

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A REPORT AND TOOLKIT ON PRACTICAL WAYS TO REDUCE THE COST OF LENDING AND BORROWING OF CULTURAL OBJECTS AMONG MEMBER STATES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION (OMC)
WORKING GROUP OF EU MEMBER STATES' EXPERTS
ON THE MOBILITY OF COLLECTIONS

1 | Introduction

Museums have a long tradition of sharing their cultural heritage with other museums and institutions. Lending objects to other museums is one of their most important tasks. The issue of museum collections and their use within the European Union has been high on the EU agenda since early 2000, through a number of projects, events and other initiatives. The key challenge is to remove the numerous barriers to cooperation between museums and to encourage the mobility of collections. The rich and multifaceted European collections housed in different museums throughout our 27 countries deserve to be used for the benefit of the public. In this way we will share our cultural heritage and help shape a sense of belonging to a shared European cultural space.

2 | Context of the report

This report and the toolkit are the outcome of the work done by the **Working Group on Mobility of Collections**, launched in March 2011 under the **Council Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014**¹, which implements the **European Agenda for Culture**². The Council Work Plan established a new priority area entitled 'Cultural heritage, including mobility of collections'.

The group worked together on the basis of the **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)**. The OMC is a voluntary form of cooperation between EU Member States, which aims to improve policy-making and structured cooperation by organising the exchange of best practice. The method was extended to the field of culture in 2008 on the recommendation of the European Commission in the European Agenda for Culture (2007).

The current working group has built upon the achievements of the previous working group with regards to the mobility of collections and museum activities established under the Council Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010, which produced reports on state indemnity schemes, long-term loans, immunity from seizure and the prevention of theft and illicit traffic³.

The objective of the Group, co-chaired by Hillary Bauer (UK) and Rosanna Binacchi (IT), was to identify good practice on all relevant issues in the context of the mobility of collections and produce a toolkit containing practical advice for national authorities and museum professionals. Experts from 25 Member States participated in this OMC Group and hundreds of professionals throughout Europe were involved in, and contributed to, its work.



3 | Increasing the mobility of collections: four key challenges

The Group focused on four key issues, specifically addressed by thematic subgroups:

1. improving and expanding **indemnity schemes** and shared liability agreements at EU Member State level;
2. improving **valuation processes** for works of art and cultural goods and the systems/mechanisms of valuation for the purposes of indemnity (and shared liability);
3. simplifying and improving the process of **risk assessment** when lending and borrowing; and
4. making **transport** procedures more reliable and less expensive.

The final report and the toolkit on practical ways of reducing the cost of lending and borrowing of cultural objects between Member States of the European Union were completed in September 2012.

4 | Recommendations of the report

Recommendations to the European Institutions:

- to consider establishing a standing committee of Member State experts on the mobility of collections in order to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of this report and the use of the toolkit, and to find ways to keep the information up to date;
- to make sure that funding for future culture programmes takes due account of the museum dimension, allowing for better access to shared European heritage through increased lending and borrowing;
- to investigate potentially anti-competitive practices among the limited number of fine arts transporters with a view to reducing costs; and
- to facilitate and encourage exchange programmes between museums for museum professionals similar to the Erasmus programme, in particular for registrars and other staff directly involved in loan management.

Recommendations to the Member States:

- to introduce a state indemnity scheme, backed by central government and underpinned by a strong regime of security inspections of all venues and processes involved in the lending and borrowing of cultural objects;
- to persuade all lenders and borrowers to make use of such a scheme and to prevent the anti-competitive behaviour practised by some commercial insurers, who misrepresent the security offered by state indemnity schemes by stating for example that governments do not pay up quickly on a genuine claim;
- when no state indemnity schemes are applicable, to consider shared liability schemes between frequent lenders and borrowers;

- to introduce and apply risk assessment procedures which are well understood ;
- to introduce and apply common standards and procedures of valuation, the overall aim being to avoid unnecessary inflation in values;
- to introduce and use as many standard and internationally accepted forms and documents as possible; and
- to support museums in establishing a national registrars' organisation to bring together all of the staff in museums who are responsible for controlling incoming and outgoing loans with a view to considering shared problems and examples of best practice.

Recommendations to museum professionals:

- to keep up to date with new developments, actively participate in relevant networks and stay informed of new contact points for the latest information;
- to avoid contracts with companies that offer specific benefits not directly related to the actual service provided or that seriously disadvantage another player in the market.

At all levels:

- to encourage museum professionals (as well as government officials) to establish and maintain personal contacts because personal trust is one of the main factors in the successful lending and borrowing of collections;
- to inform and train museum professionals through regular seminars and the distribution of relevant literature at a national level;
- to establish exchange/Erasmus programmes between museums for museum professionals directly involved in loan management;
- to appoint a contact person in the relevant museum to whom all museum professionals at national level in other Member States may address questions;
- to appoint a national museum organisation or individual museum to be responsible for organising practical training sessions for museum professionals at a national level;
- to incorporate the lending and borrowing process into university education programmes for future museum professionals (e.g. museology courses).

For the future, the following recommendations were made:

- National contact points should collect experiences and provide platforms to share practical knowledge and seek solutions at national level.
- National contact points should ensure that queries and areas of concern are raised at EU level.

5 | Toolkit on practical ways of reducing the cost of lending and borrowing of cultural objects among Member States of the European Union

The **Toolkit on Collection Mobility** provides museum professionals with useful guidelines, checklists, factsheets and links to practical information that can be used in the process of lending and borrowing.

It also proposes guidelines for Member States' governments on how to promote collection mobility (and significantly reduce overall costs) by preparing the outlines of an indemnity scheme and a checklist of what should be contained in the guidelines relating to that scheme.

For a clearer understanding of the terminology used when discussing conditions for borrowing and lending, a **glossary of terms** has been prepared in four languages: English, French, German and Italian.

The toolkit includes the following:

- guidelines for the introduction of state indemnity;
- guidelines for shared liability;
- valuation checklist;
- guidelines for risk assessment;
- best practices in risk assessment;
- best practices in reducing transport costs;
- glossary of terms in English, French, German and Italian.

1 Proposed by the European Commission in May 2007 and endorsed by the Council of the European Union in November 2007: <http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2007:287:0001:0004:EN:PDF>

2 http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/117795.pdf

3 See the summary report: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/documents/omc_mobility_collections_reportrome_07_10.pdf and the thematic reports: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/working-group-on-museum-activities_en.htm

The report and the toolkit are available on the following website:
http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/policy-documents/omc-working-groups_en.htm

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