

Summary

A new Strategic Action Plan for 2014-16

The International Culture Panel¹ is a cross-ministerial collaboration between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Business and Growth and the Ministry of Culture. The purpose of the panel is to bring together an array of prominent cultural institutions in order to strengthen the cultural exchange and give it a shared focus.

With this common strategic action plan for 2014-16 the International Culture Panel has a foundation for continuing its strategic cooperation.

Purpose

The overall aim of the strategic action plan is to increase Denmark's cultural exchange with foreign countries and strengthen the internationalisation of Danish cultural life, and must practically contribute to the fulfilment of *the four purposes of the international cultural exchange*, which are: 1) development and renewal of Danish arts and culture, 2) promotion of Denmark as a country, 3) furthering of cultural export, and 4) furthering of intercultural dialogue. The purposes are of equal value and all originate within the intrinsic value of arts and culture.

With this action plan, the members of the Culture Panel have determined common purposes, objectives, principles for cultural exchange, criteria of success, and work methods. The Panel has, furthermore, chosen to focus on three cross-sectional themes, and combined these with two geographical areas of focus for the coming three-year period. Additionally, the members will collaborate on strategic events.

Vision

The Culture Panel's *vision* for Denmark's international cultural exchange is to:

Strengthen the connections between Denmark and the surrounding world through the encounter with other cultures and countries, and as part hereof, to *contribute* with meaningful narratives, *further* reciprocal inspiration and cooperation as well as *facilitate* human and societal development.

¹ The members of the International Culture Panel are: The Danish Arts Council (as of Jan. 1st-2014 The Danish Arts Foundation), The Danish Cultural Institute, Danish Architecture Centre, Danish Design Centre, Danish Film Institute, Centre for Culture and Development, Danish Agency for Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Ministry of Business and Growth Denmark and the Ministry of Culture Denmark.

Thematic and Geographical Focus

With this vision in mind, the Cultural Panel has chosen the following cross-sectional themes and geographical areas of focus:

Cross-sectional themes

- Sustainability.
- Children/Youths.
- Dialogue, Democracy and Participation.

Geographical areas of focus

- The BRICS-countries – defined as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The Middle East – divided into the Levant, North Africa and the Gulf States.

Collaboration on strategic events comes in addition to these areas of focus. These can be cultural world events with regional or global impact, as well as other cultural events, e.g. in the form of celebrations of famous cultural figures, the Royal Family's visits, or culture and business promotions abroad.

Principles

With the strategic action plan for 2014-16, the Culture Panel has agreed upon a set of five shared principles for Cultural Exchange:

- The first principle is the understanding that the implementation of any initiative or project first and foremost must be based on the *high cultural or artistic quality* herein.
- The second principle is to ensure that cultural exchange projects are embraced by the audiences in the recipient countries. This is done by securing *outside interest, reciprocity and local anchorage* as a part of any project.
- The third principle is to make sure that the cultural exchange initiatives include a measure of longevity. This is done by including a *long term perspective, sharing of knowledge and network organisation* in the planning and implementation of any exchange project.
- The fourth principle is to base projects on the people involved whenever possible, e.g. when projects seek to strengthen cooperation between involved agents. This is done by promoting a *bottom-up approach and facilitation of agent-to-agent cooperation* within projects.
- Finally, it is a fifth agreed upon principle to ensure high visibility and impact for any cultural exchange project. This is achieved by focussing on *target groups and visibility in the communication* of projects.

Coherence

As the title of the new action plan – coherence through synergy and cooperation – suggests, it is an integral part of the 2014-16 plan to ensure coherence within the various cultural exchange initiatives to come. It is important that this coherence is achieved both *internally* by cooperation and knowledge sharing between involved agents, and *externally* by securing a common focus in the communication of initiatives.

- As a part of ensuring *internal coherence* between the agents involved with cultural exchange projects and initiatives, the action plan details expanded coordination and sharing of knowledge. Amongst other things this includes the development of an organised form of idea gathering – the purpose of which is to facilitate the possibility of learning from each other's experiences, and thereby easing the implementation of new projects by building on previous practices. Similarly the plan mentions the development of a praxis of evaluation, which can measure the long term effects of larger cultural exchange initiatives.

- Ensuring *external coherence* in visibility, impact and communication of the cultural exchange with the surrounding world is a central component in the action plan. The action plan details a focus on making sure that cultural initiatives and projects are communicated in a coherent manner by being part of a common narrative. This ensures visibility, and thereby impact, for the shared projects. The plan similarly seeks to ensure greater awareness of the work of the International Culture Panel and greater inclusion of other relevant agents in the work of the Panel.

With the shared goals, methods, principles, integrated themes and geographical areas from the plan of action, it is the aspiration that the Culture Panel can strengthen its cooperation on international cultural exchange and better communicate the results of this cooperation in the period 2014-16.