup> Susanne Andreasen, artistic director at The National Theatre of Greenland, also a dramaturg and teacher at The National Acting School of Greenland;<sup>6</sup> acclaimed contemporary dance artist Sara Anjo, born in Funchal, Madeira Island and operating at an international level.<sup>7</sup> The discussion was facilitated by Claire Rosslyn Wilson, freelance cultural writer, researcher and editor, with international experience in Thailand, Singapore, Spain and Australia.<sup>8</sup>

The Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories are territories that are part of or associated with the European Union, and particularly with five Member States – Portugal, Spain, Denmark, France and the Netherlands.

The Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories are special territories of the European Union. The 9 Outermost Regions (ORs) are European regions of France, Portugal and Spain that due to

the geographical remoteness from mainland Europe, benefit from a specific status granted by the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union, with the objective of responding to the specific challenges faced by these regions. The 13 Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) are territories that do not form part of the European Union territory, however they are associated to the EU due to their links with three EU Member States: Denmark, France and the Netherlands.

The 9 ORs are: Azores (Portugal), Canary Islands (Spain), French Guiana (France), Guadeloupe (France), Madeira (Portugal), Martinique (France), Mayotte (France), Reunion Island (France), and Saint-Martin (France). The 13 OCTs are: Aruba (The Netherlands), Bonaire (The Netherlands), Curaçao (The Netherlands), French Polynesia (FR), French Southern and Antarctic Territories (France), Greenland (Denmark), New Caledonia (France), Saba (The Netherlands), Saint Barthelemy (France), Sint Eustatius (The Netherlands), Sint Maarten (The Netherlands), St. Pierre and Miquelon (France), and Wallis and Futuna Islands (France).

Together, the ORs and OCTs are diverse in terms of location, environments, land size, language and history, though the majority are islands or archipelagos, and all have small populations when compared to the average size of the EU member states. The highest is the Canary Islands at around 2.1 million, while 10 out of the 22 ORs and OCTs have populations under 100,000. Combined, there are approximately 5.8 million EU citizens in the ORs and OCTs – roughly 1.3% of the total EU population.

5 See: <https://uniarte.org>

6 See: <https://nuis.gl>

7 See: <https://www.saraanjo.com>

8 She is also an editor for [culture360.ASEF.org](http://culture360.ASEF.org)

# Mobility funding

Looking at open calls on the On the Move website in the two-year period 2020-2021, just 10 out of 1,288 calls involved the ORs and OCTs as mobility destinations or were targeted to the area. These calls tended to focus on project funding or generalised mobility funding, and were mainly offered by large institutional funders running special programmes that targeted multiple beneficiaries. The Institut français for instance ran calls under two funds: the Caribbean Mobility Fund,<sup>9</sup> supporting the mobility of artists and culture professionals within the region and towards parts of North America, and the Indianoceanic Mobility Fund<sup>10</sup>, targeting mobility within that region and towards Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya. In September 2020, the EU special programme 'Pilot Project for the Safeguard and Promotion of Culture in the Outermost Regions and the Overseas Countries and Territories' called for an organisation or consortium to run a new funding scheme in the ORs and OCTs to test modes of support and provide recommendations for the future. Since the launch of Archipel.eu in October 2021, four calls for projects have been opened and implemented. Cultural mobility is at the centre of three of these. The Fund for 'La Collection Archipel.eu' (€150,000) aims to support the dissemination of exhibitions, shows and artistic proposals from ORs and OCTs. The 'Mobility Fund Archipel.eu' (€100,000) supports the mobility of culture-sector professionals and artists from the ORs and the OCTs. The 'Cultural Cooperation and Networking Fund of Archipel.eu' (€150,000) aims to promote exchanges between the ORs, the OCTs, and continental Europe.

In general, open calls for the ORs and OCTs tended to address multiple art forms and disciplines, were multi-regional rather than dedicated to one

territory, and allowed beneficiaries to build their own projects and activities. This is somewhat different from 'typical' calls collected by On the Move, which are usually connected to existing projects, events, research activities, or festival programmes; adopt the residency as the main form of activity; and often have a theme or topic that the applicant is invited to respond to. While less common, there were a few examples of calls for the ORs and OCTs that matched this profile. One such was a call launched in 2021 for the Technarte Residency Tenerife – an art, science and technology residency hosted by the creative studio and conference organiser Technarte alongside the research centre ITER – Instituto Tecnológico y de Energías Renovables. Over four years, art-science residencies are planned around a rotating series of themes: the energy transition, volcanology and seismology, telecommunications and supercomputing, and sustainability and environment.

Overall, the picture for the ORs and OCTs is of a relatively low level of funded mobility, but of some emerging efforts to kickstart more support – perhaps in recognition that these territories have been historically underserved. While organisations based in the ORs and OCTs are eligible for Creative Europe funding, of the 4,706 projects awarded funding across all programmes in 2014-2020<sup>11</sup> only 5 involved organisations from ORs as partners or coordinators – 4 for the Canary Islands and 1 for the Azores. None involved organisations from the OCTs<sup>12</sup>. If Creative Europe project funding were allocated in proportion to population size, OR and OCT organisations would have been involved in around 10 times as many projects.

9 The programme is part of the Africa and Caribbean cultural cooperation mission of the Institut français in partnership with the Directorates of Cultural Affairs of Guadeloupe, Guyana and Martinique. This programme is open to culture professionals or artists living in the Caribbean (Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Venezuela) or in a French Department of America (Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guiana). It covers all artistic disciplines and a variety of cross-border cultural projects. See: <https://www.pro.institutfrancais.com/en/programmes-and-projects/caribbean-mobility-fund>

10 The programme of the Africa and Caribbean cultural cooperation mission of the Institut français with the support of the Ministry of Culture (Directorates of cultural affairs of Reunion and Mayotte and the Directorate-General for Artistic Creation). This programme is open to culture professionals or artists living in one of the overseas departments of France in the Indian Ocean, in one of the Indian Ocean Commission member countries (Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, France with Reunion Island, Seychelles) or in Mozambique, or Tanzania or Kenya. It covers all artistic disciplines and a variety of cross-border cultural projects. See: <https://www.pro.institutfrancais.com/en/programmes-and-projects/indianoceanic-mobility-fund>

11 See: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/projects/search>

12 Power of Diversity – The Crossing Lines Project (2015-2018): <http://www.power-of-diversity.eu>; Opera(e)Studio (2018-2020): <https://operaestudio.eu/en/>; SILO, Socially Inclusive Literature Operations (2017-2019): <https://www.silops.eu>; TOURMALET Films, MATAR CANGREJOS / KILLING CRABS (2019-2022): <https://tourmaletfilms.com/MATAR-CANGREJOS>; EFP (European Film Promotion), Film Sales Support (2020-2021): <https://www.efp-online.com/en/>

Marta Fernández Fornieles, the EU Programmes Adviser at the Overseas Countries & Territories Association, underlines that one of the major obstacles for Creative Europe participation is the level of co-financing needed to apply, and points out that the Erasmus+ programme has a much higher

uptake within the ORs and OCTs. Apart from being open to more sectors, it permits smaller budgets and has lower requirements for match funding, lessening one of the major obstacles for mobility in the region: financial and organisational capacity<sup>13</sup>.

## Organising, routes and connections

In their renewed strategy for the outermost regions, the European Commission identified a number of challenges inherent to the development of these territories, including their 'geographic location, remoteness, insularity, [and] small size'.

Remoteness is a subjective quality, but it is true that the ORs and OCTs are mostly distant from the European continent, and at times from one another. Curaçaoan artist and filmmaker Sharelly Emanuelson describes the pressure for cooperation projects to try to engage all 6 islands in the Caribbean part of the Dutch Kingdom, as otherwise audiences are too small, but points out that this can quickly inflate budgets. A 15-minute flight between islands costs € 300, while an in-season ticket to the Netherlands would be around € 800. Moving activities online has helped with this and allowed more programmes to open across the region, but physical travel remains a challenge.

In the context of international projects, this is something of a compounding problem: it is harder to lay the foundations of international projects because travel is more complex and expensive for pre-meetings, research, etc., while at the same time projects require more planning because they have to deal with extra complexity around mobility. In Greenland, Susanne Andreasen, the artistic director of the National Theatre of Greenland, explains that even within Greenland itself some rural areas can

only be reached by helicopter, and that they often have to start planning their projects 2 or 3 years in advance.

The relationship with Europe also pulls collaborations into some less sustainable shapes. Sharelly Emanuelson explains that in the Caribbean part of the Dutch Kingdom it is the Netherlands that remains the main 'point of reference', and that developing an artistic career eventually means going there. 'The rest of the world is this kind of unachievable or very dreamlike reality. One wonders how to start to get there.' For education, it 'would be much more natural to study in say Puerto Rico or even Cuba, but because of financial resources it is always catered more to Europe'.

Even when geographically near, neighbouring territories can be difficult to reach. At its closest point, Greenland, an Overseas Territory, is around 16km from Canada, but there are no direct routes there. Travelling to North America means passing through Europe, with Iceland and Denmark the 'gateways' for anyone travelling into or out of the country. Susanne Andreasen says that close collaborations with Nordic countries<sup>14</sup> are an important part of their strategy – 'this is where the money is' – but that Greenland shares the most in terms of culture, language and history with Canada: 'this is where the heart is'.

13 For example, the calls for proposals under the Creative Europe programme - Culture Strand indicate the necessity to co-finance the cooperation projects submitted, from 20% for Small-scale projects (i.e. € 50,000 to match the maximum grant) to 40% for Large-scale projects (i.e. € 1,333,333 to match the maximum grant). See: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/culture-strand/european-cooperation-projects>. In comparison for example, calls for proposals under the Erasmus+ programme – Key Action 2 Cooperation among organizations and institutions, indicate different lump sums or pre-defined amounts (e.g. € 120,000, € 250,000 and € 400,000), with a funding model aiming to cover 100% of the implementation of a cooperation project. See: Erasmus+ Programme Guide 2022: <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/document/erasmus-programme-guide-2022>

14 See for example the Nordic-Baltic Mobility Programme for Culture run by the Nordic Culture Point: <https://www.nordiskkulturkontakt.org/en/grants/about-the-grant-programmes/mobility-funding/>

## Site, heritage, environment

While the environments of the ORs and OCTs vary, the importance of landscape is a common thread, and safeguarding heritage has been an important theme in funding programmes and policy – particularly as many ORs and OCTs are at increased risk from the effects of climate change.

Reminding that her home territory of Madeira has the largest area of primary forest in Europe, and a unique biosphere with it, dancer and choreographer Sara Anjo advocates for a perspective shift away from a touristic appraisal of the environment towards a wider sense of its character and qualities: '[we need to] think of land as being sacred, as being

very valuable, as having will and spirit'. She likewise highlights the need for cultural tourism to broaden from a narrow focus on entertainment to encompass festivals, curation, and artistic programming – a 'different aesthetic'.

Seeing land and environment as both venue and collaborator within the artistic process – as a site for research, creation and presentation – might be an opportunity to align the ORs and OCTs with emerging trends in outdoor and site-responsive work, and sidestep some of the problems associated with a lack of more traditional 'infrastructure' such as galleries, theatres and art centres.

## Centre and periphery

If the pandemic has brought a refocusing on the local, perhaps for the ORs and OCTs territories this points to a wider need to consider these places individually and on their own strengths, as well as to accept their self-determination in deciding how and where to spend resources.

Madina Regnault, the programme manager for Archipel.eu, says that they already see the funding scheme enabling different trajectories – with strong interest among applicants in, for instance, collaborations between Madeira and the Canary Islands, or between the French outermost regions (Martinique, Guadeloupe, Reunion Island) and the African continent.

For her part, Sharelly Emanuelson underlines that the local and its needs should be looked at and

addressed before the international is possible – which in the Caribbean part of the Dutch Kingdom means acknowledging that artists or culture professionals might not have the formal statuses needed to apply for funding, send invoices, etc. 'It needs this larger infrastructure around it for it to work.'

In the past, the ORs and OCTs have often been referred to as 'peripheral' territories. This framing is revealing concerning how they are seen within Europe, as well as where they stand in relation to the European infrastructure and resources they are entitled to. Sara Anjo: 'When we live there, that's our centre; it's not the periphery. We are always in our centre, and the periphery is what surrounds us. It's really important to change that perspective and to challenge what is or is not the periphery.'

# State of the arts

For the last decade, the European Union has increasingly paid attention to its Outermost Regions, not only calling for a stronger and renewed partnership with these regions but also calling for action regarding key areas that were identified by the European Commission. In the EC's Communication on the topic,<sup>15</sup> we observe that the arts and culture field has a limited place as the text only acknowledges 'a rich cultural heritage, which together with their biodiversity and natural landscape makes [the Outermost Regions] attractive tourism destinations'. However, in the new European regulation 2021-2027, the specificities of the Outermost Regions are recognised, and several dedicated schemes will be created,<sup>16</sup> within which we hope the culture field will be supported.

We also see the positive progress made at European level and the upcoming investments to support Europe's outermost contexts, in relation to improving skills or digital infrastructure. In its 2020 report, the European Commission points out that 'Developing the outermost regions' research and innovation potential is key to boost growth in these regions. Increasing their participation in international research networks and global value chains both within Europe and with third countries can help the outermost regions to strengthen their innovation systems and create employment.'<sup>17</sup>

Again, the creative sector is not directly targeted but the European Commission underlines that further investment in international mobility would 'improve cooperation with neighbouring countries and support regional integration'.

Moreover, the recent Council Decision on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories proposes a framework to stimulate cultural exchanges 'through cooperation between the cultural and creative sectors of all partners; promotion of the circulation of cultural and creative works and operators between them; policy cooperation in order to foster policy development, innovation, audience building and new business models.'<sup>18</sup>

The five Member States directly involved with Europe's ORs and OCTs have developed support schemes towards their overseas cultural operators and arts professionals, or made the existing national ones accessible to them.<sup>19</sup> However, practitioners report that several local and regional governments traditionally focus more on the sports and tourism sectors in existing funding schemes. Through its Cultural Mobility Funding Guides,<sup>20</sup> On the Move observes that cross-border cultural mobility is unevenly supported, and that ORs and OCTs are rarely explicitly mentioned as incoming or outgoing destinations.

15 European Commission: A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions. Communication from The Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank, October 2017: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:32f72786-b980-11e7-a7f8-01aa75ed71a1.0018.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:32f72786-b980-11e7-a7f8-01aa75ed71a1.0018.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

16 For example, calls for proposals can be launched for combined funding under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), and the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) established by Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council. A dedicated Strand D concerns the geographical areas of Amazonia and the Caribbean, Middle Atlantic/Gulf of Guinea, Indian Ocean and the Mozambique Channel. The financial amounts represent 3.5% of the INTERREG amount or approximately 280 million euros.

17 European Commission: Report from The Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the European Investment Bank on the implementation of the Commission Communication on a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions, March 2020: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:06752b4a-6cf9-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:06752b4a-6cf9-11ea-b735-01aa75ed71a1.0004.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

18 See the Chapter 5 of the Council Decision dedicated to culture and tourism. COUNCIL DECISION (EU) 2021/1764 of 5 October 2021 on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Union including relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on the other (Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D1764&qid=1633684378959&from=en>

19 See the example of Portugal that suspended this eligibility for several years and opened it again in 2018.

20 On the Move, Cultural Mobility Funding Guides for Spain (2017), Denmark (2017), Latin America and the Caribbean (2018), Portugal (2018), France (2022) and the Netherlands (2021): <http://on-the-move.org/resources/funding>

National bodies in the five Member States are not always clear in their appreciation of 'international' activities, having a more centralised, mainland-focused perspective. For example, practitioners based in the French Caribbean might feel that travelling all the way to Paris is an 'international' work visit, while collaborating with Dominican Republic colleagues is a 'local' project. In terms of artistic mobility and cultural cross-border projects, a macro-regional approach has flourished at political and institutional levels, and we observe concrete support mechanisms in place such as several programmes (already mentioned in the text above) led by the Institut français or Nordic Culture Point.

However, because of historical, political and structural reasons, we observe that mobility flows tend to primarily happen between an overseas territory and the capital city of the Member State. Private foundations based in these Member States navigate two approaches: maintaining an overseas territory-mainland relationship, and enhancing overseas territories' collaborations with their own macro-regional contexts.<sup>21</sup> Local cultural operators point to a lack of awareness concerning distances, as well as a lack of understanding of what a neighbouring country is and what international and domestic travel means in terms of planning, feasibility and costs. For example, in Greenland, domestic travel might imply flying by helicopter to rural areas and remote communities. To quote Martinique-based artist

Annabel Gueredrat: '[...] it is very difficult to move within the Caribbean space, either because the island has not yet developed relations with the other English and Spanish-speaking islands, or because one "has to go through Paris to get to Haiti". Conversely, when an airline company set up flights from Martinique to New York, a large number of collaborations sprang up with North American artists.'<sup>22</sup>

The general weaknesses of local infrastructures are known but we tend to forget about the lack of cultural venues or the lack of equipment available, especially when it comes to specialised facilities (for heritage preservation, digitisation of collections, audio-visual projects, discipline-specific work, etc.). Moreover, the few venues, festivals and institutions that exist don't have the capacity to support all local artists, who are then forced to compete against each other – leading in some contexts and fields to a lack of cooperation and networking among peers, and to some artists choosing to migrate to other countries.<sup>23</sup> Many practitioners mention that digital projects and collaborations meet technical obstacles because the Internet is not reliable for everyone, a fact which not only limits access to cultural events but also to training and networking opportunities, or to the livestreaming of artistic projects. Moreover, specialised technical expertise is not always available: beyond issues with equipment, cultural operators need to 'import' skills and competences to deliver their projects.

## Access to education and training

Culture professionals in overseas regions often remark on the scarcity of education pathways for those wishing to embrace a career in the arts, and share personal stories on the lack of local infrastructure. Again, accessing a vocational

education usually translates into 'going abroad' – most often to mainland Europe and the related Member State, as it is considered a 'point of reference'. For example, Caribbean artists often indicate it would be more natural to study in Puerto

21 See for example Bikuben Foundation (Denmark): <https://www.bikubefonden.dk/uk/young-people-edge-greenland> or Print Claus Fund (the Netherlands): <https://princeclausfund.org/about>

22 Gwendolenn Sharp: Report: Mobilities Europe/World. Artistic mobility and environmental sustainability: which way are we going? On the Move (June 2022): [https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/library/2022-06/OTM\\_report-mobilites-europe\\_EN.pdf](https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/library/2022-06/OTM_report-mobilites-europe_EN.pdf)

23 Ibid.

Rico, Florida or Cuba but because of established educational routes and financial resources, mainland Europe is the primary destination.

Member States and the European Union try to cater to needs. For example, the Erasmus+ programme adapted some features to support young people from the ORs and OCTs by awarding them higher travel allowances than other European beneficiaries.<sup>24</sup> The 2020 OCTA report shows that this programme is fairly well-used across Europe's Outermost Regions but very few projects actually answer the education and training needs of the culture field.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the Creative Europe programme is particularly underused, including with respect to cooperating with colleague international organisations to address sector-specific capacity building priorities. The Interreg Caribbean 2014-2020 Programme supported a few cultural initiatives such as PACAM, the Caribbean-Amazon Dance and Circus Passport project.<sup>26</sup>

In terms of lifelong learning opportunities and peer-to-peer exchange, European cultural networks and platforms use physical or digital mobility to

stimulate the creative, personal and professional development of their affiliates. We observe that cultural operators and professionals from European overseas territories are relatively absent from the membership of these networks and don't benefit from the many opportunities they provide. Moreover, the networking activities designed by European membership organisations don't always take into account the circumstances of these contexts, for example in relation to time zone differences, language barriers, financial resources or digital equipment. Similar patterns can be noticed in many on-site and online education and training programmes carried out by mainland European organisers.

Sensitive societal, political and historical issues such as decolonisation are frequently addressed when designing overseas territories-mainland Europe relations and implementing educational or cultural activities. Cultural stakeholders contribute to raising awareness of tensions, acknowledge inequalities, and find various ways to mitigate them.

## Cultural isolation and international relations

The limited opportunities existing in Europe's outermost contexts, in terms of access to education, training, peer-to-peer learning and further professional development, leads to a 'brain drain' from the (perceived) peripheries towards (perceived) centres, a weaker position for artists and culture professionals from overseas territories, and less diverse proposals for European citizens: 'Where an

artist is based geographically is of crucial importance to their visibility and, consequently, their capacity to create and show work. Inequalities in access to mobility, and therefore access to work, have remained and have even been accentuated by COVID-19, with most activities and support schemes concentrated in a few countries.'<sup>27</sup>

24 For example, the European Commission increased the monthly grant for Outermost Region residents and the travel grants for Mayotte and Reunion Island citizens by creating exceptional travel grants for residents travelling over 8,000km. See: Report (...) on the implementation of the Commission Communication on a stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU's outermost regions, *ibid*.

25 See: Marta Fernández Fornieles: Report on the Participation of the Overseas Countries and Territories in the European Union programmes during the period 2014-2020. Overseas Countries and Territories Association (July 2020): [https://www.overseas-association.eu/content/uploads/2021/03/octa-report\\_on\\_the\\_participation\\_of\\_octs\\_in\\_eu\\_programmes\\_2014\\_-\\_july\\_2020.pdf](https://www.overseas-association.eu/content/uploads/2021/03/octa-report_on_the_participation_of_octs_in_eu_programmes_2014_-_july_2020.pdf)

26 Interreg Caribbean 2014-2020 Programme was a European Territorial Cooperation programme allowing operators from Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Martinique and Saint Martin to implement win-win projects with their neighbours in the Caribbean - more than 40 countries and territories. PACAM, the Caribbean-Amazon Dance and Circus Passport project led by Métis'Gwa (Guadeloupe) aimed to create the conditions for the development of complementary artistic dynamics between circus, still under development in the region, and dance, both in its traditional forms and in today's Caribbean practices. See: <https://www.interregpacam.com>

27 Milica Ilić, Dance Mobility in Times of Fracture: Experiencing the Framework of Fragility. European Dancehouse Network (September 2021): <https://www.ednetwork.eu/uploads/documents/64/EDN3-mobility8.pdf>

Many stakeholders insist on the feeling of cultural isolation and a low sense of belonging to the European Union. This manifests in low participation in European cultural cooperation projects and related mobility opportunities as well as a general lack of data collection and research. The Creative Europe programme, as well as other relevant EU programmes, contributes to the enhancement of skills, awareness and knowledge, including on embracing more sustainable working models in the cultural sector, for example in relation to topics including slow travel and engagement with local communities.

Taking the example of the recent pilot actions that took place under the Creative Europe programme, from Music Moves Europe<sup>28</sup> to i-Portunus<sup>29</sup> to Perform Europe,<sup>30</sup> we see that they didn't explicitly take European overseas territories into consideration. Even if ORs and OCTs were mentioned as eligible in the list of countries/regions in calls, no specific additional funding or targeted information was provided to encourage more applications from these contexts. From the available data, no beneficiaries were selected from these contexts; when asked, some consortia indicated that sometimes there were simply no applicants. During discussions with overseas individuals and organisations we noticed

a reoccurring misconception that mobility funding schemes like i-Portunus were accessible only from mainland Europe, and a fear of not being eligible to apply. Also, surveys and reports published didn't collect data on these territories, generally aggregating them to the related Member States. Lastly, studies and recommendations don't take into consideration the specificities of cross-border mobility flows to and from European outermost territories. We observe the need to better include ORs and OCTs on the cultural map, investigate the specificities of their cultural ecosystems, and circulate context-specific resources.

Cultural workers deplore the missed opportunity to fight against cultural isolation, rebalance cultural relations, and activate new dynamics. In particular, the unique geographical position of Europe's ORs and OCTs and their cultural proximity to third countries is seen as an asset to engage in international cultural relations and respond to transversal issues in line with key strategic European and international strategies, including the European Agenda for Culture and the European Union Strategy for International Cultural Relations, as well as with global commitments including the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>31</sup>

## Impacts of the pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has brought overseas cooperation to a halt, whether it is with mainland Europe or neighbouring countries. Especially in European Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and

Territories, along with tourism, 'the creative sector is one of the sectors that has been hit the hardest by the lockdowns and restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.'<sup>32</sup> The pandemic has reinforced

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28 Music Moves Europe was the framework for the European Commission's initiatives and actions to support the European music sector and build on and strengthen its assets: creativity, diversity and competitiveness. Music Moves Europe's specific objectives were to promote creativity and innovation, safeguard and expand the diversity of European music, help the sector adapt to and benefit from digitisation, and support the sector's sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and its ongoing resilience: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/music/music-moves-europe>

29 i-Portunus was an EU-funded pilot action which aimed to support the mobility of artists, creators and cultural professionals. It funds short-term mobilities for individuals to go abroad or for hosts to attract international talent. i-Portunus' main objective is to connect international artists, creators and cultural professionals and to support international collaborations among all countries participating in the Creative Europe Programme: <https://www.i-portunus.eu>

30 Perform Europe is an EU-funded pilot action which aimed to rethink cross-border performing arts presentation in a more inclusive, sustainable and balanced way, in the 40 countries of Creative Europe and the UK. The Perform Europe Consortium has been given a mandate to develop policy recommendations on how a new support scheme for sustainable and inclusive distribution of the performing arts can be integrated into the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027: <https://performeurope.eu>

31 See: Fanny Bouquereil, Cristina Farinha, Global dance: EDN's work across borders European Dancehouse Network, October 2021): <https://www.ednetwork.eu/uploads/documents/67/EDN%20Global%20Dance%20final%20full.pdf>

32 See: IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut: Cultural and creative sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe: crisis effects and policy recommendations. Research for CULT Committee, European Parliament (February 2021): [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL\\_STU\(2021\)652242\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL_STU(2021)652242_EN.pdf)

isolation in a broad sense and brought a clearer awareness concerning unequal circumstances and operational capacities. The pandemic has challenged the cultural sector's practices, yet operators still remain very much eager to keep on connecting and collaborating for the sake of artistic diversity and development.<sup>33</sup>

However, cultural stakeholders from Europe's ORs and OCTs observe that the COVID-19 crisis brought many complications, including for example a significant increase in travel costs which limits their capacity to operate at macro-regional or international levels. As in many other sectors, a major challenge was to ensure continuity, especially through digitisation.<sup>34</sup> Often, the weakness of digital infrastructure and the lack of digital skills made it impossible to adapt cultural activities. Nevertheless, cultural practitioners report that they were able to open programmes during the pandemic: in the Caribbean, for example, an online exchange gathered culture professionals from six islands. Such a project would have been difficult to implement in 'real life' without encountering budget and planning obstacles.

Some cultural professionals see digitisation as a way to help overcome their geographical remoteness and access a more continuous way of learning and working, overcoming territorial inequalities and making it possible to implement the ecological transition. We nevertheless observe a growing pressure on artists and culture professionals, including from ORs and OCTs, to address climate change and adopt more environmentally sustainable practices. And there is a tendency to reduce action on environmental sustainability to limiting international travel – incorrectly assumed to be a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Where action has been taken it has often been too inflexible, passing over existing discussions and efforts, adding more pressure to underfunded local cultural players, and putting more responsibilities on their shoulders. Culture stakeholders plead for the adoption of a more informed, contextual, nuanced approach both in regards to geographical and infrastructural realities and the interdependencies between mainland Europe and its overseas territories.<sup>35</sup>

33 See: Elena Polivtseva: The moment for change is now: COVID-19 learning points for the performing arts sector and policymakers. IETM (December 2020): [https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/ietm\\_covid\\_publication\\_v3.pdf](https://www.ietm.org/en/system/files/publications/ietm_covid_publication_v3.pdf)

34 See: Ecorys: Study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the outermost regions. European Commission (October 2021): [https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/policy/themes/outermost-regions/pdf/covid19\\_or\\_study\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/policy/themes/outermost-regions/pdf/covid19_or_study_en.pdf)

35 Committee on Culture and Education: Report on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps. European Parliament (July 2020): [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2020-0141\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2020-0141_EN.html)

# Policy recommendations

The following recommendations have been derived from the above takeaways, combined with insights from mobility stakeholders and desk research. We formulate here a set of observations and recommendations for public authorities at different levels, as well as for stakeholders in the culture field. These recommendations aim to offer a better and fairer system of support for those accessing artistic and cultural mobility opportunities.

## All culture stakeholders should:

- **Acknowledge that cultural mobility is a central component of the professional trajectory of artists and culture professionals.<sup>36</sup>**

Cultural mobility effectively contributes to a sustainable and fairer ecosystem, allowing fruitful interactions between contexts and cultural expressions, mitigating inequalities and preventing brain drain. The possibility to engage in mobility across borders, whether in neighbouring contexts, in mainland Europe (beyond related Member States), or internationally, allows culture professionals from ORs and OCTs to benefit from and contribute to multiple opportunities and strategies.

- **Engage with artists and culture professionals from European Outermost Regions.**

International cultural collaborations are a vector for development and stakeholders should envisage long-term commitment, reciprocity, and fair exchange. European networks and platforms as well as mainland operators should increase their accessibility to and interaction with cultural operators and arts professionals from these regions.

- **Acknowledge the diversity of local structural realities.**

From a digital infrastructure still under development to higher costs for bank transactions, from living and working in different time zones to a low level of regional cross-border connectedness, all stakeholders should keep in mind the variety of existing circumstances and/or inequalities. This should be reflected in how cross-border collaborations are shaped and funding is distributed, including the criteria applied to select beneficiaries, participants, contributors, jury members or guest experts.

- **Change mindset and stop considering Europe's outermost territories only as tourist destinations.**

The perception of Europe's outermost contexts is reflected in the attitudes and expectations from mainland Europe, often focusing on nature, folklore or tangible and intangible heritage, leaving few spaces and little support for contemporary creation, innovative aesthetics, and alternative narratives that can be brought to European and international audiences. All stakeholders should challenge their assumptions when interacting with local cultural players and avoid reinforcing colonialism, exoticism and calcified power relations.

<sup>36</sup> See the Updated definition of 'cultural mobility' from the i-Portunus Operational Study. On the Move (March 2019): <https://www.i-portunus.eu/wp-fuut/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/OS-final.pdf>

- **Develop accessible lifelong learning and training opportunities.**

Introducing capacity building components based on peer-to-peer learning should be encouraged, including co-designed experimental formats that could answer to the specific needs of artists and operators.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, digital access and know-how differ significantly within Europe and across Europe's outermost regions: new digital skills are needed to develop all the segments of the creative value chain, fostering processes, professional networks and outreach.<sup>38</sup>

- **Develop data collection and research.**

Given the general scarcity of existing studies analysing the cultural relations between mainland Europe and overseas territories, as well as between overseas contexts and third countries, all stakeholders should integrate a dedicated data collection focus when leading surveys and producing sectoral or transversal knowledge.

## The European Union institutions should:

- Foster discussion and policy development on the role of the European Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories' culture sector in contributing to European strategies and commitments including the European Agenda for Culture, the European Union Strategy for International Cultural Relations, the UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.
- Include culture in their strategy towards European Outermost Regions and Overseas Countries and Territories.
- Ensure that European programmes, including Creative Europe and Erasmus+, take into account the geographical and structural specificities of ORs and OCTs, especially when it comes to supporting artistic and cultural mobility.
- Ensure that the mobility support scheme Culture Moves Europe takes into account the domestic, macro-regional, and international needs of cultural practitioners, including in relation to exchange with neighbouring third countries, the length of mobility experiences, and the actual costs of travelling.
- Continue simplification processes and make sure that the Creative Europe programme continues to avoid intricate procedures and administrative burdens.
- Adopt a contextualised approach in relation to 'greening' strategies and requirements in relation to ecological transition, including a fair share of responsibilities between stakeholders.
- Encourage Creative Europe Desks to multiply communication efforts, including digital and physical promotion meetings, targeting outermost professionals and operators.

37 See: The European Commission and the High Representative Of The Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy: Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council – Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (June 2016): <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52016JCO029&from=ET>

38 See: Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: The challenge of discoverability. The urgency to act to defend the diversity of cultural expressions, CDCE (January 2021): <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2021/01/15/the-challenge-of-discoverability-the-urgency-to-act-to-defend-the-diversity-of-cultural-expressions/>

## The local, regional and national authorities should, in their respective areas of competence:

- Contribute to building bridges between ORs and OCTs culture professionals and operators with other European countries in order to foster a shared, diverse and equal cultural space in Europe.

Ambitious objectives and coordination efforts should be part of the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, including to exchange information and practices on Europe's outermost regions and specificities.
- Create or reinforce artistic and cultural mobility support programmes to better connect with communities in neighbouring third countries, including by providing a dedicated support for digital mobility.

In their participation in the Council of Ministers and Open Method of Coordination working groups, Member States should continue to address cultural mobility issues, including administrative and fiscal ones encountered in ORs and OCTs.
- Take measures to ensure equal access to online activities, by fostering digital skills and addressing the digital divide.

All stakeholders should address the imbalances as one of the most urgent obstacles to building a vibrant European cultural project. Breaking isolation, redistributing access to opportunities and challenging prejudices should be our common priority<sup>39</sup>. Quoting the More Europe initiative (now called Global Cultural Relations), it is by acting collectively with a shared responsibility and spirit of solidarity that we will move towards recovery and sustainability in the long term.<sup>40</sup>
- Support capacity building activities for the arts and culture sector, from administrative management to digital literacy, etc.
- Take measures to foster access to and participation in European programmes, in particular Creative Europe, including by supporting the necessary longer preparatory phase, by co-financing cultural cooperation projects, and by ensuring the financial and administrative stability of operators over time.

39 See: Perform Europe Consortium: Research Results of Perform Europe. IETM (June 2022): <https://www.ietm.org/en/resources/reports/research-results-of-perform-europe>

40 The More Europe open letter 'Culture in EU's External Relations: The Way Forward' (November 2020): <https://eunicglobal.eu/news/culture-in-eu-s-external-relations-the-way-forward>

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Working for independent arts organisations and cultural institutions, **Yohann Floch** has designed, coordinated or contributed to many European cooperation projects and pilot international collaborations over the years, including recently Perform Europe (led by IETM), Learning Trajectories (led by Eunia), SHIFT (led by the European Music Council), and Innovative Leadership Network (led by Dansehallerne).

He has been an external expert for governmental bodies and private foundations, as well as a guest lecturer at universities. He has led or (co)authored many European studies, including recently Bespoke Brokers (British Council, 2022), Time to Act (Europe Beyond Access, 2021), i-Portunus Operational Study (Goethe-Institut, 2019), and previously for European Dancehouse Network, Circostrada or the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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