



NETWORK SOLUTIONS FOR CULTURAL COOPERATION IN EUROPE

**a document drafted by Judith Staines for The European
Forum for the Arts and Heritage**

Summary

This document provides a clear analysis of the work of European cultural networks. It seeks to outline their needs and describe the benefits they provide for members and those who support them at a European, national, regional and local level.

European cultural networks represent a tremendous pool of creativity, ideas, information and professional practice. At present more than forty active transnational cultural networks are identified, representing many thousands of individual and organisational members whose work impacts on the lives of millions of people across Europe.

European networks make a vital contribution to transnational cooperation across diverse sectors of the arts and heritage fields. A contemporary phenomenon, they represent a flexible and dynamic way of working which brings together professionals across Europe who share common concerns. Networks have grown out of the need to establish transnational links, share information and experience, generate ideas and find partners for collaborative projects and engage in professional development. They are widely valued by European institutions, national and regional governments and foundations for their ability to work effectively across borders and deliver a substantial range of benefits and achievements.

This document analyses the activities of networks in the light of current research on organisations, culture and society and places their achievements within a framework of the stated objectives of European institutions. It examines their needs and shows how their ability to operate effectively is weakened by a lack of structural support and insufficient recognition of their real potential.

At the heart of the document are a series of realistic proposals which respond to the needs of networks, can operate within existing frameworks and would provide transnational cultural networks with a more stable foundation for their work. They are addressed to European institutions, national ministries, regional authorities and the private sector. Both serious and constructive, these are proposals for increased support and recognition, without which the networks cannot survive, develop and work to their immense potential.

This document is the starting point for a more informed dialogue on the needs and activities of transnational cultural networks in Europe. It is hoped that readers will be encouraged to respond and contribute to the debate. Our aim is to engage your commitment to the primary objective: that of achieving the conditions necessary for the survival of the European cultural networks.

"The only organisation capable of unprejudiced growth or unguided learning is a network. All other topologies limit what can happen ... a dynamic network is one of the few structures that incorporates the dimension of time. We should expect to see networks wherever we see constant, irregular change, and we do."

Kevin Kelly, writer, scientist and philosopher

"HOPE that we continue to be intrigued and challenged by the idea of Europe: that it provides us with a sense of history, which is to say a sense of humility, of mingling and of adventure."

European Cultural Foundation

" When you collaborate, you are not permanently identified with one position. When you practise taking all the positions and listening to all the sides, you help the field to balance its global parts: the new parts, the older ones they are trying to replace, and the interaction between the old and the new."

Suzi Gablik, art critic and artist

CONTENTS

Preface

Acknowledgements

Summary

1. Introduction
2. Networks in Europe
 - a. Types of networks
 - b. Human or social networks
3. European cultural networks: a panoramic view
 - a. Adaptable learning organisations
 - b. Characteristics and principles
 - c. Similarity
 - d. Difference
4. The cultural network 'umbrella'
 - a. Transnational professional associations
 - b. Networked information outposts and institutions
 - c. Transnational cultural projects
5. Real benefits + concrete achievements
 - a. Evaluation criteria
 - b. Benefits and achievements
6. Modus operandi: a brief guide
 - a. How do networks function on a day to day basis?
 - b. Core costs and members' contributions
 - c. What about the budget shortfall?
 - d. Political and environmental factors
7. Proposals for cultural cooperation in Europe
 - a. Proposals to European institutions and partnerships
 - b. Proposals to national, regional and local institutions
 - c. Proposals to the private sector
 - d. Conditions
8. Conclusion

Preface

This document is the product of networking among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the cultural sector in Europe. It was initiated by the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH). Financial support was provided by the European Cultural Foundation, EFAH and the City of Torino.

EFAH was established in 1992 as a representative forum for arts and heritage organisations, associations and cultural networks across Europe. It exists to give a voice to the cultural sector, to facilitate the flow of ideas across disciplines and sectors on issues related to European cultural policy and to liaise with the European institutions. EFAH seeks to identify and highlight the needs of the European artistic community to European decision-makers, and thereby ensure the sector participates in the decision-making process. Its 52 members represent many thousands of organisations across Europe, often with their own members. Thus EFAH collectively represents a substantial weight of opinion in the sector.

Over eighty NGOs, both networks and others in the cultural field, were consulted directly in the research for this document. Criteria for inclusion were to be either a member of EFAH or an active transnational European network in the arts and/or heritage field (many such networks are in fact EFAH members). The Forum of European Cultural Networks provided a means of identifying other networks in the field and the Working Group is grateful for their contribution to the research. Network coordinators enlisted the participation of many more organisations through their membership and boards. The document represents a distillation of the views of networks and organisations active in the field of European cultural cooperation in the arts and heritage.

The document traces threads of **common purpose** running through the cultural networks sector, while acknowledging a **great diversity** of membership and working methods. It identifies issues of common concern and presents **concrete proposals** addressed to institutions, ministries and to networks themselves. It seeks to engage a political consciousness of the need for networks to work with European institutions, foundations, ministries, regional authorities and with each other. It aims to articulate the needs and concerns of those consulted and to present relevant solutions; to outline proposals drawn from the networks' own experience and vision of how things could be better, proposals which may also be pertinent for others in the field.

Above all, its purpose is to increase understanding and support for this dynamic, effective and flexible way of working and thereby secure a more stable foundation for European cultural networks.

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1. Introduction

We need to bring Europe closer to its citizens. We need to continue fighting for jobs with all the effort and determination we can muster. We must make use of all the resources provided by the single market. It is a great opportunity for Europe and we must seize it. We need to respect the diversity of identities and cultures in Europe. We intend to devote much of our attention to the opportunities for tomorrow's Europe. If we do not seize these opportunities, we could be condemning Europe to decline. Innovation is vital. It allows individual and collective needs to be better satisfied. Tomorrow's society will be a society which invests in knowledge, a society of teaching and learning ... in other words a learning society. We need to work in such a way as to serve the interests and quality of life of the European citizen.

(extracts from official documents of the European Commission, 1995-1996)

Transnational cultural networks are where people are putting Europe into practice. They are achieving these goals every day. Networks are living proof of the determination to create flexible and dynamic structures that can adapt to the changing environment of Europe as it prepares for the 21st century.

"Nothing would be more dangerous than for Europe to maintain structures and customs which foster resignation, refusal of commitment and passivity."

Commission of the European Communities,
White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, 1993

These networks are making an enormous ongoing commitment to Europe through their work across borders and cultures involving cooperation, communication and collaboration between thousands of member organisations and individuals. And yet the research for this document was provoked by the urgent realisation among cultural networks that their very survival is under threat. The pressures are intensifying. Any organisation needs partnership, solidarity and strategic investment.

The problems currently experienced by transnational cultural networks are both serious and strategic and arise from a combination of factors.

Firstly, networks find it incredibly difficult to secure structural support and stability, even medium-term, for the tiny network coordination offices which act as pivots for information sharing and the organisation of joint activities. This is because the environment in which networks operate copes more easily with short-term projects that have limited objectives. The result is that, just at the point when cultural networks can be seen to have achieved a level of maturity and professionalism, their ability to deliver a well-documented range of benefits is undermined by an insecure and low base of funding for their extremely modest core costs.

Secondly, cultural networks depend on the participation of members who contribute membership fees, participation costs, time and commitment. With declining support for cultural organisations at local, regional, national and European level, networks could become reduced to electronic databases of members who can never afford to meet or elite clubs.

Thirdly, networks suffer from a lack of understanding and acknowledgement of their work. In spite of the fact that, within a comparatively short period of time, networks have come to be accepted as essential consultation partners by European institutions, politicians, national governments, regional authorities and foundations. Indeed networks are valued for their connections with the grass roots, with artists and artistic projects in communities across Europe and for their ability to make connections through transnational cultural cooperation.

Transnational cultural networks are therefore seeking a matching commitment from institutions, governments and other organisations in Europe. Concrete measures of encouragement are required which acknowledge the considerable achievements of networks by investing in the benefits of their work. A number of proposals are put forward in this document which seek to establish a more secure foundation for the networks so that they can realise their full potential.

Cultural networks have reached critical mass and are the 'motors' of cultural work in Europe. It therefore seems extraordinary that they are under threat at a time when Europe most needs to invest in sustainable development which places culture at its heart.

"If we want the participation and the confidence of the citizens, if we want to make Europe the business of every citizen, if we want to construct Europe together with the citizens - then we must, on the one hand, seek their involvement, listen to and welcome new ideas and, on the other hand, make our work and visions understood."

Mr Oreja, Commissioner for Audiovisual Media, Information, Communication and Culture, DGX,
Seminar on Openness and Transparency, 1995

2. Networks in Europe

Networks are ubiquitous. A phenomenon which is at once ancient and post-modern, networks are widely championed as ideal systems for a variety of complex management, communication and cooperation activities. They provide models of commitment, interdependence and collaboration which are effective in delivering benefits across the field.

"In a global marketplace ... the more sustainable competitive advantages are working in an international context, building flexibility, sharing information and developing collective know-how into a worldwide network. In order to develop these capabilities, people from different cultures have to be able to communicate, negotiate, compromise and understand each other's values and world views."

Lisa Hoecklin, management consultant

Economical, political and social networks are as old as human history and form the basis of all societal structures. Cultural networks are a more visible and more contemporary form of social cohesion. They are an answer to the complex, overwhelming, chaotic, information saturated societies we live and work in.

As Europe approaches the dawn of the 21st century, old certainties are undermined by increasing unemployment and social unrest; by an explosion in the field of new technologies and awareness of the shifting priorities of the information society; by human migration and social exclusion. A rapidly changing

environment demands supreme adaptability. Networks offer flexible, transversal structures particularly suited to contemporary society and the unpredictable demands it makes.

2.a. Types of network

Physical networks of transport, energy and telecommunications provide the infrastructure that underpins contemporary society. The establishment of efficient trans-European networks in these fields is a priority within the European Union:

"Networks are the arteries of the single market. ... The establishment of networks of the highest quality throughout the whole Community and beyond its frontiers is a priority task."

Commission of the European Communities
White Paper on growth, competitiveness and employment, 1993

Networks are also a growing feature of the economy in Europe as major corporations have discovered the benefits of re-organising their structures into network formation. Physical and economic networks are designed to increase efficiency, competitiveness, growth and employment.

On the other hand, human or social networks have developed more organically, out of a need for people to establish links across national borders, share information and experience, collaborate on joint initiatives and lobby effectively. Human networks are designed to increase communication and the mobility of people, ideas and experience, thereby providing professional development, training and increased employment opportunities; they are also an effective means of representation of a sector at an international level.

2.b. Human or social networks

Transnational cultural networks in Europe fall within the sphere of human or social networks. Specialist professional networks of NGOs and individuals have formed in many fields: culture, health, education, environment and the social economy. They are horizontal structures, designed to establish channels of communication and cooperation between professionals who share common concerns. A network, in this sense, is usually defined as:

"a dynamic system of communication, cooperation and partnership between individuals or groups"

Michel Bassand, sociologist

Networks are **emergent structures**, both in Europe and globally, and are **in a process of evolution**. Such is their nature. Networks generally emerge as small groupings of like-minded individuals or organisations with a shared sense of mission and evolve into more complex and mature organisations with legal structures, constitutions, executive committees, coordination offices, membership fees and 'products' such as publications, conferences, meetings and collaborative projects. A network can be described as 'established' when it has a clear mission, a legal constitution, a democratic decision-making process with an executive board and an active membership.

Although highly diffuse and decentralised in their way of working, an established network with a legal structure requires a node or pivotal point which is identifiable as its centre. A small office, the *network coordination office* or *secretariat*, with a network coordinator or secretary general is essential to undertake

the day to day administration, respond to requests from new and existing members, disseminate information, organise meetings and help facilitate special interest groups within the network.

In practical terms, transnational networks are an efficient way of sharing information and learning from others' experience. They can prevent members from wasting resources by duplicating work or 're-inventing the wheel' through lack of contact with others in their field. Training, employment and professional development are some of the outcomes of international networking in the cultural field.

But human or social networks offer much more than this. In all networks, whether physical, economic, electronic or human, the web structure ensures that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. In a professional network, "the behaviour of every individual becomes a stimulus for others" (J-F Bourquin). For a group, networks generate common interests and ideas for new projects. They offer working partners and access to a capital resource of ideas, contacts, specialised information and pertinent experience.

Transnational networks reach across geographical borders and barriers of language and culture, but always revolve around the central mission of the network. In order to realise their aims within the comparatively small but extremely diverse space of Europe, they confront issues of communication and mobility on a daily basis.

3. European cultural networks: a panoramic view

Within the arts and heritage field in Europe, specialised professional networks have multiplied over the past fifteen years, in particular in the 1990s. Networks exist at local, regional, national and transnational levels. Networks are also important in adjacent sectors such as cultural tourism, education, young people, and the audiovisual field. There is a high degree of interdependence and interaction between all these networks.

This document addresses the needs of transnational cultural networks in the arts and heritage fields whose members are drawn from across Europe.

At present, around 40 active transnational European networks operate in the arts and heritage field. The nature of the members (eg. cultural centres, arts projects, festivals, performing arts companies, museums, galleries, historic monuments) means they engage in activities reaching large audiences and numbers of participants, who come from all segments of society in Europe: children, elderly people, unemployed young people, employed women and men of all ages and social classes, people from ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities. Member organisations directly provide employment, purchase goods and services and generate own income. The work of these 40 cultural networks therefore impacts on the lives of millions of people across Europe.

Transnational European cultural networks are specialised and diverse. There are networks of textile artists, of cultural centres in historic monuments, of jazz programmers, of multidisciplinary centres in old industrial sites, of residential centres for artists, of poetry translation centres, of performing arts professionals, of cultural management training centres, of asylum cities which offer refuge to persecuted writers and artists, and many, many more.

3.a. Adaptable learning organisations

It is important to recognise the nature of the sector. It is changing fast. At present the number of transnational cultural networks is comparatively small but it is growing. Existing networks are facing increased demand for membership. New young networks are swiftly clarifying their aims and adopting a professional legal status.

There is no ideologically pure, 'model' cultural network. All true networks are in a continuous process of change and adaptation. Networks embody that elusive principle which most successful companies and institutions aspire to: that of being a **learning organisation**. They make constant readjustments to their working methods as the world in which they operate throws up new challenges and conflicts.

Although various typologies of transnational cultural networks have been put forward, it is most useful in this context to note the shared **characteristics and principles** and elements of **similarity and difference**.

3.b. Characteristics and principles

Networks share certain general characteristics: openness, flexibility, the heterogeneity of their members and coexistence of messages from different cultures. They are interactive systems whose dynamism depends on a high level of participation and voluntary information sharing.

They are non-bureaucratic organisations, informal in style of management although in general formally and legally constituted. Network coordination is purposely kept to a minimum, either carried out on a voluntary basis or by employed staff. To function optimally, an established network with an active membership and range of activities might need 3-5 staff. As such, they would continue to be non-institutional, open structures.

A fundamental principle of networking is that information and contacts need to be shared. There is a belief that "the exchange of information and ideas is a source of power" (IETM guidelines for membership). These are what Kevin Kelly describes as "web hierarchies" where "information and authority travel from the bottom up and from side to side" in a largely self-determined way.

Since authority and commitment are generated internally, participation in a network requires generosity and work. It demands an investment of time, money and effort. Membership fees, travel to meetings, accommodation expenses and time are all real costs borne by members and their organisations. What is less tangible and cannot be underestimated is the personal mental effort required to engage in a debate in your third language; to try to understand the position of someone from a country which has just emerged after decades of isolation; or to plan an exchange with a colleague whose culture and background share few points of reference with your own. Trust and continuity of participation are essential to benefit fully from network membership.

Networks depend on face-to-face human contact. However sophisticated the electronic tools and information dissemination, people must actually meet in order to lay the foundations of trust required to develop collaborative projects.

3.c. Similarity

There are more fundamental similarities between these networks than differences. Broadly, the network is identified as a means of bringing people together in order to:

- **share information and experiences**
- **generate ideas and provide partners for collaborative projects**
- **reflect on the needs of the sector**
- **engage in professional development**

These aims are achieved through activities such as publications, meetings, conferences, seminars, projects, lobbying and advocacy. As well as adhering to common objectives, network members share other attributes:

- **diversity:** network members come from any number of countries and cultures; they bring different working methods, artistic priorities and preconceptions. The network is committed to the positive aspects of diversity, to exploring and valuing diversity as a way of questioning one's own priorities and way of working. As such, cultural networks are truly European.
- **cohesion:** in the midst of this diversity, the network acts as a magnet for people committed to cross-border collaboration. The arts field has long been recognised for its aversion to borders of any kind and the network channels these energies. The shared sense of mission provides cohesion.
- **non-representativeness AND representativeness:** network members are self-selecting. Participation is a voluntary activity. However they do represent a significant segment of the field which is committed to ideas of 'europeanism' and the identification of shared solutions for cultural development and society.
- **individuality:** network members swim against the tide. Networks frequently bring together people who work in ways that do not fit into existing categories within institutions, ministries and arts councils. Individuals and organisations who find themselves isolated and frustrated by the inevitable time lag between institutional change and the real world can establish transversal links with professionals in other countries through networks, find partners and effective ways to work in ground-breaking projects.

3.d. Difference

The cultural networks sector is evolving and there are considerable variations in scale and status across the field. Each network has different origins and priorities. One can therefore observe distinct differences between network organisations in terms of:

- **maturity & level of organisation:** some younger networks are still at the formative stage and operate as an unconstituted special interest group; the majority consulted for this research have evolved into established non-profit associations and foundations with a legal status.
- **scale:** influence and effectiveness are not necessarily related to size. Some networks need to be small; they represent a narrow field of vision and have tightly determined objectives. Others choose to be large because they have determined a wider working field. There is no optimum size of network which can guarantee quality of communication and innovation.

- **profile and status:** some networks are able to lever greater resources and influence than others. This relates to the status and connections of its members. Differences in profile and status are not necessarily a cause for disharmony: they are generally a reflection of society at large.

- **intention and priorities:** a network expresses its intention, or aims, through its mission statement, charter or resolution. It is put into practice through activities, which have both tangible and intangible outcomes. Mission statements vary considerably (eg. some focus on research and dissemination of information, others on practical collaborative projects). Other differences emerge at the outcomes stage when subtle shifts in priority are magnified (eg. some networks facilitate meetings where members determine their own level of engagement, others organise conferences and information seminars with a more formal level of presentation). Networks invest in entirely different notions of 'success'.

- **allegiance:** networks which have grown out of a clearly articulated need and evolved into established organisations are able to develop a balanced allegiance, or loyalty. The network's allegiance is broadly to the stated mission, the members and the networking process and takes into account the spirit and influence of the founders of the network.

However, for those networks which have been installed or assisted into being by institutions or ministries, the process of establishing themselves as truly independent organisations often takes longer. Such assistance often has strings attached, the network having been created out of institutional priorities and goals. It can be difficult for both network and institution to cut the strings. This situation can create a misplaced, or missing, sense of allegiance which diminishes the network's potential until the situation is resolved.

KEY FEATURES OF TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL NETWORKS: evolve out of need; horizontal structure; flexibility; openness; value diversity of membership and interests; non-bureaucratic management style; minimal central organisation; often legally constituted; long-term goals; concrete results (publications, meetings, collaborative projects) + intangible results (solidarity, active citizenship, professional development); learning environment; innovative; creative problem solving; believe in value of dialogue and face-to-face contact; boundless potential.

4. The cultural network 'umbrella'

The wider network umbrella covers many organisations with diverse origins and purposes. Some describe themselves as networks, some are perceived as networks, some really are networks. There is a certain amount of confusion which needs examining.

Firstly, don't assume that a network will call itself a network. You can find network organisations under all the following names, and more: *network - forum - league - meeting - working group - alliance - council - committee - college - convention - foundation - federation - confederation - society - association*. A network may be made up of: *members - associates - affiliates - partners - delegates*. Of course, most networked associations and projects use just the same thesaurus.

This document concentrates on the core group of transnational cultural networks whose key features are described in Section 3. But there are many other network-type organisations, associations, projects and networked information outposts under the networks umbrella. These organisations often share close working relationships with transnational networks and their members. Although their needs fall outside the scope of this document and are not addressed directly by the proposals, it is useful to briefly describe their main characteristics.

4.a. Transnational professional associations

These are sectoral associations which primarily focus on making representation on behalf of a field to the European Commission, other European institutions, key governmental and non-governmental agencies. Membership may be limited to one or two delegates per country in order to present a representative front at the supranational level. Information and authority flows from local and regional organisations and members up through national delegates to the supranational association and back down again. It does not flow from side to side.

KEY FEATURES OF PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS: aim to represent sector; restricted membership (national/regional delegates only); seek consensus; legally constituted organisations; structure may mirror institutions they target; limited interest in transnational collaboration through projects.

4.b. Networked information outposts and institutions

These are organisations set up by a central institution or other 'higher authority' to represent their interests and deliver specific services. They are found in network-like formations across Europe.

Within the European Union there are many such organisations, charged with information dissemination or semi-formalised cooperation. An example would be the 23 MEDIA Desks and Antennae set up by the European Commission as regional information posts for DGX's MEDIA programme. Another would be national cultural institutions (eg. Institut Français, British Council, Goethe Institute) which have offices across the world linked through regional or continental networks.

Both examples present strong transversal links but when a network has been installed by the parent organisation to undertake well-defined tasks its members are ultimately responsible to head office. This creates a different pattern of communication and action from a transnational cultural network with authority tending to travel from the top down, while information travels top down, bottom up and, in a limited way, from side to side.

KEY FEATURES OF INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS: institutional structures designed by 'parent' organisation; authority travels from top down; information travels top down, bottom up and, in a limited way, from side to side; service delivery oriented; limited autonomy; partners predetermined; evolve from highly centralised institutions.

4.c. Transnational cultural projects

A network is the environment in which projects are identified, created and copied. Transnational cultural networks and other organisations have generated a multitude of cross-border cultural projects. These are commonly described as networks although the term is misleading since projects have entirely different

origins and purposes from network organisations. Transnational cultural projects are practical outcomes of some of the organisations under the cultural network umbrella, rather than being network organisations in their own right.

The Community Kaleidoscope programme which ran from 1992-1995 provided support for transnational cultural projects and networks under Action 3 (cultural cooperation in the form of networks). Such projects have frequently been described as networks. A characteristic of projects is that they often focus on short-term goals and visible results. Kaleidoscope required a minimum of three partners from different countries. Compared to the broader membership of a network organisation, the number of partners in a transnational cultural project may appear limited.

Network projects sometimes begin as a 'call for project partners' (by post, fax or electronic bulletin board) in order to secure the required number of partners to satisfy funding criteria laid down by the European Commission, or other funding body. This approach does not guarantee that they assemble the right partners with a shared sense of mission and a need to collaborate. If the original idea has emanated from one individual or organisation, it may translate with difficulty into other languages, cultures and working practices.

Many network projects, however, evolve from meetings between like-minded people through cultural networks. These have a better survival rate and increased long-term potential. They are more likely to group partners with shared goals. Partners meet at an early stage, or may already know each other, so the project builds on a foundation of trust. The idea can evolve interactively which ensures a broad base of 'ownership'. Real creative partnerships and synergy can develop between such project participants.

Some network projects have the potential to become true transnational networks. Several have, although more identify it as a goal than really achieve it. A more sustainable aim is to develop a transferable model with a combination of fixed and flexible elements.

Network projects offer valuable, vital spaces for experimentation in cross-border collaboration. But under this heading one finds intelligent pilot projects with committed partners alongside unguided missiles fuelled by misplaced ambition. Key features are therefore somewhat contradictory.

KEY FEATURES OF NETWORK PROJECTS: short-term goals; concrete, fast results; limited number of partners; often tailored to funding criteria; legal constitution of a project is rare; partners have other priorities and responsibilities; flexible structure; idea evolves from grass roots need; experimental and innovative; may have long-term potential or transferability.

5. Real benefits + concrete achievements

Transnational networks deliver real benefits and well-documented achievements. In the language of contemporary economic management, they offer **substantial returns for stakeholders**. The stakeholders here are the network members, arts organisations, artists and individuals in the sector, project participants, audiences and individual citizens in Europe as well as the institutions, foundations and sponsors which support networks and their activities.

5.a. Evaluation criteria

It is impossible to quantify the huge numbers of outcomes of networking since most remain undocumented - dispersed throughout the membership. Some networks are active devisers and managers of projects. But a network does not 'own' or control the projects it incubates. A project often develops without any need to refer to the network coordination.

Appropriate and flexible evaluation criteria are urgently needed to assess the work of cultural networks. Some networks are in the process of developing such systems. What is required is an appreciation of the area that lies between total control and no control. Normal quantitative methods are not sufficient for evaluation purposes.

The criteria need to acknowledge that the main work of a network can be to create an open and communicative framework in which innovative, trans-European collaborations are likely to develop. The results can only be assessed with hindsight.

Achievements cannot be tied down to predictable outcomes. This would instantly limit a network's inbuilt capacity for potential and growth. But it's no wonder institutions and funding agencies find it difficult to appreciate what networks really do. It's as if you planted a tulip bulb and an orchid flower popped up, the next year you get some grass and then ... a pineapple! Networks have a capacity for joyous and disobedient unpredictability. The important thing is that they go on being productive and that this production is relevant to current needs and practices - even forward thinking or ahead of its time.

5.b. Benefits and achievements

The benefits of networks and networking are described and perceived differently by different stakeholders. Like the gaining of wisdom and expertise through age, networking benefits develop slowly. Experience and practice build results since networking is a form of training or professional development. Benefits fall into the following areas:

- **intercultural cooperation:** participation in a network is an ongoing, active workshop in intercultural communication. Through meetings, information dissemination and projects, network members confront issues of communication and cultural diversity. Networks are about learning how to work together and acknowledge cultural differences.

Example: in 1994, five theatre companies working for children and young people (members of EU NET ART) from Italy, Portugal, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands co-produced a theatre performance "The Right Shoes". This special production was performed for thousands of children in refugee camps in Croatia to take them away from the day to day reality of the war situation and to demonstrate cooperation between different countries on stage.

- **efficiency and effectiveness:** networks are lean, well-managed organisations which maximise resources. They have efficient metabolisms which extract relevant information and disseminate it widely because members do the necessary work. Networks were created in order to save costs - members can meet a great many partners or potential partners in one place at the same time, thus saving the costs of travelling to several cities to meet the same people.

Example: Culturelink is a global network of more than 1,000 networks, institutions and individuals from over 90 countries. Information mediated through the network reaches at least five people in every organisation and networks usually have more than ten member organisations. It can therefore be estimated that at least 5,000 and as many as 50,000 people have access to the information circulated. Culturelink publishes a quarterly Bulletin, has developed a Cultural Policy database accessible by Internet and manage a cultural development information database on 1,000 institutions and networks worldwide. Several different people work on Culturelink as part of their broader research workload. Their work is equivalent to 3-4 full time posts.

- **professional development:** active participation in a network provides on-the-job training in communication, collaboration, and project management. Members learn about cultural history, structures, laws, working practice and key concepts of different countries. Networks are an emancipatory tool which enable members to do their jobs better. They create employment through the projects, exchanges, co-productions, publications and meetings they generate.

Example: IETM was the organism which fostered the birth of the Gulliver Clearing House and Practical Training Programme. IETM's members form an immediate source of placements for students and stagiaires, for exchange and employment of artists and administrators. At each IETM Meeting there are always a number of working groups based around practical issues, such as sharing information on co-productions. In this way, good practice is shared, differences between countries are examined and new working solutions are explored.

- **productivity:** networks are productive hives of activity. They incubate projects, spawn micro-networks and generate transferable models of cultural cooperation. They activate a multiplier effect in the financing of projects. Members offer tremendous potential for a multiplication of collaborative projects across Europe.

Example: in 1995/96, ELIA's programme includes masterclasses in theatre, dance, opera and music, developed in collaboration with art education institutions across Europe and open to students and teachers; a seminar on the management of international projects in art education; a symposium on 'Confrontation and Conflict: the challenge to the arts in times of human turmoil'; and an annual conference for 500-600 participants which includes the participation of 75 colleagues from the USA through the International Council of Fine Art Deans.

- **innovation:** any major corporation prides itself on the investment it makes in research and development, in seeking viable solutions for future challenges, in trying to identify new questions long before anyone asks them. There will always be new questions. Research and development, creative problem solving, experimenting with new ways of doing things, lateral thinking - all lie at the heart of networking in the cultural sector in Europe.

Example: Trans Europe Halles (TEH) is a network of 26 independent cultural centres, all multidisciplinary centres based in former industrial buildings, in 16 European countries. In 1996 TEH launches the Phoenix Project when 250 young people from all over Europe meet in Copenhagen to develop ideas on the future of work, employment and using time through workshops linking artists, philosophers and researchers. At the centre of the Phoenix Project are, on the one hand, the young people as the most desperate, energetic and future minded group in our societies and, on the other hand, the artists and their visionary creative activities. TEH believes in the creative power of the individual and the community and is seeking to broker new dialogues and new perspectives for change through artistic work.

Perhaps the most intangible benefit comes from a belief in the value of dialogue as a tool for learning which guides professional, political and personal development.

"One position, one voice, lacks dialectical resonance... [dialogue offers] a latticework of thoughts and points of view that interweave and complement each other."

Suzi Gablik, art critic and artist

6. Modus operandi: a brief guide

6.a. How do networks function on a day to day basis?

Network organisations have simple management operations. Most have formalised, legal structures with a constitution and articles of membership. They adopt a legal entity (association, foundation or non profit-making status) appropriate to the country where the network coordination office is located. Responsibility for the network's work and development lies in three areas:

- **members** - *for participation, information, ideas, time, energy and project management skills.*
- **Executive Committee** (management board, steering group, advisory council, with President, Secretary, Treasurer), drawn from the membership and often including external advisors in the field. Sometimes the management and advisory functions are split into two committees - *for direction, support, advice, information, ideas, management skills and yet more time.*
- **Network staff** (Coordinator, Secretary General, maybe others) - *for day to day administration, liaison with members and Executive Committee, gathering, sifting and disseminating information, organising meetings, negotiating partnerships, fund-raising, lobbying, representing the network, identifying trends and future directions, providing project support and collecting membership fees.*

There is a marked divergence between networks which have established an independent coordination office or secretariat and those where the considerable duties of Network Coordinator are subsumed into the daily workload of one network member (usually the President or Secretary), who already has a full-time job. Here there are immediate problems of availability and ability to deliver and impossible conflicts of priority. These are particularly acute for a network which has evolved in size, profile and maturity to a point where the need for its existence has become exposed and demand from current and potential members is growing. This situation is never a matter of choice but is determined by the extremely limited resources a network organisation can draw on at present.

It would be wrong, however, to imagine that life is rosy for networks with an independent coordination office. Firstly they are few in number (less than a third of those consulted have a network coordination office with paid staff) and these are **tiny organisations with 1-3 employees**. The workload is tremendous and coordinators often work in precarious, isolated conditions with little security of employment. The nature of the work demands extreme mobility and advanced communication skills.

Network coordinators are tough, motivated individuals with an inbuilt ability to juggle multiple priorities. They are constantly overwhelmed by the demand for their services and presence. They are eloquent spokespersons on behalf of the network and the networking approach. They have to embody the

network's characteristics and be adaptable, dynamic, open, communicative and innovative as well as being efficient managers of limited time and resources.

Network offices are on the frontline of the current information explosion. The sheer quantity and multiple sources of relevant information have created an urgent need to find new solutions to the metabolising of data. Some networks are developing electronic tools such as bulletin boards, e-mailed newsletters and Internet-accessed databases to provide rapid information dissemination. However, they are held back by a lack of specialist staff and no time to learn new skills as well as inequalities of participation by members who do not yet have the funds or communications infrastructure to access these technologies.

6.b. Core costs and members' contributions

Networks and their members do remarkably well in covering nearly all the costs connected to networking. Core costs are only a small part of the total turnover of a network's yearly activities. However, that is where the problems lie. The costs of the core activity of a network coordination office include:

- office expenses (rent, services, telephone, fax, post)
- network staff salaries
- communication (newsletters, translation, interpreting for meetings)
- travel expenses (for staff attending board and network meetings)
- equipment and technology for efficient information dissemination
- research (subscriptions, publications)
- staff training (eg. in use of new technologies)

Project activities are over and above these basic costs and include, for example, publications, meetings, collaborarative projects and exchanges.

Membership fees and members' contributions for travel and meetings expenses make up a significant part of a network organisation's total budget (in some cases as much as 75% of the general turnover of all the activity related to networking). Cultural networks depend on the participation of members who contribute membership fees, time and commitment and pay their own costs to attend meetings and participate in joint projects.

However, none of the networks are able to cover all their core costs through members' contributions alone.

Members are coming under increasing pressure in their own countries to reduce expenditure and there is a danger that international collaboration can be viewed as a luxury. This affects both members from European Union countries and those in Central and Eastern Europe. Networks are acutely aware of inequalities of ability to participate among their members. The costs for members in peripheral countries, those with weaker economies and smaller, younger cultural organisations without funds are becoming prohibitive. Networks are making serious efforts to introduce differentiated membership fees where appropriate. Without support for members at local, regional, national and European level, networks could become reduced to electronic databases of members who can never afford to meet and develop real partnerships or elite clubs of rich, well-connected cultural moguls.

6.c. What about the budget shortfall?

Meeting the budget shortfall is the permanent challenge for a network organisation. It is the core costs which remain the most difficult to fund.

A few national ministries recognise the value of hosting a transnational network office in their country and in some cases have allocated as much as 50% of core costs. This does offer the network coordination a more secure foundation although funding is usually on an annual basis only. But this is not an option available to all network offices whose location is often a combination of chance and history. It is not viable, nor can it be considered desirable, to imagine that the majority of transnational cultural network offices could be located in a handful of richer European countries whose national governments would pick up the bills.

The costs of projects generated through the network are quite different since these are occasional activities which can be developed as 'add-ons', only happening when the finances are in place. Members expect to contribute financially to projects and are better placed than a network organisation to secure project funding from European institutions, national ministries, national cultural institutions, regional authorities, sponsors and foundations. This is the multiplier effect in action. But without the network organisation - no network projects.

"It is felt that priority should be given to the developmental aspect of networks rather than to the projects which are their end result and which themselves could have easier access to other sources of funding. Emphasis should therefore be placed on support for the structural aspects of networks and, in recognition that time is a crucial resource, for their continuity."

Kaleidoscope 2000: a common position by EFAH, 1995

As far as other solutions to the budget shortfall are concerned, networks find that they are rarely of interest to the private sector who seek out more visible, media-worthy events to sponsor. Foundations have recognised the value of networks and support their work through project grants, research and travel bursaries. However, foundations cannot provide a source of permanent revenue funding.

Networks do generate some earned income but their scope for developing this is low while they have no reserves to draw on. Publications, for instance, are costly to produce, market and distribute. They demand advance investment for returns which cannot be guaranteed.

The level of activity of transnational cultural networks is European. It therefore follows that measures of support are required in the form of regular revenue or structural funding at European level to give these organisations a more secure foundation.

6.d. Political and environmental factors

As outlined in the Introduction, the three main problems currently experienced by networks are the lack of funding for core costs, the pressure on funding for members' contributions and the lack of recognition for the area of work. These problems are compounded by a number of other factors - political, bureaucratic and environmental:

- **short-termism:** networks have been forced to package their activities in project form with short-term objectives and short-term gains. Networking is a long-term process which yields increasing returns with time and close attention.

Networks are operating in a political climate that invests value in short-term enterprises with predictable, visible outcomes. At all levels - institutional, governmental, municipal and corporate, one finds an anxious concern to control, monitor and limit. Perhaps this is a reaction to living and working in a complex world where global forces are out of politicians' control, but networks are the best type of structure to process uncertainty and absorb change. For these qualities alone they merit greater support and, as has been demonstrated, their benefits can be monitored.

- **delays and cashflow problems:** the grantmaking process at European level is plagued with delayed announcements, impossibly short deadlines, more delays in decision-making, and yet more delays in processing grants. Networks, which have no financial reserves to fall back on, are forced to manage their affairs in an appalling manner: they have to take out expensive loans to cover monies owing (although some banks refuse to lend money without collateral) and are obliged to spend money up to nine months before it arrives. This habit of devolving the cashflow problems of a supranational institution to tiny organisations with one or two staff is intolerable and creates a huge burden of administration, bank charges and worry.

- **inadequate or inappropriate criteria:** funding applications are judged by inappropriate criteria, such as treating the location of a transnational network office as a project's nationality, rather than looking at the balance of membership which may come from 40 different countries.

- **information overload:** the environment in which networks operate is changing and one of the most pressing areas is information. An urgent assessment of ways in which new technologies can process and streamline information handling and dissemination is required. Networks, as they are resourced at present, are unable to take this on although all recognise it as a priority. This is one area where adequate resourcing could place transnational cultural networks at the cutting edge of an intelligent and democratic use of new technologies. The networks could be a good trial ground for pioneering a wider use of these techniques in Europe.

"A rapid and successful transition to a society where information is available to everyone will bring with it a new dynamism, creativity and economic growth for Europe."

The Commission's work Programme for 1996

These problems and pressures lock networks into a series of vicious circles. The challenge is to transform them into productive cycles. Only long-term structural support at a European level can achieve this.

7. Proposals for cultural cooperation in Europe

These proposals are **concrete**. They build on the **existing assets and future potentials** of cultural networks. They are **modest, realistic and achievable**. Proposals are addressed to institutions of the European Union (European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Ministers, Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions); the Council of Europe and its Member States, the

European Cultural Foundation, national ministries and arts councils; regional and municipal authorities; foundations; sponsors; and networks themselves.

They are **proposals for improved structural support and recognition**. They respect the principle of subsidiarity, whereby one seeks to determine which is the most effective level to tackle each issue: local, regional, national or European. Proposals addressed to the Commission also respect the Commission's right of initiative in making proposals for all new legislation. The level of activity of the transnational cultural networks is European and the benefits are experienced at a European level; it follows that measures of encouragement must be at a European level.

Proposals are aimed at the following three levels:

- a. **European institutions and partnerships at a European level**
- b. **National, regional and local ministries, councils and authorities**
- c. **Private sector**

and are dependent on:

- d. **Conditions**

7.a. **Proposals to European institutions and partnerships**

Proposal # 1

That the European Community set up a Community NETWORK DEVELOPMENT FUND to support the essential revenue costs of cultural networking.

Scope: core activities of transnational cultural networks.

Open to: applications from transnational cultural networks which meet an agreed set of criteria (see Condition # 1).

Operational basis: multi-annual renewable funding (ideally 3 year grants) to enable networks to plan strategically.

Applications procedure: annual grants round with adequate notice of deadlines; clear application forms; published guidelines; grants to be paid at the start of the year to enable networks to fulfil proposed work programmes.

Selection procedure: against agreed criteria, financial need and any existing sources of funding secured by the network organisation; if nationality is a necessary factor in selection, it should be based on the locations of network members rather than the location of the network coordination office; transparent selection process involving people from the field and experts who understand the networks sector.

Evaluation: periodic valuation of the network's continuing relevance; evaluation criteria to reflect the specificities of networking.

Fund: to cover a proportion of core costs as described for a modest network coordination office (3-5 staff ideally).

Source: since the work of transnational cultural networks has a horizontal

impact, it is recommended that the source of the fund reflects cross-sector involvement of external relations, employment, development, regional policy, telecommunications, education, youth, cultural tourism and the social economy. The fund would be managed by DG X.

Note: this fund would be complementary to a Creative Partnership Fund

(providing support for transnational cultural projects). The two funds - Network Development and Creative Partnership - would operate separately and cover some of the area described under Action 1 and 3 of the former Kaleidoscope Programme. Through its effective use of resources, the proposed Network Development Fund would provide strategic support for the work of transnational cultural networks in a way which is not available under existing Community programmes. There would continue to be a need for project funding but it is beyond the scope of this document to outline how a Creative Partnership Fund might operate.

Proposal # 2

That a EUROPEAN GUARANTEE FUND FOR CULTURAL NETWORKS be established, as in the audiovisual field.

Scope: the Guarantee Fund does not allocate funds or loans directly. It acts as an interface and incentive for financial establishments to support networks and cultural or artistic projects which involve European cooperation.

It offers the possibility of obtaining an advance against a signed contract for Community funding. It acts as a guarantor in obtaining bank loans.

Open: to networks which meet an agreed set of criteria (see Condition # 1).

To managers of cultural or artistic projects which set up European partnerships, excluding the cultural industries (film, publishing, record).

Purpose: where Community funds are allocated, an advance can be made providing there is proof of contract. Moreover, a total or partial advance can be made against the outstanding balance of a grant.

With the funding of projects, it acts as an additional guarantee depending on the nature and approach of the project, particularly where there is co-funding from public/private and/or national/Community sources.

For all networks and project managers, it guarantees expertise, advice and support for the financial setting up of projects and the management of bank negotiations.

It will help find partners (banks, financial establishments) which could provide bridging loans or directly support financial operations.

Administration: the Fund could be managed by a European Economic Interest

Grouping, a legal entity which could group all the networks and organisations which wish to benefit from the Guarantee Fund.

Selection: on the basis of eligibility criteria and on the presentation of

documents illustrating the cultural and economic components of the project and how it will be managed. Selection to be made by a Clearing Committee, made up of professionals from the sectors participating in the Fund and representatives of the bankers' pool. The Clearing Committee can also provide advice and expertise and, in the long term, define guarantee criteria applicable to other partners.

Source: the Fund is made up of two parts: one for the operational costs, the

other for funding purposes. Its resources are provided by a European bankers' pool, in partnership with funds from foundations, contributions from Member States and Community funds. The total amount to be

determined following a study of the needs of networks and a medium-term evaluation of the needs of European arts and cultural projects.

Proposal # 3

That the Council of Europe, European Cultural Foundation and others collaborate to provide an INTEGRATED TRAVEL BURSARY SYSTEM offering travel expenses to enable full network participation.

Scope: a quota of travel bursaries to be allocated to transnational cultural networks (accepted onto the scheme on the basis of agreed criteria) at the beginning of each year. Networks can plan their use strategically and distribute according to need and priority.

Purpose: to enable full participation in network activities by members. Selection to be based on greatest need. This new fund would operate more effectively than present measures by lifting restrictions (eg. a person may not receive support to attend a network meeting more than once).

Administration: the network takes care of the on-the-ground responsibility for selection, which is devolved to them under a contract with the funders. All recommendations to be ratified by the network's executive board. Grant management to be a direct transaction between the selected network member and the funders.

Fund: needs to be more substantial than is currently available through the European Cultural Foundation Apex Fund and Council of Europe 'support to networks'. Fund total to be established against a realistic establishment of actual need (through a survey of the networks).

Note: this fund would complement a parallel fund available for artists and arts managers in areas of need and priority to support their travel costs to meet partners and develop collaborative projects.

Proposal # 4

That the Council of Europe support multilingual dissemination of network information where appropriate through the provision of an annual bank of translation and interpretation hours, if possible in partnership with other European/international institutions.

Scope: as with the previous proposal, a survey of the networks sector will establish the level of need. The Council's translators and interpreters, who are known to be among the best, would be made available to transnational cultural networks on the basis of an annual quota of hours. Networks would allocate the time themselves and work directly with the translators and interpreters.

Purpose: to ensure better communication by making sure information, whether written (via newsletter) or spoken (at a meeting/conference), is well translated and clearly understandable. This is a fundamental necessity of good networking. At present, those networks which operate in more than one language as a matter of principle are financially penalised in comparison to those which use one language only (usually English).

7.b. Proposals to national, regional & local institutions

Proposal # 5

That national governments and territorial institutions openly acknowledge their support for European cultural networking through their ministries and arts councils. That they seek to

increase both direct and indirect support in recognition of the benefits at national, regional and local level.

There are two ways in which national governments and territorial institutions can support the work of European cultural networks. Firstly (Scope I) through indirect support to member organisations in their country, region or locality for network membership fees and participation costs; secondly (Scope II), there are a range of ways in which they can offer direct support to the network coordination centre and its activities.

Scope I: contributions from national, regional and local level authorities to cultural organisations within their remit to enable them to participate fully in European networks. The support takes the form of grants for membership fees, travel, communication and other participation expenses. Grants to be provided in addition to existing funding of the organisations and clearly acknowledged as international networking costs. These grants assist the professional development of an organisation and its staff by enabling them to keep up with European developments, develop specialist contacts and place their work in an international context.

Evaluation: the benefits to national and regional authorities of this support are valued in terms of enhanced international profile, prestige and access to international contacts and cultural circuits. These benefits accrue to the participating organisations and individuals and, by extension, to the country, region or locality where they are based.

Scope II: direct support to the network coordination can take three forms:

- a) small, direct grants to the network coordination office or secretariat, wherever it is located, as an ongoing contribution towards basic revenue costs.
- b) a more substantial commitment by hosting the network office and providing a percentage of the core revenue costs. In kind support may also be provided, such as office premises, equipment and services. National governments which have made this commitment recognise the value of hosting a European network office in terms of the enhanced profile and prestige they gain by having an international organisation within their territory. There are added benefits in terms of access for members and officials in that country.
- c) support for network meetings through provision of facilities and hospitality (eg. meetings rooms, interpretation, conference services, accommodation and food to host general assemblies, specialist seminars and board meetings). The support may be one-off or on a regular basis. Network meetings offer the host country or organisation an opportunity to profile their artists' work to an international audience of professionals. Network members in the host country can participate fully in the meeting since travel costs are low.

Evaluation: in valuing the benefits, it must be accepted that European transnational networks do not have a nationality. Special evaluation criteria therefore apply which acknowledge the value of international work and the benefits which accrue at a regional, national and European level for the host country or region.

7.c. Proposals to the private sector

Proposal # 6

That imaginative corporate sponsors committed to research and development, innovation, intercultural communication, networking and finding international solutions for international problems jointly create a bank of symbolic capital and spare capacity.

Scope: there would be no money in this bank. Corporate sponsors would credit the bank with appropriate donations of resources in the form of airmiles (airline companies); hotel nights (international hotel chains); telephone/fax units (telecommunications companies); translation & interpretation hours (international corporations); language tuition (international corporations); training and technical support hours (computer companies, Internet service providers); printing units (international corporations). All resources to be dedicated to communication and mobility for cultural cooperation in Europe.

Access: transnational cultural networks which meet a set of agreed criteria could join the bank. Other areas of priority to be agreed. Existing technology would be used to provide access to the bank's resources via a "smart card" with pin number assigned to each network. Core resources might be divided up between networks against an assessment of need, others might form a resource pool available to all.

Management: a 'gatekeeper' would be required to deal with administration.

Costs to be met by joint subscription of corporate partners. Fast, direct access to the bank's capital resources essential to support flexible working practices.

Promotion: the launch of the bank would be a media-worthy event and focus sponsors and media attention on the value of cultural networks and their achievements. Sponsors to be acknowledged as appropriate.

Evaluation: the value of the bank would be assessed by all parties through its use. Corporate sponsors and users can access bank records at any time through the Internet and monitor patterns of use. Users can post messages of thanks, support and assessments of value of donation on publicly accessible bulletin boards. This would provide visible proof of networking in action.

7.d. Conditions

There are a number of conditions which are essential to the efficiency, effectiveness and credibility of the new proposals. Networks have long been concerned about the lack of transparency in decision-making procedures and have questioned the ability of experts to reach decisions without a valid set of criteria. Networks need proper evaluation and criteria. They are keen to contribute to the process of determining such measures and would welcome the opportunity to participate in inter-institutional dialogue with a view to the wider application of agreed criteria.

Condition # 1

That a valid set of CRITERIA FOR NETWORKS and their activities be devised with the input and subsequent ratification of all concerned parties. This is required to achieve the proposals in an effective and democratic manner.

The initiative for this could be taken by the Council of Europe as part of its ongoing commitment to inter-institutional dialogue. The criteria commission would include the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the European Cultural Foundation, UNESCO, national cultural ministries and regional authorities. Networks in general would provide consultative expertise and feedback.

The primary focus would be the establishment of viable and accepted criteria for transnational European cultural networks. Criteria might include, for example, legal status, open structure, active membership and a track record of benefit and achievement. This would also be a useful

first stage to establishing valid criteria for cultural networks which operate at the national or regional level and may have application in other sectors of activity.

Once devised, the criteria must not be set in stone. In order to remain responsive to the liveliness of the arts and heritage scene and the constantly changing environment in which transnational networks operate, a framework for the ongoing review of the criteria should be a condition of their ratification.

Condition # 2

That a well informed NETWORK DIALOGUE STRUCTURE be created within the European Commission to deal with cultural network applications against the newly established criteria.

Within DG X staff there should be a specialist in cultural networks as an official who understands this way of working and supports the different evaluation criteria which are applied. Selection panels for cultural networks revenue grants and networking projects should also contain experts in the field.

In order to deal strategically with the horizontal impact of transnational cultural networks, DG X should provide a proper information structure which meets the demonstrated need from the sector. This would enable transnational cultural projects which work across two or more sectors to first address DG X who would be equipped to pass on information on programmes in other DGs which may be more appropriate to their need.

Condition # 3

That the Council of Europe facilitate opportunities for strategic dialogue and exchange across the cultural networks sector.

Transnational cultural networks acknowledge the value of the contribution the Council of Europe has made to developing dialogue across the wider Europe. They welcome the scope for disseminating expertise developed through the experience of European cultural networking via technical support missions and other actions undertaken by the Council of Europe. They support the action of the Council to bring different partners together in strategic alliances to unlock new potential.

Conditional to the outlined proposals is that the Council of Europe continue to develop this dialogue with the cultural networks through concrete actions, eg. by seeking their opinion on proposed new programmes and major publications, such as the World Report on Culture and Development.

8. Conclusion

Transnational cultural networks in Europe are working groups that really do work. Networks are often perceived as *ends* rather than *means*, but they are not finished products or short-term projects. Rather they are the beginning of a process of transnational collaboration and communication which unlocks tremendous potential in terms of shared benefits and achievements.

If the activities and effectiveness of the networks were reduced yet further because of a lack of structural support, one major loss would be the **accumulation of collective intelligence**. Over the years, networks have constructed an effective approach to the complexities of transnational cultural cooperation. Layer by

layer from the bottom up, they have developed a cumulative experience which network members carry and disseminate through their professional practice.

Networks exist in order to share **transferable models of good practice**. This capacity to enable people in distant corners of Europe to communicate their experiences and to learn from others would be lost.

Networks are looking for sustainable, cooperative solutions to Europe's deep problems. They are committed to innovation:

"Innovation is vital. ... Europe has to rely on intelligence and invest in the intangible. Education and lifelong training, creativity, the exploitation of research results and the anticipation of technical and commercial trends need to be developed."

European Commission, Green Paper on Innovation, 1995

Yet cultural networks, which thrive on innovation and for years have valued intelligence, creativity and intangible returns, lead a precarious, barely acknowledged existence. A fraction of the research and development budget of a multi-national corporation would provide the security they require.

Networks are committed to constructive participation in the decision-making process. As grass roots organisations connected to the real world, networks value the views of broad-based independent think tanks who stress the need for cooperation and change.

Europe 99 is at the interface between three groups: thinkers, researchers and intellectuals; citizens active on the grass roots level; and institutions and political decision-makers. It published a report, intended as a counterpoint to the European Commission's 1993 White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, which presents proposals that further the debate on Europe and offer decision makers alternatives to institutional approaches:

"Confronted with the depth of the mutation our societies are going through, and the risks there-from, it is imperative they [Europe's leaders] be creative and imaginative."

Europe 99, 'Development, Cooperation, Activity', 1993

In the UK, an independent commission under the chairmanship of leading economist and politician, Lord Dahrendorf concluded:

"A cohesive, prosperous society requires another level of interaction beyond market transactions and the bonds of individuals and their families. Networks of cooperation and reciprocity should cut across society, building trust and mutual obligation."

'Report on Wealth Creation and Social Cohesion in a free society', 1995

European cultural networks act as a magnet for people whose notions of cultural cooperation run ahead of those in most institutions. Networks generate a constantly refreshed reservoir of ideas and energy, which inspires people to work together and find new ways of communicating across language, culture and geographical borders.

Networks are not perfect organisations. They are fallible and fragile. But they are tenacious. They persist in seeking better solutions to the thorny problems of transnational cross-cultural collaboration in Europe. They persist in asking difficult questions. They produce results.

Above all, networks represent **boundless potential**. As Kevin Kelly writes: "networks hide countless novel possibilities in the exponential combinations of many interlinked individuals". If they were to cease to function, one cannot really predict what might be lost since they embody: "*a treasure of future metaphors, insights and models*".

Networks cannot work alone and are seeking appropriate, well-targeted support from European institutions and other organisations to provide a more secure foundation for their work. This document is intended to be the starting point for discussions on how to achieve the conditions for survival of the transnational cultural networks in Europe. It is hoped that those who read the document will feel encouraged to respond and contribute to the ongoing dialogue.

NETWORK FACTS

Note: Network Facts are integrated into the design of the document. They appear on alternate pages, always in the same place, and act as a repetitive counterpoint to the main body of the text. NWF are placed according to their relevance to the main text. NWF alternate with NWW.

Note, these are flexible elements and may not all appear in the final text.

NETWORK FACT

The European Forum of Worldwide Music Festivals (EFWMF) is a network of 30 members, all worldmusic festivals in Europe. Combined audiences for these festivals total over 1.2 million people. EFWMF organises WOMEX, an annual trade fair/conference/showcase event for music business professionals in the growing area of world music. It unites the commercial concerns of the music industry with the complementary concerns of cultural cooperation. WOMEX 95 welcomed 900 participants from 41 countries, including over 125 journalists.

NETWORK FACT

The Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM), active since 1981, groups over 300 professional organisations in the contemporary performing arts field, from nearly 40 countries. IETM provides its famous and anarchic "structure for meeting" which includes an annual series of large and small "meetings", a newsletter, on-line conferences and the occasional publication of advocacy documents ('Theatre and Dance in the 1990s', 'More Bread and Circuses: Who Does What for the Arts in Europe', etc.).

NETWORK FACT

The European Network of Arts Organisations for Children and Young People (EU NET ART) was founded in 1991 as an informal grouping of European professionals with the mission to create more space for art activities for the young people of Europe. In 1994 it formed a Foundation in The Netherlands to place its management affairs on a legal basis. In 1996 it has 52 members in 22 European countries and a part-time staff of two people.

NETWORK FACT

The Biennial of young Mediterranean European artists was established in 1985. A network of 8 member countries (Spain, Italy, France, Greece, Portugal, Cyprus, Croatia and Algeria), it has organised six multidisciplinary biennial festivals in Barcelona, Thessaloniki, Bologna, Marseille, Valencia and Lisbon. The Biennial brings together 1,000 young artists from 30 cities in a 10 day programme offering around 50 live shows, 10 exhibitions, publications, debates and meetings.

NETWORK FACT

The European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) represents 280 universities and colleges involved in teaching the creative arts. Its annual conference attracts 500-600 participants from 36 countries. It publishes a newsletter and magazine, organises symposia, seminars and masterclasses, provides an on-line access database and supports collaborative projects under its auspices.

NETWORK FACT

The European Network of the Performing Arts Information Centres was formed in 1989. Exchanges of experiences and information and standardisation of information procedures and formats were the primary objectives. With an EC grant awarded in 1995, they plan to update their guides to festivals and venues in Europe, create a new module for International Training Opportunities, establish the central database in Eastern Europe and organise meetings. With the rapid technological development of electronic communications, Internet and World Wide Web, the network is now consolidating and expanding. The two new guides will be launched on the Internet.

NETWORK FACT

DACOR (Développement de l'Action Culturelle Opérationnelle en Région), a cultural development agency in Lille and associate of the Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council, is actively developing electronic solutions to disseminate information and create databases for cultural networks. It believes that "a reduction in the costs of processing the information essential to the existence of networks should allow European cultural networks to redeploy these means to other developmental activities."

NETWORK FACT

ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres) develops research and development issues through working groups known as Circles. These are developing three practical programmes: a Training for Trainers pilot project in the field of cultural management; a European Cultural Administration Placement Database; and a Summer School with thematic symposium.

NETWORK FACT

GULLIVER informal working body was created in 1987 through a Charta signed by 25 leading European intellectuals. Its objective is to further cultural cooperation by creating exchange and working facilities for individual artists and small groups in the context of a new emerging Europe. The Gulliver Clearing House project has created a framework for exchanges of artistic experiences through self-determined residencies and work placements. It works on a barter system and, in an earlier phase, was called 'The Bank Without Money'.

NETWORK FACT

The European Network of Cultural Centres-Historical Monuments was formed in 1991 and groups 22 cultural centres based in historic monuments (castles, palaces, abbeys, convents etc.) in 11 countries. It provides a vital point of contact for organisations which are often isolated in their own countries. Members

value the connection with professionals elsewhere in Europe in this highly specialised field which balances the needs of contemporary culture with the preservation of a rich cultural heritage.

NETWORK FACT

Res Artis international association of residential arts centres and networks was founded in 1993 and is booming: 150 residential programmes worldwide form the membership to date. This unexpected scale of development requires strong formal guidance and organisation, a body or office to take care of the Network exclusively. Res Artis has a 15-strong Executive Committee enthusiastically addicted to the organisation. But all are necessarily concerned with their own centres and programmes in the first place. No means are currently available to form the network coordination office so badly needed.

NETWORK FACT

MORE (Music Organisations of Europe) is a confederation of European music organisations founded in 1992. The purpose of MORE is to facilitate the exchange of European rock and pop music groups across borders in Europe by all possible means. MORE will be instrumental in setting up meetings and conferences dealing with issues of a cultural, social and economic nature of relevance to the pop and rock music industries and communities.

NETWORK WITNESSES

Quotations from Network Witnesses are integrated into the design of the document. They appear on alternate pages, always in the same place, and act as a repetitive counterpoint to the main body of the text. NWW are placed according to their relevance to the main text. NWW alternate with NWF. These are flexible elements and may not all appear in final text.

NETWORK WITNESS - Hilde Teuchies, Board member: EFAH

"In spite of, and maybe because of, the increasing number of sophisticated communication tools, which are all very impersonal and cold (faxes, computers, e-mail, Internet etc.) there is a growing need for a 'warm', personal kind of communication. Both types of communication, the warm and the cold, are exciting, useful and rich tools for the exchange of information and know-how. But they are very much complementary."

NETWORK WITNESS - Stella Coffey, Association of Artists in Ireland, EFAH Board Member

"Networks are particularly important for small (and relatively poor) countries, because the country's infrastructure tends to be less well developed, so that informal contact may be the only level of contact for those on the ground. Travel aspect is critical for island countries like Ireland; the Irish Sea is the most expensive piece of water in the world to cross and so is a formidable barrier to Irish participation in networks."

NETWORK WITNESS - Corina Suteu: Board Member, Forum of European Cultural Networks

"One always comes back to the question, 'Why do we need networks?'. What is the real reason that brings people together in these meeting points? Of course we need to share, to be informed and to know one another. But I believe that the incredible growth within the networks sector of recent years is, above all, linked to a strong need amongst professionals in the cultural sector to feel 'protected' from an environment which seems to them increasingly hostile and inflexible."

NETWORK WITNESS - Dragan Klaic, Director: Theater Instituut Nederland & President: European Network of Performing Arts Information Centres

"There should be a small fund in the EC that will be available for the networks: to oil the machine, to equalise the inevitable inequalities among the members that now forces networks to function below the optimum, to ensure the participation of members from territories where local money can (still) not be found to give international work a continuity."

NETWORK WITNESS - from IETM guidelines for membership

"IETM's centre of gravity is the teeming daily activities and interaction of its members."

NETWORK WITNESS - Neil Wallace

"To be real, networks have to be spontaneous because, of all the things that bring and keep people and organisations together, need is the most potent. Nearly every attempt to invent a network fails, because even well-meaning bureaucracies can't second guess the exciting and volatile chemistry of need."

NETWORK WITNESS - Charter of Asylum Cities

"The Network of Asylum Cities [offering refuge to threatened writers and artists] could thus become a veritable 'archipelago' of the imagination, giving pride of place to tolerance as the underlying condition necessary for literary creation. The Network will thus succeed in terms of Art and Spirit."

(extract from Charter adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe at the Council of Europe, June 1995)

NETWORK WITNESS - Carla Delfos, Executive Director ELIA

"In an ideal world ... I would like to wake up and suddenly find myself speaking 15 languages instead of 4 ... I would like my assistant, my president and myself to have three bodies or to have the ability of being present at several places at the same time ..."

NETWORK WITNESS - Mary Ann DeVlieg, IETM

"Networking is by definition a loose, vague, disobedient concept. The anarchic duplication of the component parts of a thing in various places, and the freedom of those parts to collaborate and be productive amongst themselves without a central direction - this does not lend itself to the requirement's of today's 'quantifiable culture', led by long-term inflexible plans with previewed results."

NETWORK WITNESS - Michael Haerdter, Res Artis

"Cultural institutions and networks are operating in a climate hostile to their optimal functioning and flourishing. ... This situation is in sharp contrast to the increasing demand cultural and art institutions see themselves confronted with: a demand regarding the 'production' of sense or meaning and steadily increasing afflux of artists internationally."

NETWORK WITNESS - Biserka Cvjeticanin, Culturelink

"The establishment and development of cultural networks in the countries in transition, in which many old structures have collapsed and new ones are slow in emerging, is of particular importance, since thanks to their openness, flexibility and dynamism, cultural networks stimulate cooperation and partnership among individuals, groups and societies and make possible a dialogue of cultures."

NETWORK WITNESS - Raymond Weber, Director of Education, Culture & Sport, Council of Europe, President: Pépinières Association

"Pépinières residencies use networking to maximise the multipolarity potential of European cultural cooperation and the horizontalisation of European exchanges. These networks regroup towns, experts, cultural institutions, artists and enable all these groups to exchange information and experiences."

NETWORK WITNESS - Fons Trompenaars, Cultural Diversity Management Specialist

"Other cultures are strange, ambiguous, even shocking to us. It is unavoidable that we will make mistakes in dealing with them and feel muddled and confused."

NETWORK WITNESS - Melanie Harris, North West Playwrights, UK

"I cannot tell you how rare it is in England to find a forum in which Art, ideas and the future are discussed in any seriousness. It is always about money and how impossible everything is. IETM is a network rich in possibility. I have grown personally and professionally through my contact with the network. The value to me and my organisation is unquantifiable."

NETWORK WITNESS - John Welch, Chief Executive - General Electric

"We have found what we believe to be the distilled essence of competitiveness. It is the reservoir of talent, creativity and energy that can be found in each of our people. That essence is liberated when we make people believe that what they think and do is important - and then get out of the way while they do it."