

European Parliament – Committee on Culture and Education

Public hearing on the “Implications of Brexit for Culture and Education” 21 June 2017

Presentation by Eluned Hâf, Head of Wales Arts International

Pnawn da, bon apre midi, good afternoon, thank you to the members of the committee for offering me and my organisation the opportunity to present before you today. My name is Eluned Haf and I’m the Head of Wales Arts International which is the international arm of the Arts Council of Wales, a public body sponsored by the Welsh Government. I speak with authority of the Arts Council of Wales my employers whose response to the outcome of the EU Referendum has been widely published.

Brexit has significant impact on culture and creativity not just in the UK but in Europe, some of which I hope I can cover and do justice with the 10 minutes I have.

I will focus today on just three areas of potential impact:

- on people and citizenship;
- on European programmes; and,
- the creative and wider economy

However, some context is needed first.

Wales is one of the 4 nations of the UK situated on its western shores. We share our Celtic cultural heritage with nations of the Atlantic arc of Europe and also with the rich tapestry of cultures of the UK. We are a bilingual nation. Welsh is a minority language that is part of the EU Network for the Promotion of Linguistic Diversity.

But if our identity is a complex one, so is the governance structure that underpins the UK nations, even before Brexit!

In the UK, cultural policy is a devolved matter. There are therefore four national cultural policies and a plethora of institutions responsible for their delivery. Brexit has brought this complexity to the fore, so we are grateful for initiatives from the Creative Industries Federation and British Council that have brought voices together from all over the UK and EU.

Our sectors are intrinsically connected – creative people thrive on the exchange of ideas and information. There are now a large number of European and international networks and programmes – such as Culture

Action Europe, On the Move or Literature Across Frontiers –which connect the UK and our European counterparts. It’s in everyone’s interest to retain this collaborative approach.

Surveys repeatedly show that the sector remains overwhelmingly committed to international cooperation – European in hearts and spirits. We accept, that Brexit is taking place, but the goal now, as relationships are re-negotiated, is to preserve those things which helped creativity to thrive. In this respect we are all in transition from being *remainers* to *retainers*.

So many aspects of the cultural sectors across Europe are intertwined and inter-dependent. So unpicking them can feel like untying the tapestry of Bayeux.. and whatever one thinks of the narrative of the canvass itself, its cultural value transcends centuries and reminds us of the need to work together for peace and prosperity.

As negotiations commence and vested interests jostle for attention, we must not forget that the cultural and creative sectors are big business for Europe.

In 2015 the Creative Industries contributed over £87 billion to the UK economy – 5.3% of total UK GVA, employing some 2m people. This represents 7% growth since 2014, compared to 2.3% for the economy as a whole. It would be very easy for Cinderella to be excluded from the ball....despite being dressed for the occasion.

However, we should not become seduced by statistics alone. I'm not advocating measuring our sector purely through numbers but to also to emphasise what it brings to our overall quality of life.

What we have in Europe, in essence, is a "single market of the mind" – one that we in the arts and cultural sector cherish and respect. This is a phrase was coined by Geraint Talfan Davies in a recent paper for the Institute of Welsh Affairs examining the impact of Brexit on education and culture in Wales and the UK. The paper stresses that there is no monopoly on ideas or culture – they are as likely to emerge from a deprived community in West Wales and the Valleys, or Silesia as they would from Berlin, Bucharest or Birmingham.

And we know the power of arts and culture reach well beyond the emotional response to a performance or the financial gain generated by the sale of a painting. The arts illuminate and give life to the wide range of strategies that underpin public life. From arts and health to cultural tourism, public art to town centre re-generation, the arts bring meaning, authenticity and enjoyment to our everyday lives. They create and sustain jobs, enrich education services, bring people together, improve our quality of life..

Which brings me to the **first** major impact of Brexit that I wish to note – **that on people and citizenship.**

People are the sector's main asset and their lingua franca is that of collaboration. Limiting their ability to move and to work in partnership is likely to have very significant consequences for the creative economy of Europe. We already have a skills gap in the creative economy and the ability to recruit from beyond our own borders is a very important factor in the growth of our creative economy. Arts organisations and business alike have major concerns over the loss of skills that Brexit could bring.

So how can we **retain** what works, given the cards that we've been dealt?

Finding ways of retaining the freedom of movement of **workers**, if not of **people**, is a goal of *supreme* importance, and current discussion around short-term temporary visas as well as visa free events might form part of a final arrangement. But the first step on this journey is determining the future of all EU citizens in the UK, as well as British citizens across the EU.

Whatever happens, this sector depends on a partnership approach that enables artists and creative workers to move to where the work may be.

And for touring – and the international travels of orchestras, theatre and dance companies – frictionless movement between boundaries unencumbered by legal impediment **is a gold standard** worth aspiring to.

We can expect these issues to be played out with acute sensitivity around the land border in Ireland.

The long-standing relationship between the Arts Councils of Northern Ireland and the Republic is built on enabling a politically neutral environment that allows artists to work seamlessly across both jurisdictions. Brexit may mean that arts organisations that operate on very lean budgets with limited financial flexibility find themselves unable to cushion or manage the effects of fluctuations in currency, taxation and regulation of movement.

The **second** issue I want to raise is that of the **impact of Brexit on European funding programmes**.

You will, I am sure, be familiar with the significant impact of Interreg and ERDF funding across the UK. From the Sage in Gateshead to Manchester's Home, from Ikon in Birmingham to Pontio in Bangor, Europe funding programmes have helped transform the cultural infrastructure of the UK.

But whilst the structural funds have been designed to help poorer regions play catch up with the rest of the EU's economy, as a recent DEMOS report has argued, there is a real risk that those regions will be more adversely affected by the withdrawal of these programmes.

So there could be significant benefits in retaining UK involvement in multi-lateral programmes, benefits that are as applicable to the EU as they are to the UK. I stress that this is not merely a fear of lost funding. The networks and partnerships that the Creative Europe programme has nurtured, the infrastructure developed for our sector, the expertise of working transnationally – these are things that cannot be measured in financial terms alone. And the impact of withdrawing that funding – whether it’s Creative Europe or Structural Funds cannot be gapped purely by replacing loss of funding with country specific replacements.

The award winning TV series “Hinterland / Gwyll” is a case in point. Funded through the Media strand of Creative Europe, Wales’s rural detective answer to the Scandinavian noir genre was shot back to back in English and Welsh and broadcast on S4C and various BBC outlets. It has since been sold to more than 30 countries and is available on Netflix worldwide.

Ed Thomas, Director of Fiction Factory, the series producer, sees the wider cultural benefit to the EU not just in relation to his company, to Wales, or the

UK economy. He says, and I quote. “Celebrating and nurturing the diversity of culture and language across Europe is vital, and our partnership has given a voice to a small country, its culture and its people.”

Retaining our membership of Creative Europe alongside other non-EU partners, either as a full member or through some form of association agreement, would help our sector directly and indirectly in developing skills, and opening up new markets in the longer term for participating companies.

From the creative sector’s point of, UK membership of the Creative Europe programme has compelling benefits. But I pose a further question. Given that culture is devolved within the UK, could the constituent UK nations become members of Creative Europe in their own right? Perhaps there are some precedents available in the European Territorial Cooperation or Interreg programmes?

The **third** area I want to comment on is **the impact of Brexit on the creative and wider economy.**

If freedom of movement of workers is the lifeblood of the arts and creative industries, Intellectual property is its currency. IP challenges in this day and age can only be addressed transnationally. The CIC of England quotes that in the second quarter of 2016 alone, some 78 million music tracks and 51 million pieces of film and TV content were accessed illegally online and there are also significant problems with imported counterfeit physical goods.

We should now look at new models of partnership that build on mutual benefits. This would include retaining some key principles set by the EU such as the EU country of origin framework as well and the current definition of European works.

There is a need for the UK and EU to continue to engage actively on the Digital single market and in particular around new copyright legislation. This will be important in shaping future international cooperation on the protection of intellectual property.

It is important that we retain the ability to exchange data between the UK and the EU responsibly and without onerous restrictions as part of our new relationship.

Both parties should resist the imposition of tariffs on cultural goods and services – from literature to music, architectural services to touring provisions.

We **all** have a lot to lose if we kill the goose most likely to lay a golden egg.

Last but not least, we should retain scope for continued public support for media and creative sectors within new trade deals.

The Cultural exemption for large parts of the creative industries from EU trade negotiations should be agreed and maintained. This is important in that it enables the public policy interventions that support public investment in public service broadcasting system and a range of other interventions that support creativity, arts organisations and creative businesses.

In the UK, public investment through a combination of grant in aid and national lottery funding to the subsidised arts has provided a crucial nurturing ground for the commercial creative industries.

None of this is in isolation. We thrive on collaboration with artist and creative companies all over the EU and internationally despite the confusing narrative of Brexit.

So as I draw to a conclusion, I urge you to ask your national governments to help the creative sector of the UK and beyond in our aim of retaining a partnership approach - culturally and economically beyond Brexit. Our new relationship needs to be European and global in outlook in what a very competitive global market, estimated to be worth well in excess of \$2 trillion annually – surpassing the *entire* GDP of India - and employing over 30 million people. And there are significant opportunities for further growth over the coming years.

The cultural impact of Brexit affects Europe's prosperity. And it affects our citizens – not just because it deprives a generation of the identity they have

taken for granted, but also because it potentially interferes with our capacity to be active global citizens who can learn languages, study abroad enjoy and appreciate the riches of cultures other than our own.

Make no mistake. I firmly believe that offering citizens a diverse range of international cultural activity is *fundamental* to building progressive community relations that help to overcome Xenophobia that seems, worryingly, to be so much on the rise across much of Europe.

But whilst I personally may fear for my children's future in terms of the cultural misunderstanding that is prevalent locally and globally I remain hopeful that given the opportunity, their generation will do things differently. The sector that I care so much about offers part of the solution in that it nurtures hope, authenticity, and an understanding that reaches across boundary and division.

Culture and creativity matter to us *all*.

And that's another reason to get this right.