

**Culture &
Creativity**

EU-Eastern Partnership Programme



Mainstreaming Moldovan Culture, Cultural Leaders and Organisations in Europe

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Executive Summary

After 25 years of independence Moldova now has the opportunity to share its culture and values more widely across Europe. But this is a relatively new activity.

Moldova's culture and creative industries sector are starting to develop, but one important issue that limits Moldova's cultural integration is the need for cultural strategies and policies, which consolidate the link between civil society and government.

Therefore, the 10 steps to stimulating international collaboration in culture are:

- Involve European volunteers
- Increase public-private cross-collaboration in film promotion abroad
- Focus on training young filmmakers in international grant applications
- Develop a state fund for marketing Moldovan film festivals
- Make better use of the visa waiver regime
- Donors could evaluate the experience of key people
- Monitor cultural organizations' membership of European networks
- Develop trust-building among professionals
- Develop an integrated approach to Diaspora engagement
- Encourage artists to continue participation in the Eurovision Song Contest

The key to the success or failure of these 10 steps is ensuring diversity.

Current Situation

After 25 years of independence Moldova now has the opportunity to share its culture and values more widely across Europe. But this is a relatively new activity.

Following independence, many young Moldovan professionals have returned from arts faculties in Moscow and Bucharest and started to develop independent cultural organizations in Moldova.

In parallel the government started to look for a new cultural strategy - the Republic of Moldova's Culture 2013-2020 "Cultura XXI-20". The strategy was compiled as an analysis of the Moldovan culture and an overview of the country's cultural potential.

Moldova's culture and creative industries sector are starting to develop. Examples include:

The IDFF CRONOGRAP festival has been organized by the OWH Studio team as a big cultural event in Moldova since 2001. It is a strong way to promote national film culture abroad and to create an international network in the sector.

The Ethno Jazz Festival was created also as an international festival and good platform for Jazz music mixed with authentic national music.

Young culture operators have also brought international films and festivals to Moldova such as TIFF Chisinau, Anim'est Chisinau, American Film Festival, Japanese Film days, Romanian Film days and the French Film Festival.

It has also become popular for the European countries to introduce small programmes within these festivals, in order to acknowledge local cultural assets.

Moldovan cultural figures increasingly participate in the international events, such as festivals of music, theatre, film, literature. Valentina Nafornta, Eugen Doga, Igor Cobileanski, are real actual examples.

International fairs and book salons such as the annual Book Fest salon each September in Chisinau are also gaining popularity.

The Cinema Law was adopted in August 2013 following the foundation of the National Film Centre. This opens up opportunities for developing new cinematography.

Over 100 cultural institutions particularly NGO's have been created and over 20 national cultural events have been inaugurated since 1991. These developments have led the culture sector to think about how it can work more closely with Europe's cultural scene.

Cultural events that blend Moldovan traditions, folklore and ethnography with European Culture such as the European Night of Museums have been well received abroad and have given local cultural operators an interest in going further and promoting authentic Moldovan culture. These events include National Wine Day, Independence Day, the Martisor Music Festival, the CRONOGRAF Festival, the Gustar Music Festival and the Maria Biesu Opera and Ballet Festival.

10 steps for stimulating international cultural collaboration

1. Involve European volunteers in the organization of cultural events.

The culture sector should collaborate and establish a national programme that will increase the number of volunteers from Western and Central Europe coming to Moldova to discover and learn about local traditions.

This would build on other programmes such as the ADVIT association in Moldova, which sends international volunteers to local NGOs, CRONOGRAF festival volunteers, and KSA: K volunteers.

2. Increase public-private cross-collaboration in film promotion abroad

Government and the film sector need to develop a joint action plan to promote and develop the film industry. The recent reforms in cinema mean the National Centre of Cinematography, the Ministry of Culture other government departments should form a cross-departmental committee to plan an international promotion programme.

3. Focus on training young filmmakers in international grant applications

Although there are many European film funds and film co-production opportunities, few Moldovan organizations apply for international grants. So far just two film festivals have received funding from the Creative Europe MEDIA Programme IDFF CRONOGRAF's 13th edition in 2016 and the Chesnok Film Festival in 2017.

There is a need to improve the quality of Moldovan application, and also increase awareness about funding opportunities. Improved visibility can be realized through the Creative Europe desk in Moldova promoting opportunities by organizing fairs, events, info days, information sessions and info points at all cultural event. The focus of the drive should be on encouraging small and young organizations in their first stages and help them to improve their credibility, visibility and skills.

4. Develop a state fund for marketing Moldovan film festivals

Almost all International film festival platforms such as Doc Alliance have an entry fee or promoting fee which few Moldovan film festival organizers can afford. Therefore,

there would be benefits if the Ministry of Education, and National Cinema Centre or Cineastes Union (for example) could establish a marketing fund for Moldovan film festivals in Europe. The fund could run in a similar manner to the good example of "Moldova Cinematografica", which was initiated by CNC Moldova to promote national movies across Europe and globally. The purpose of the fund would be to increase the credibility of Moldovan film festivals with potential partners and sponsors, and improve the skills of local cultural managers to organize large events.

5. Make better use of the visa waiver regime

The non-visa system for EU Association Agreement countries offers Moldovans the opportunity to travel and spread Moldovan culture in Europe.

6. Donors could evaluate the experience of key people

Companies or donor organizations could evaluate not only the company that applies for funds as a whole, but also the skills of key people involved. Currently companies with more experience on the market win many projects and new young talent are sidelined.

One idea to overcome this could be that donor organizations invite local cultural specialists, civil servants, private employees and freelancers to courses, and hire them for short-, medium-, and long-term European cultural projects. This would give donors an updated database of the local cultural figures.

7. Monitor cultural organizations' membership of European networks

There are at least 50 European cultural networks, and according to their websites, Moldova is not represented in the European Documentary Network, the European Film Promotion, or the European Festival Association to name but a few. Membership to these platforms would make Moldovan cultural organizations more visible and prominent in Europe. One way of increasing Moldovan organizations' interest in becoming members of European cultural associations is for the Creative Europe Desk Moldova to monitor and publish Moldovan membership to cultural programmes on an annual basis.

8. Develop trust-building among professionals

The Ministry of Culture together with The EU Delegation and Trade Unions should organize regular interactive and social events for each sub-sector of the CCIS. In Ukraine the sector continuously meets and shares information at Fail Fairs, TED Talks, pitching events, creative morning, conferences and workshops run by commercial hubs. These models could be imported into Moldova, or Ukrainians could be invited to roll out launch events in Moldova and train locals to then continue.

9. Develop an integrated approach to Diaspora engagement

Every cultural organization should be encouraged by the Government through the Ministry of Culture to make a policy on Trying to involve more diaspora from European countries in all cultural events. The key is to make them promote events and speak to the native citizens. They usually have newspapers, online portals and representatives who can speak of them. They have created strong communities abroad and are actively participating in the activities as a whole.

The Diaspora's Excellence Groups (DEG) should work with the Ministry of Culture to develop best practice policy statement recommendations for cultural organizations on an integrated company policy towards diaspora involvement in cultural events.

The statements can be used as a template to ensure minimum standards, and further developed by individual organizations as required. The Ministry should require these statements to be included in any application form for government funding.

10. Continue participation in the Eurovision Song Contest

National cultural values and identity are promoted by songs representing Moldova in this global event. Popular songs can revive traditions, customs, the Moldovan language and a national visual identity. Eurovision is also a networking opportunity to meet different countries and to make Moldova more visible on the European/international music market. It is a win-win situation – promotion and visibility in both senses.

Recommendations

The key to the success or failure of these 10 steps is ensuring diversity. A society can only develop and culturally integrate by retaining its uniqueness through creative opinion and pluralism. Moldova's diversity will interest European countries and will maintain Moldova's identity as it integrates more closely with the European Union. Having elaborate good cultural strategies and policies are essential for ensuring cultural diversity. This means preserving communities, languages and customs. Artistic freedom, arts exchanges and freedom of expression are preconditions to cultural diversity. Practicing culture and exchanging cultures with different European countries are the tools by which this can happen.



Note

The policy briefs are the result of capacity building work undertaken by the EU-Eastern Partnership Culture and Creativity Programme in 2016-2017 with 240 Programme Associates, who had completed a series of eight workshops in business management for mid-career cultural operators. The purpose of these briefs is to help them additionally understand the role of professionals in providing concise and neutral policy advice in the area of their competence. The task was to identify problems within the sector, provide potential models, options and solutions, support critical thinking, evidence-based policy analysis and the formulation of recommendations. The ideas were developed by the Associates themselves.

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